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PIERRE BOURDIEU AND THE SOCIOLOGY  
OF INTELLECTUALS.  
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCES TO POLAND

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**A b s t r a c t.** The present article, devoted to the issue of the intellectuals, is aimed at offering a proper terminological and theoretical perspective for the research conducted in the Polish academia (yet one that could be applied in other countries as well). According to the key assumption, the intelligentsia and the intellectuals complement each other, creating a system – the elites and their audience. Thanks to a proper operational definition of the term “intellectual” it is possible to conduct the analysis of the intellectuals’ presence in public life and their acts of engagement that testify both to their activity and an attempt at assuming that authoritative role. Since in the contemporary world creators of culture usually appear in the media as experts (commentators) or celebrities, it is a sign of will and political engagement when they put their signatures on an open letter (manifesto). The theoretical and empirical perspective proposed in the present paper originates from Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social fields and his analytical activities, and works inspired by Bourdieu – his student Gisele Sapiró’s, or American sociologist Ron Eyerman’s.

**Key words:** Pierre Bourdieu, intellectuals, sociology of intellectuals, fields theory, intelligentsia, Poland.

Polish social sciences devote special attention to the issues of the Polish intelligentsia and the creation of its contemporary counterparts. However, in spite of numerous studies devoted to the transformation and professional diversification of the intelligentsia, Polish scholars rarely make intellectuals their main area of study. Three causes may be given:

1) ontological – Polish sociologists still pose a question whether it is justified to consider Polish intellectuals as a separate social category, especially regarding its functionality, not profession; the question still has not been answered;

2) epistemological – the ambiguity of the term “intellectual” (context of the intelligentsia, controversies regarding the scope of the social role) makes it difficult to offer a satisfactory definition and propose accurate methodological premises;

3) political – the issue of the intellectuals first entered the Polish debate after World War II and is inextricably connected with the political system of the time and Marxist, Communist ideology – and even though the intellectuals were the major group responsible for the collapse of the regime in 1989, the term “intellectual” inherited many pejorative connotations that have been responsible for its “unpopularity”.

The present article, devoted to the issue of the intellectuals, is aimed at offering a proper terminological and theoretical perspective for the research conducted in the Polish academia (yet one that could be applied in other countries as well). According to the key assumption, the intelligentsia and the intellectuals complement each other, creating a system – the elites and their audience<sup>1</sup>. Already in 1960 Szczepański noticed that in the nineteenth century, the Polish intellectuals (the so-called creative intelligentsia) shaped the intelligentsia that has remained under the influence of the way of thinking and lifestyle of its elite<sup>2</sup>. And even though in Western countries one should rather, similarly to Schumpeter, consider the bourgeoisie (or, after Sdvižkov, *Bildungsbürgertum*<sup>3</sup>), as the audience of the intellectuals<sup>4</sup>, replaced in con-

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<sup>1</sup> In the second half of the twentieth century, in the Anglo-Saxon world appeared the term “public intellectual”, an idiom which – according to the second edition of *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* – except for the United States, is rarely used (British studies are an exception to that rule). According to Gourgouris, the author of the encyclopedia entry, the term is unnecessary in Europe. As the Dreyfus Affair is the origin of an intellectual in the Old World, the phrase “public intellectual” is a pleonasm (S. GOURGOURIS, *Intellectuals, Public*, in: W.E. DARITY Jr. (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*. 2nd Edition, Macmillan, 2008, vol. IV, pp. 68-69). An analogy may be made between Polish intellectuals as part of the intelligentsia, and Anglo-Saxon “public intellectuals” being part of a group of educated specialists, experts, and high administration officials that in the second half of the twentieth century in the Anglo-Saxon world became known as “intellectuals”.

<sup>2</sup> J. SZCZEPAŃSKI, *Zakończenie*, in: J. SZCZEPAŃSKI (ed.), *Wysztalcenie a pozycja społeczna inteligencji*, Vol. II, Łódź: PWN 1960, pp. 448-450.

<sup>3</sup> D. SDVIŽKOV, *Epoka inteligencji. Historia porównawcza warstwy wykształconej w Europie*, Warszawa: Neriton 2011.

temporary societies by the middle class called by Glotz the “society of two thirds”<sup>5</sup>, in Poland the intelligentsia – that germ of the middle class – would be a natural audience of the intellectuals<sup>6</sup>.

The theoretical and empirical perspective proposed in the present paper originates from Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of social fields and his analytical activities, and works inspired by Bourdieu – his student Gisele Sapiro’s, or American sociologist Ron Eyerman’s. The present approach puts major emphasis on collective activities of the intellectuals in public life and their mutual connections. Relations between the intellectuals create a social space (defined in the present paper as the field) that accounts for relations of dominance and submission, includes conservatives and the representatives of the avant-garde, is the arena of subversive struggles for position in the field, but is also the place where mechanisms of reproduction occur. Additionally, the field is part of a larger area – the field of cultural production – thus becoming its connector with the field of power<sup>7</sup>. However, the field distinguishes from most social fields the fact that its limits do not depend on profession (contrary to scientists in the scientific field or writers in the literary field) but on the symbolic capital of its members and their function in public space. This function may be performed by creators of culture<sup>8</sup> - agents in the field of cultural production – only after the field has reached the autonomy that allows for acts of political courage.

