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Therapeutic discourses and practices as neoliberal technology of power.
Auto-ethnographic case study of "Szkoła Edukacji"

Perhaps Faris accepted Birkelund's offer and was appointed as the President of the Polish American Enterprise Fund, simply because Poland looked like a start-up to him.

Michał Matys,
Rekiny, ale łagodne.
Opowieść o Polsko-Amerykańskim
Funduszu Przedsiębiorczości (2020)

I ask the pardon of those teachers who, in dreadful conditions, attempt to turn the few weapons they can find in the history and learning they 'teach' against the ideology, the system and the practices in which they are trapped. They are a kind of hero. But they are rare and how many (the majority) do not even begin to suspect the 'work' the system (which is bigger than they are and crushes them) forces them to do, or worse, put all their heart and ingenuity into performing it with the most advanced awareness (the famous new methods!). So little do they suspect it that their own devotion contributes to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the School, which makes the School today as 'natural,' indispensable-useful and even beneficial for our contemporaries as the Church was 'natural,' indispensable and generous for our ancestors a few centuries ago.

Louis Althusser,
Ideology and ideological state apparatus:
Notes towards an investigation (1971)

1. The concept

This article focuses on therapeutization of work and educational spaces (Illouz 2008, 2010, 2020) in late capitalism. It presents a case study of Szkoła Edukacji (School of Education, hereafter SE) – a post-graduate school run by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation[1] and the University of Warsaw (in collaboration with Columbia Teachers College), awarding professional qualifications for primary and secondary school teachers of Polish language and literature, history, mathematics and biology in Poland[2]. The purpose of this paper is to show how therapeutic discourses and practices within the institutions responsible for the process of social reproduction (schools, universities), here understood as State ideological apparatus (Althusser 1971), become a technology of power (Rose 1998; Foucault 2009, 2010; Bobako 2017), and how they can translate into both the content and the form of neoliberal ideology and, through it, neoliberalism *per se*, i.e., a particular form of class politics (Harvey 2005). The intended outcome of the following reflections is the formulation of a hypothesis related to a change in the traditional pattern of student interpellation by the school.

The present text is autoethnographic[3], and its starting point is my experience of studying at SE in the academic year 2020/2021, my observations made at that time, formal and informal conversations with students, alumni, SE staff members and staff from the schools where I did my student placement. Contextually, I draw on material publicly available on the SE website.

The text itself is situated at the intersection of two genres of ethnographic writing: case study and autoethnography. The latter takes the lead, and among the different conceptualizations of the term distinguished by Anna Kacperczyk, two in particular are relevant here: the technique of research material collection and the research strategy (Kacperczyk 2014). There are two main reasons for relying on such a methodology. The first derives directly from the object of the study – the mechanisms of interpellation, i.e., institutionalised material practices of influencing subjectivity, inherent in social reproduction mechanisms.

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[1] The Polish-American Freedom Foundation (PAFW) is one of the major NGOs in the region, established in 2000, by the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, based on the Support for East European Democracy Act passed by the US government in November 1989 (Matys 2020: 11–12). The Fund has invested in various projects: „setting up banks and providing loans, was involved in privatisation, awarded scholarships to students and trained people in how to operate in capitalism" (Matys 2020: 17).

[2] In line with the Teachers' Charter (orig. Karta Nauczyciela), to become a teacher, one needs to hold a higher education degree and pedagogical training or complete a special course of study in a specialist teacher training centre. Nowadays, people joining the profession usually pursue a specialist pedagogical program as part of their course of study or, following their graduation, they enrol in an additional (paid) course (often online). There is a fairly widespread opinion, also among teachers, about a negative selection among education professionals, due to low salaries, sub-standard working conditions and the associated low standards of specialisation or courses.

[3] It fits with the analytical tradition, thus fulfilling all of Anderson's requirements for analytic autoethnography texts: the researcher is a full participant in the group or milieu under study, appears as a member of the group under study in the texts he or she publishes, and engages in developing theoretical explanations of wider social phenomena (Anderson 2006).