Contemporary intellectuals do not live – as stated by Mannheim – in alienation but in particular environments, and even though they are marked out for individual activity, once made aware of their power, they act together. It does not mean, however, that they can be easily stratified; on the contrary,

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<sup>4</sup> J. SCHUMPETER, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, London: Routledge 2010.

<sup>5</sup> P. GLOTZ, *Die beschleunigte Gesellschaft. Kulturkämpfe im digitalen Kapitalismus*, München: Verlag Kindler 1999.

<sup>6</sup> A safer approach would be to focus on educated people, since the questions about the Polish intelligentsia or the Polish middle class remain open.

<sup>7</sup> The field of power should not be confused with the political field, for the field of power is a space of power relations between agents equipped with one type of capital that allows domination in a given field. P. BOURDIEU, *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998, pp. 31-34.

<sup>8</sup> The field of cultural production would consist of professions listed by Jan Szczepański: 1) academics; 2) writers; 3) architects; 4) feature writers and journalists; 5) visual artists; 6) directors and actors; 7) composers, musicians, and singers. J. SZCZEPAŃSKI, *Odmiany czasu teraźniejszego*, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza 1973, p. 106.

they elude sociologists researching social class structures (unless the definition of the intellectual is broad enough).

## 1. THE SOCIOLOGY OF INTELLECTUALS – MAJOR PERSPECTIVES

In order to define intellectuals, one should first consider three major traditions listed by Kurzman and Owens<sup>9</sup> that were developed in the twentieth century and have been extended by many social theoreticians who differ in their views regarding the position of intellectuals in social structure. Therefore, these traditions consider the intellectuals as a class-in-themselves, class-bound, or socially unattached (class-less).

Tab. 1. Intellectuals – typology

“class-in-themselves”	“class-bound”	“class-less”
Julien Benda	Antonio Gramsci	Karl Mannheim
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ marxist “new class”</li> <li>G. Konrad</li> <li>I. Szelenyi</li> <li>M. Bakunin</li> <li>W. Machajski</li> <li>◦ L. Coser</li> <li>◦ A. Gouldner</li> <li>◦ D. Pels</li> <li>◦ P. Bourdieu</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Ch. Wright Mills</li> <li>◦ M. Foucault</li> <li>◦ N. Chomsky</li> <li>◦ E. Said</li> <li>◦ J. Karabel</li> <li>◦ R. Brym</li> <li>◦ R. Eyeran</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ T. Parsons</li> <li>◦ E. Shils</li> <li>F. Znaniecki</li> <li>◦ R. Dahrendorf</li> <li>◦ R. Aron</li> <li>◦ J. Schumpeter</li> <li>◦ R. Merton</li> <li>◦ S.M. Lipset</li> <li>◦ R. Collins</li> </ul>

Based on: KURZMAN, OWENS, *The Sociology*.

Limiting so many perspectives to only these three categories may suggest that the matter – the intellectuals in social theory – is relatively organized and transparent. However, the above mentioned perspectives merely disguise the ambivalence that stems from numerous ways of situating the intellectuals in social structure. According to the authors of that classification, in the

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<sup>9</sup> Ch. KURZMAN, L. OWEN, *The Sociology of Intellectuals*, “Annual Review of Sociology” 2002, nr 28.

following years all three perspectives found their continuators (see Tab. 1); nevertheless, it must be noticed that the perspectives listed by Kurzman and Owens should not be followed in a rigorous way as they never formed an intellectual school nor created a mutually influential environment. The above classification imposes an artificial frame that includes similar points of view but at the same time generates controversies that the present paper cannot address, especially considering the fact that the theoretical scope of the present text exceeds the scope of Kurzman and Owen's typology, even though their list included Bourdieu.

Contemporary studies of the intellectuals witness a clear departure from the classic approaches discussed above. The classic approach – from a class to an unattached individual – considered the intellectuals to be a functionally homogenous group, disregarding the type of creativity and produced knowledge, or professional belonging. In the times of growing egalitarianism, free access to education, digitalization, but also celebration of culture, diminishing scientists', writers', or artists' prestige, considering the intellectuals as a functionally homogenous social category (whether they are considered a class or class-less), disregarding their diversification, is outdated<sup>10</sup>. Camic and Gross, outlining a new subfield of the sociology of knowledge (one they named the “new sociology of ideas”), stated: “In much of the work considered so far, we have already glimpsed the importance that new sociologists of ideas assign to contests for intellectual position and scientific credibility. Whereas contributors to the old sociology of ideas tended to view intellectuals as «special custodians of abstract ideas», new sociologists of ideas see the women and men who produce ideas as engaged in historically specific struggles with one another, and with various audiences, to establish their legitimacy and respectability as intellectuals of particular types (scientists, humanists, etc.) – struggles that can have significant effects on the ideas that these actors produce and on the fate of the ideas that they generate”<sup>11</sup>.

Ron Eyerman expressed a similar view, attempting to prove that nowadays the intellectuals cannot be considered in class terms. Instead, they should be presented as members of a particular social space organized by mutual rela-

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<sup>10</sup> Ch. CAMIC, N. GROSS, *The New Sociology of Ideas*, in: J.R. BLAU (ed.), *The Blackwell Companion to Sociology*, Malden-Oxford-Carlton: Blackwell 2004, pp. 241-242, 248-249; B. MISZTAL, *Intellectuals and Public Good*, New York: Cambridge University Press 2007, p. 20; R. EYERMAN, *Between Culture and Politics – Intellectuals in Modern Society*, Cambridge: Polity Press 1994, pp. 30, 241-242.

<sup>11</sup> CAMIC, GROSS, *The New Sociology*, p. 248.

tions between its members<sup>12</sup>. The intellectuals' credibility is nowadays evaluated through juxtaposition with other thinkers in the field – not all creators of ideas are treated in the same way. That is why Wacquant stated that one of the major practical applications of Bourdieu's theory is an opportunity to reformulate the intellectuals' role in contemporary political fights of the World. The intellectual's autonomy and his civic engagement are combined in a synergist union thanks to which numerous circles – scientists, writers, and artists – enhance the effectiveness of their political interventions and are more eager to defend their independence from economic or political forces. As a result, the model of the “total intellectual” embodied by Sartre gets replaced by the “collective intellectual” who combines academic research with creative communication<sup>13</sup>. This approach allows to grasp the social force of the intellectuals as a group, but also reveals significant differences between ideologically engaged writers and scientists convinced that the motto of contemporary science – “knowledge as a means to solving problems” – is relevant both for social and political life. Their perception of political engagement and reasons behind it will differ; similarly, the relations between their fields and the intellectual field will not be parallel. Bourdieu's perspective allows for grasping the specificity of these fields which are endogenous to the field of cultural production, but metamorphic to the intellectual field.

The study of intellectuals is an important part of the French sociologist's research, necessary to fully comprehend his ideas of stratification, political conflict, or inequalities in contemporary societies. Most importantly, it is the heart of his theory of symbolic violence and the major element of the project of discovering “the whole set of dominant positions”<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu was unable to finish<sup>15</sup>. Perhaps due to his strong feeling of belonging to that social category and thanks to a series of studies devoted to it, Bourdieu was able to

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<sup>12</sup> EYERMAN, *Between Culture and Politics*, pp. 241-242.

<sup>13</sup> L. WACQUANT, *Pointers on Pierre Bourdieu and Democratic Politics*, “Constellations. An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory” 11(2004), No. 1, pp. 9-10.

<sup>14</sup> L. WACQUANT, *From Ruling Class to Field of Power: An Interview with Pierre Bourdieu on La Noblesse d'Etat*, “Theory, Culture and Society” 10(1993), No. 3, p. 20.

<sup>15</sup> D. SWARTZ, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1997, p. 219. Paradoxically, the French sociologist did not devote any of his books entirely to the intellectuals, making them a subplot of many of his publications. The intellectual field appears in the context of the analysis of the literary field (P. BOURDIEU, *The Rules of Art. Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 1996) and the academic/scientific field (P. BOURDIEU, *Homo academicus*, Cambridge: Polity Press 1988).

provide an accurate analysis of the intellectuals' position in social life and recognized how the world of eminent thinkers, named by the author of *Homo Academicus* the intellectual field, functions.

## 2. BOURDIEU'S THEORY AND THE INTELLECTUAL FIELD

Even though Bourdieu claimed that social classes do not exist, on numerous occasions he expressed a view that there exists a social space that is a space of differences, and classes exist as long as it is possible to theorize them, distinguishing relatively homogenous groups occupying similar (or even identical) positions in the social space<sup>16</sup>. Focusing on the empirical study of a particular part of social reality, a researcher should "create and discover" the rule according to which a given space is singled out and diversified, simultaneously creating a theoretical model of that space. This rule should be applied not only to recreate class order understood – as stated above – not as a given, but as something that yet needs to be created, but also to construct all social spaces, thus replacing thinking about society as substance or function with a relational perspective.

The proper perspective for such an analysis is the field theory that has gained popularity among a number of researchers who apply it in many analytical contexts. Bourdieu introduced the notion of the field in order to stress the need for relational thinking regarding social reality. It means that "truly real" are not interactions between active subjects, but objective relations between positions – the internal structure of the field. According to the author of *Distinction*, his theory of the field may be seen as a social topology which distinguishes many domains that, while adding up to the whole social space, may be analyzed separately<sup>17</sup>. And even though in his early works the French sociologist wrote about the existence of the overall social field divided into particular dimensions according to the capital present in each of them<sup>18</sup>, in his later works on the media, literary, or scientific field he stres-

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<sup>16</sup> BOURDIEU, *Practical reason*, pp. 1-13; IDEM, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1984, pp. 466-484.

<sup>17</sup> P. BOURDIEU, *The Social Space and the Genesis of Groups*, "Theory and Society" 14(1985), No. 6, pp. 723-724.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, pp. 724-725.

sed the fact that social reality is divided into numerous independent areas (fields) that correspond to human activities.

This theoretical perspective allows one to focus on how a given group defines its social territory and helps to understand how local social order is constructed, transformed or maintained. In other words, this theory allows for recognizing the laws of micro-social spaces (fields), how they self-regulate themselves and delineate their territories. The study of these orders may also reveal forces that influence the field from the outside – other fields or the rules of the whole social order. However, it must be stressed that the field is created through relations between positions in the structure, that is institutions or environments, but most importantly, through relations between individual actors. That is why, as stated by Fligstein, the theory of the field may be easily applied to the issue of relations between the structure and the active subject<sup>19</sup>.

The relational aspect of Bourdieu's theory, established through structural thinking, is based on – as stressed by Sewell Jr. – considering social structures as mutually sustaining cultural patterns and reservoirs of resources that both legitimize and limit social activities, and are usually reproduced by these activities<sup>20</sup>. The structure of the intellectual field consists of power relations between the intellectuals or particular circles of intellectuals. The intellectuals legitimize their social function by knowing cultural patterns that allow them to mobilize, access, and use resources, but these resources get legitimized by environmental structures. Structural presence (environmental interactions) to a large extent decides about one's admission into the intellectual field, making the audience a less important factor. Participation in public life depends on many structural restrictions such as gaining the environment's recognition, which in turn conditions one's access to the media. Environmental reproduction, which may also be called intellectual reproduction based on propagating a certain lifestyle or way of thinking typical for a given environment, is also noticeable.

In the context of the intellectual field, the field of power described by Bourdieu assumes democratic nature of the system, or at least its illusion. That is why heretics always counterpoint orthodoxes, which in turn assumes ideological plurality – domination is symbolic, not material. The French so-

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<sup>19</sup> N. FLIGSTEIN, *Social Skill and the Theory of Fields*, "Sociological Theory" 19(2001), No. 2, pp. 105-125.

<sup>20</sup> W.H. SEWELL Jr., *A Theory of Structure: Duality, Agency, and Transformation*, „American Journal of Sociology" 98(1992), No. 1, pp. 13-17.



ciologist wrote that “there are two very different forms of discourse on the social world”<sup>21</sup> that are in constant competition. These discourses may be called the symbolic space and the literal space, the world of intellect and the world of action.

The first discourse is of intellectual nature, and the “fight to the death” argument (“if I’m right, you’re wrong”) is symbolic. Here making an error has no great social consequences (for example, such arguments take place in the scientific field). The second discourse, connected to the sphere of activity, transforms ideas into actions and behaviors. A political leader is granted the power to transform his words into action, and each mistake leads to severe consequences. The first type of discourse is typical of culture, while the second is typical of politics. The intellectual is a person who crosses the line that separates these two worlds and two discourses.

By connecting these two worlds too hastily, the “fight to the death” argument may become transferred onto the ground where it no longer remains symbolic. From the point of view of science, an intellectual debate, and politics, it is important for the two orders to coexist in separation as they both have the right to exist and one should not abdicate in favor of another (which happened more than a few times in history – for example, Bourdieu gives an example of the intellectuals and Communist parties)<sup>22</sup>. To sum up, the space where discourses on the social world are produced becomes the field of struggle when the dominant pole (orthodoxy) does not attempt to eradicate the dominated positions (and their “heresies”), since “in that area, so long as there is struggle there is history, and therefore hope”<sup>23</sup>. The totalitarian system does not have the field of power around which the argument would focus – here orthodoxy becomes doxa and heresy is not tolerated. It is one of the reasons why the assumption must be made that the intellectual is a phenomenon specific for democratic realities. However, this theoretical discussion should be concluded with precise definitional postulates.

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<sup>21</sup> P. BOURDIEU, *Sociology in question*, London: Sage Publications 1993, p. 39.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

### 3. THE INTELLECTUAL – A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE DEFINITION

Kurzman and Owens admit that their study, in spite of presenting many sociological traditions that provided a theoretical description of the intellectuals, did not discuss any definition of the “intellectual,” thus testifying to a belief that how the intellectuals define themselves and how they are defined by others at various historical moments is more important<sup>24</sup>. Bourdieu’s position regarding this matter is clear – one is defined as an intellectual through the struggle in the intellectual field<sup>25</sup>. It does not mean, however, that one should abandon the operational definition. The French sociologist in his numerous publications made sure that the definition was clear<sup>26</sup> – for there is a difference between a researcher’s perspective and the reconstruction of definitions in social struggles.

In spite of providing a theoretical background for the study of the intellectuals, their social significance still needs to be evaluated and, as a result, the term needs to be defined. Therefore, the Dreyfus Affair and public group protests of artists becomes the origin of that particular social category. The French model became the prevailing way of perceiving the intellectuals – a political intervention became the constitutive element of that category. As a result, the model could be applied to local comparisons in other countries. Cultural capital would allow scientists, writers, journalists, and artists to combine high recognizability, popularity, and special dispositions to formulate opinions regarding public matters and direct them to the unqualified audience. And even though Collini rejects the thesis about political activity being the intellectual’s duty, claiming that the constitutive part of the term is the intellectual’s public role<sup>27</sup>, this “political activity” should be rather understood in the republican spirit (the political as the sum of all citizens)<sup>28</sup>. The

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<sup>24</sup> KURZMAN, OWENS, *The Sociology*, pp. 80-81.

<sup>25</sup> An Interview with Pierre Bourdieu: L. WACQUANT, *For a Socio-Analysis of Intellectuals: On “Homo Academicus”*, “Berkeley Journal of Sociology” 34(1989), p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> P. BOURDIEU, *The Rules of Art*; IDEM, *Homo Academicus*; IDEM, *Fourth Lecture. Universal Corporatism: The Role of Intellectuals in the Modern World*, “Poetics Today” 12(1991), No. 4, pp. 655-669.

<sup>27</sup> S. COLLINI, *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life In Britain 1850-1930*, Oxford: Clarendon Press 1991, pp. 49-51.

<sup>28</sup> The republican vision of the political is based on the idea of society consisting of subjects (citizens) who have a duty to participate in the life of society and the state. Therefore, the original subject is society and the political is a secondary term derived from the idea of

intellectual's social engagement is not only his or her creative mental activity in public space, but also taking responsibility and expressing an opinion in a political argument<sup>29</sup>. It does not have to necessarily mean one's involvement in a political party's activity, but in theory it should serve "the battle over human hearts and minds"<sup>30</sup>.

Ron Eyerman points to the fact that the intellectual is a unique social role that consists of forming ideas which are transmitted to a wider audience through various media in order to shape public opinion. It means entering a role between purity and engagement which, when crossed, becomes a fundamental moment for shaping the intellectual's identity. Therefore, the intellectual is a two-dimensional character. And, as stated by Bourdieu, in order to "have the right" to the name (be allowed to be called the intellectual), the creator of culture must fulfill two requirements: "on the one hand, he must belong to an autonomous intellectual world (a field), that is, independent from religious, political, and economic powers (and so on), and must respect its specific laws; on the other hand, he must invest the competence and authority he has acquired in the intellectual field in a political action, which is in any case carried out outside the intellectual field proper"<sup>31</sup>.

Through political intervention<sup>32</sup>, the intellectual "sends" a multi-layered message. On the one hand, it is an intervention and an attempt at strengthe-

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society. The sphere of politics is a space where debates about the political life of society take place, and the political is a "binder" thanks to which the *res publica* functions efficiently and defends society against tyranny. M. KRÓL, *Filozofia polityczna*, Kraków: Znak 2008, pp. 146-151.

<sup>29</sup> Timotny Garton Ash stated that a writer or thinker who, in spite of publicly expressing his opinions and intervening in political matters, intentionally renounces power, may be called an intellectual. See: T.G. ASH, *Prague: Intellectuals and Politics*, "The New York Review of Books" 42(1), 12 I 1995.

<sup>30</sup> F. FUREDI, *Gdzie się podzieli wszyscy intelektualiści?*, Warszawa: PIW 2004, s. 41 [F. FUREDI, *Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?*, New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2005].

<sup>31</sup> BOURDIEU, *Fourth lecture*, p. 656.

<sup>32</sup> According to Bourdieu, it was not the intellectual's role to shape political attitudes, in spite of numerous political interventions. These interventions are aimed at attacking the foundation of the symbolic violence by asking questions about the basic political assumptions of the citizens. Bourdieu's position coincides with Foucault's perspective. According to Foucault, "The role of an intellectual is not to tell others what they have to do. By what right would he do so? [...] The work of an intellectual is not to shape others' political will; it is through the analyses that he carries out in his field, to question over and over again what is postulated as self-evident, to disturb people's mental habits, the way they do and think things [...]". M. FOUCAULT, *Politics Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings, 1977-1984*, L.D. KRITZMAN (ed.), New York: Routledge 1988, p. 265.

ning one's independence from the worldly authorities through providing socio-economic conditions for the autonomy of creators of culture (especially regarding publication and the rules of evaluating intellectual activity) and strengthening one's public prestige. On the other hand, as institutions and mechanisms allowing for collective political intervention in the name of creators' authority get established, it is a sign of efforts aimed at protecting the most independent artists against the temptation of sealing themselves off in an ivory tower. That is why Bourdieu claims that the first goal of the intellectuals should be a collective action in defense of particular interests and means necessary to defend their autonomy<sup>33</sup>.

If the term "intellectual" were to be applied not to all people who earn their living through intellectual activity, but only to a group of them who decided to come out of their "laboratories, studios, or libraries" to take part in public life, then a conclusion may be made that one becomes an intellectual through engagement. Bourdieu testifies to this paradoxical position of people of high intellect by claiming that the intellectual cannot be conceptualized as long as he is considered in the context of the forced alternative between autonomy and engagement, pure culture and politics. According to Bourdieu, this dichotomy is faulty because the intellectual, while born as part of this opposition, also overcomes it<sup>34</sup>.

Bourdieu proves, however, that there is no dichotomy between the search for the autonomy of pure culture and the struggle for political effectiveness. It is through strengthening their autonomy (their authority and freedom to criticize the authorities and all coteries) that the intellectuals may conduct successful political actions<sup>35</sup>. That is why in order to accurately recognize and understand the directions of collective actions undertaken by the intellectuals in particular countries, one needs to abandon the outdated dichotomy between pure and engaged culture. The intellectual overcomes that dichotomy, which in turn can be visible only when an individual decision about one's engagement in public life has been made.

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<sup>33</sup> BOURDIEU, *Fourth lecture*, p. 660. "With a view to grounding philosophically the realpolitik of Reason that I am defending, let me counter the transcendental illusion of universal structures of Reason inscribed in consciousness or language by reminding you that Reason is a product of history that has to be incessantly re-produced through historical action aimed at guaranteeing the social conditions for the possibility of rational thinking". Ibidem, p. 661.

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, pp. 655-659.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem.

Ron Eyerman claims that contrary to the intelligentsia or experts engaged in intellectual activity, social role of the intellectuals may be understood as “the articulation of ideas communicated to a broad audience”<sup>36</sup>. What is more, according to the American sociologist, a person expressing his or her opinion in a limited public space (for example, a politician in parliament, or a writer at a *soirée*) is not an intellectual, but the same person expressing the same opinion during an open public debate broadcasted by the media intentionally undertakes the role of an intellectual.

Eyerman’s position, even though correct, needs to be supplemented. It is difficult, based on statements in the media, to allocate the label of an intellectual, expert, or celebrity in such a way that the distinction between particular attitudes remains clear. After all, an expert’s opinion is a subjective point of view (even if based on objective data) and yet another voice in public debate, even when it is neutral (apolitical).

One’s presence in the media is not enough to be labeled an intellectual. The very act of artistic creation (whether it concerns a novel, a poem, a movie, a work of art, or an essay) consists of a description of reality and a comment to that reality – for many artists the very act of evaluating reality is part of the profession, directed to a limited or wider audience. However, the intellectual is not concerned with describing reality and formulating judgments, but commenting on reality in a manner that shapes that reality. The intellectual, as stated by Kołakowski, by using words attempts to offer his or her interpretation of the world and either makes this new perception of reality available to others, or forces it on them. Not only does the intellectual want to transmit the truth, but he also wants to create it, thus shaping a new world<sup>37</sup>. In this context Eyerman’s position gains a new meaning, becoming the creation of intellectual projects (or, to quote Bourdieu, creative projects<sup>38</sup>) aimed at influencing events and searching support for these projects. These projects have ideological grounds and relate to particular systems of values – in this example their very presentation becomes the sign of engagement in changing reality (or preventing its change); it becomes something more than the medial newspeak. It becomes an exemplification of

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<sup>36</sup> EYERMAN, *Between Culture and Politics*, p. 454.

<sup>37</sup> L. KOŁAKOWSKI, *Czy diabeł może być zbawiony i 27 innych kazań*, Kraków: Znak 2012, p. 177.

<sup>38</sup> See: P. BOURDIEU, *Intellectual field and creative project*, “Social Science Information” 8(2)(1969), pp. 89-199.

Rousseau's statement: "Strong souls have another language; it is by this language that one persuades and brings about action"<sup>39</sup>.

#### 4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE INTELLECTUAL FIELD

The intellectuals are therefore eminent representatives of broadly defined creators of culture who, by exceeding their professional qualifications, get engaged in socio-political life and take part in public debate, expressing opinions or taking a stand on a given matter and thus influencing their audience. Thanks to a proper operational definition of the term "intellectual" it is possible to conduct the analysis of the intellectuals' presence in public life and their acts of engagement that testify both to their activity and an attempt at assuming that authoritative role. Since in the contemporary world creators of culture usually appear in the media as experts (commentators) or celebrities, it is a sign of will and political engagement when they put their signatures on an open letter (manifesto). For, as stated by Bourdieu, acts of exposure, among whom Zola's *J'accuse* is a constant reference point, are inextricably connected with the intellectual, and each person aspiring to a position (especially a dominant one) in the intellectual field must perform such acts<sup>40</sup>. The means provided by science, literature, or art are too limited – the intellectual wishes to have a more substantial influence. If he wishes his idea to be given proper attention and wishes it to influence the authorities, he must put his cultural authority – around which he gathered the cultural capital characteristic for a given profession – on the line. By becoming an intellectual, he risks losing that capital.

In addition, when signing an open letter one is aware that his support for a given cause enhances the effectiveness of the appeal. It is the best proof that the signatory, in spite of the seeming insignificance of the act, has left his "ivory tower". Signing the letter with a clear political demand is an expression of will, a sign that an unambiguous decision was made: "Yes, I committed myself."

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<sup>39</sup> J.J. ROUSSEAU, *Emile*, OC, IV, p. 645.

<sup>40</sup> P. BOURDIEU, *The Field of Cultural Productions. Essays on Art and Literature*, New York: Columbia University Press 1993, p. 63.

Since the Dreyfus Affair, when the French intellectual circle was formed, direct, group intervention of the intellectuals through open letters, petitions, and manifestos has been the main form of the intellectuals' public protest<sup>41</sup>. Not only was it a form of communication with the audience, but it became yet another form of artistic expression. Signatures on open letters point to a group activity that establishes a given environment and strengthens a given community.

Signing open letters indicates the attitude characteristic for the intellectuals. It can be described in the following manner.

1) This attitude exceeds professional obligations and is connected with moral commitment to "do more" than is required by one's socio-professional role ("leaving the role")<sup>42</sup>.

2) It testifies both to public activity and engagement (intellectual and/or emotional) in a particular cause. Except for manifestos with limited – local (territorially restricted) or internal (referring to a particular, specialist area of social life) – range, in most cases the national media publish open letters with axiological, political, or ideological connotations. Therefore, these letters become testimonies to the signatories' engagement in a particular political event.

3) It is directed to a particular audience who rarely is the addressee of the letter. Even though the letter is addressed to the central authorities or other persons in power, its true recipient is the so-called public opinion, the public will, or, to be more precise, a particular audience determined by particular media. Each press title has its own program and a group of readers (the audience) and, as a consequence, has its own group of authorities. Therefore, even though open letters are directed to the whole society, their themes, signatories, and place of publication decide about the segmentation of the audience.

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<sup>41</sup> See: T. CONNER, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Emergence of the French Public Intellectual*, European Studies Conference Selected Proceedings, 2006, <http://www.unomaha.edu/esc/2006papers.html> [12.11.2014], p. 3; BOURDIEU, *The Rules of Art*, pp. 47-176.

<sup>42</sup> It happens that open letters are part of an internal game within a given field. In other words, they are an expression of protest against or approval of particular activities or behaviors within a field such as science or medicine. For example, scientists protest against the standards of academic polemics, or journalists react when a code of professional ethics gets breached. Signing such letters is part of one's professional duties and should not be considered "leaving the role." In order to "leave the role," one must take a position regarding matters exceeding one's socio-professional competences.

The analysis of the field implies a specific – outlined by Bourdieu – order of research. In order to reconstruct the structure of the field and its dynamics, it is essential to show its genesis and describe the history of the struggle for the autonomy of the field. That is why each individual is defined by his or her position within the field which is consistent regarding the consensus about the nature of the “game.” People are predictable in their choices because of a more general structure of social space, but it happens only when the field is autonomous. An intellectual as a distinct social figure is born when he or she intervenes in the political field in the name of specific values of the field of cultural production (the field of creators of culture) – only then one can claim that an autonomous intellectual field was born. In France such a moment was the Dreyfus affair.

It is extremely difficult to explicitly name such a moment in Poland due to the difficult Polish history, unstable situation of the country (that did not even exist when the French intellectual was born) and undemocratic reality. Demand for democratic liberties is connected with a critical attitude of an intellectual, impossible to realize in a reality where freedom of thinking and speech is restricted. Hence it is difficult to describe the beginnings of the intellectual field in Poland not only during the war, Nazi occupation, or socialist censorship, but also during the authoritarian policy of Piłsudski’s rule in the Second Polish Republic. It does not mean, however, that when talking about the genesis of the Polish intellectual field one may not discuss intellectual traditions during the occupation or the Second Polish Republic; on the contrary, one should discuss them. Bourdieu believes that individual subjects in the field through their actions express a fraction of the historical unconscious written into the experience of a particular field. It means that each field is formed by historical events that influence its shape<sup>43</sup>.

As the symbolic beginning of the Polish intellectual field and the birth of the contemporary intellectual one should consider – in accordance with the example the Dreyfus affair – the protest of the creators of culture who exceeded their roles and made a free choice (although a choice made in a reality that was not entirely free) to get engaged and thus enter the sphere of politics by writing a letter later entitled “The Letter of 34,” its title reflecting the number of signatories. It was a protest letter issued on 14 March 1964 to Prime Minister J. Cyrankiewicz, demanding larger rations of paper and cen-

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<sup>43</sup> P. BOURDIEU, L.J.D. WACQUANT, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1992, pp. 94-114.



sorship to be relaxed. It was the moment when the Polish intellectual environment got stimulated; it showed a possible way of resistance and critical reaction to particular political decisions. As a result, at least an indirect one, March 1968 took place and other similar letters by intellectuals followed (e.g. The Letter of 15, The Letter of 44, The Letter of 59, The Letter of 14, but also The open letter to the Party).

In discussions regarding “The Letter of 34” a thesis is made that it was the first fully aware act of intellectuals’ fight for the autonomy of the intellectual field, i.e. an opposition to the dictatorship of the political field and the field of power over the field of cultural production, including the intellectual field. The fight over the autonomy of the field will be discussed along with the genesis of the field. The communist authorities managed to create a specific imitation of the intellectual field in the undemocratic reality, involving in it many creators of culture. Since the beginning of the Polish People’s Republic there had existed two parallel realities that structured cultural products – the one controlled by the government, and the dissidents. Both of them shaped their own intellectuals. However, only one of them may be considered as natural for this group, which is naturally connected with the autonomy of creation – literature, journalism, art, or science. Autonomy – and its results – is the basis of intellectuals’ public authority. That is why 1964 is such an important year for the Polish intellectual field. That is why the following questions are so crucial: how did the field expand its autonomy? how did the transformation of the political system influence the shape of the Polish individual field?

Although Bourdieu postulated that particular research questions and hypotheses be selected at subsequent stages of the research process in the course of carrying it out, it can be stated already at this point that fundamental research problems derived from the field theory include such questions as: what capital is significant in the intellectual field?; how the autonomy of this field was shaped and how extensive is it?; who has the best access to the decisive capital, i.e. who exercises authority within the field while holding positions which are dominant for this field?; what behaviour strategies are characteristic of actions taken in the intellectual field?; how strong is the pressure exerted by the journalistic field in the field of cultural production by imposing economic logics?; what actions taken by the state authorities in democratic world threaten the autonomy of the Polish intellectual field?

Analysis in field categories provides for three essential elements interrelated with one another. Firstly, a position of a specific field in relation to the field of power needs to be determined. Next, an objective structure of rela-

tions between positions occupied by people and institutions which compete with one another in this field needs to be described. Finally, habitus of subjects, its origins and various systems of disposition acquired in the course of interiorizing a specific type of social and economic determinants need to be analysed. As pointed out by Bourdieu, the idea of the field was coined as a reminder of the fact that the true subject matter of social sciences does not include an individual. However, it should be noted that the field cannot be constructed in isolation from individuals because it is individuals (or individual institutions) that are major carriers of information required for performing analyses. According to prerogatives of a French sociologist, the field should become a centre of research activities; yet, it still means that data for analyses are provided by individuals who take actions within the field<sup>44</sup>.

Field analysis calls for constructing a dynamic model of an intellectual field which would depict the nature of relations and connections among intellectual environments. The structure of the field should be shown mainly from the point of view of the chiasmatic model of social space which is the best way to demonstrate the distribution of capital and positions in the game occupied by active individuals: "In *Distinction*<sup>45</sup>, Bourdieu has analyzed the structure of the social space as a chiasm. On the first axis, dominant and dominated classes are opposed with regard to the total volume of capital they possess. On the second axis, it is the structure of this capital that is determinant, that is, the proportion of economic and political resources as opposed to cultural resources. In this structure, intellectuals occupy a dominated position within the dominant class as they are endowed with cultural rather than economic or political resources"<sup>46</sup>. Structure could be formalized through Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA), as Bourdieu did for the academic world<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>45</sup> BOURDIEU, *Distinction*.

<sup>46</sup> G. SAPIRO, *Forms of Politicization in the French Literary Field*, "Theory and Society" 32 (2003), No. 5/6, p. 641.

<sup>47</sup> BOURDIEU, *Homo Academicus*.

## CONCLUSIONS

Polish intellectuals are a social category which is empirically perceptible – even though they seem to be difficult to grasp when it comes to stratification, and on the class level they are difficult to distinguish (many have tried, starting with Benda, Mannheim and Gramsci and the others, but no consensus could be gained), they are a group of people who are active in public space and are structurally connected. The intellectuals are responsible not only for the creation of ideas, but also for activating them, shaping their fate and history – social structure, then, is not a background of such activities, for public debate seems to better serve that purpose of a social context for intellectuals's activities. The theoretical perspective and analytical tools provided by Bourdieu and his continuators allow for the analysis of the intellectuals in a manner appropriate to their public activity and the type of capital that determines their prestige, recognition, power, and political influence.

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PIERRE BOURDIEU I SOCJOLOGIA INTELEKTUALISTÓW.  
TEORETYCZNE PODSTAWY ANALIZY POLA INTELEKTUALNEGO  
ZE SZCZEGÓLNYM UWZGLĘDNIENIEM POLSKI

S t r e s z c z e n i e

Niniejszy artykuł, podejmując problematykę intelektualistów, ma na celu zaproponowanie odpowiedniej perspektywy – definicyjnej, teoretycznej, a także badawczej dla prowadzonych na gruncie polskiej nauki badań (ale także dla innych krajów). Kluczowym założeniem jest zaś uznanie, że kategorie inteligencji i intelektualistów stanowią pewien wzajemnie uzupełniający się układ – elity i jej publiczności. Dzięki dobrej operacjonalizacji pojęcia „intelektualista”, można przeprowadzić taką analizę obecności twórców kultury w życiu publicznym i stanowionych przez nich aktów zaangażowania, które będą świadczyć zarówno o podjętej aktywności, jak i próbie wejścia w tę rolę, przyjmującą charakter autorytatywny. Skoro współcześnie nie każda obecność twórców kultury w mediach ma charakter polityczny, a najczęściej ekspercki (jako komentator) lub rozrywkowy (jako celebryta), to tym szczególnym wyrazem woli, i owocem ich działania, jest złożenie własnego podpisu pod listem otwartym (manifestem). Zaproponowana w artykule perspektywa teoretyczna i empiryczna została wyprowadzona z teorii pól społecznych Pierre’a Bourdieu i podjętych przez francuskiego socjologa działań analitycznych, a także prac badaczy zainspirowanych Bourdieu – jego uczniicy Gisele Sapiro czy amerykańskiego socjologa, Rona Eyermana.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Pierre Bourdieu, intelektualiści, socjologia intelektualistów, teoria pól, inteligencja, Polska.