The autoethnographic methodology – applied within an institution that is integrated into the system, that feeds the system with cadres it has formed and runs a highly popular training programmes – makes it possible to capture and describe even relatively minor, subtle links within the overall mechanism of such interpellation. The second reason stems from the 'field' itself. In the course of the educational process at the SE, autobiographical writing methods, broadly defined, were frequently used in teaching. At various times we were encouraged – or explicitly required to complete a given module – to produce autobiographical records of varying lengths, summarising changes in our professional practice and thinking. We were also encouraged to produce records of our observations made during our placements at schools during classes taught by other people. In addition, we regularly trained in formulating and receiving written and oral feedback, which also encouraged textualization of our reflections. Due to above circumstances, while I embarked on writing up this article, I was not faced with the challenge (and a methodological conundrum) of a *post factum* textualization of my experience, but instead had at my disposal a sizable body of written records – including autobiographical ones – which were produced during the period under study.

The most important premise of this ethnography – stemming directly from the design of the didactic process at SE, focused radically on practice rather than theory (cf. e.g. footnote 21)[4] – is to treat the totality of the material teaching practices to which we have been subjected as teacher-adepts as a kind of 'laboratory' of interpellation. The premise is legitimised both quantitatively (the unusual number of compulsory – and enforced – hours of observation, teaching or co-teaching in primary and secondary schools) and qualitatively (practical orientation of most of the theoretical courses, application of the introduced didactic methods to teacher-adepts, and the subsequent requirement to reflect upon them and put them into practice, each time culminating in some form of evaluation)[5]. Critical reflection on the content and form of the interpellation schema 'read' from the totality of these material teaching practices – and reflection on the attitude towards its image as established in the relevant literature – is the main goal of this text.

In the interpretative part, I take into account selected studies – theoretical and empirical – focusing on the politicisation of education (e.g. Potulicka, Rutkowiak 2010; Sadura 2017) and sociological studies on the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism in global (Boltanski, Chiapello 2007), national and regional contexts (Gardawski, ed., 2009).

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[4] On the complex relationship between theory and practice in teaching see, for example (Ilyenkov 1974).

[5] Obviously, one should not be too hasty to conclude that there was no theory behind all the practical work at SE. It is, in fact, a diverse corpus of theories unevenly present in the curriculum of various courses, consisting especially of American constructivism in educational theory and psychology (here, among others, the 'Americanised' work by Vygotsky), ideas of *cooperative learning*, the Free School Movement, etc. I respect the Althusser's assumption (here and throughout the text) that ideas are embedded in specific practices and do not exist outside of them – in other words, an ideology always exists within an apparatus (cf. Montag 1995; Janik 2008: 66–67). Cf. also footnote 53.

2.1. General characteristics of studying at SE
in 2020/2021 academic year

The SE is located on the first floor of the University of Warsaw's Centre for New Technologies (CENT) within the Ochota Campus in Warsaw. We met there on weekdays between 12 and 6 p.m., and 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. we had practical classes.[6] Some classes were held outside, periodically (for about six months) some of the courses were delivered online, but the goal was to meet in person as often as possible. Staff and student space was shared, we only had separate kitchens, but there were times when students used the staff kitchen and vice versa. The 'commonality' of space was enhanced by the architecture of the part of the building used by the SE – the space, although divided into separate rooms (lecture theatres, seminar rooms, administration and management staff offices), was mostly glass-panelled, which encouraged its perception as a single 'space' imposing corporate associations with 'open space' offices. The largest lecture theatre was an exception – known as the 'tomb,' it was separated from the main part of the SE space, devoid of windows, and intended for use for lectures delivered to the entire batch of students enrolled in specific year of study (around 40 people).

Decreasing the distance separating staff and students took place not only within the physical space of the SE building but also in communication. From the very first days, it was established that we all addressed each other informally.[7] This was unambiguously welcomed by the majority of students, although discussions arose about the appropriateness of this type of practice for school pupils and here, the opinions were divided.[8] In general, the tutors in their comportment and communication, on various, including non-verbal, planes, sought to shorten the distance, build a peer-based, collegial atmosphere and remove barriers between staff and trainees. Most student activities were subject to one of three types of evaluation – self-evaluation,[9] peer review[10] or an evaluation by the tutor (mentor from the school where we had placements, a tutor from the SE or another staff member). We were also introduced to the basics of teacher

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[6] Here is a framework schedule of courses at SE: https://szkolaedukacji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/ramowy-rozklad-zajec.pdf; an example of detailed schedule of classes: https://szkolaedukacji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Przykladowy-szczegolowy-plan-zajec.pdf; and an exemplary set of syllabuses: https://szkolaedukacji.pl/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/sylabusy_2022-2023docx.pdf (Szkoła Edukacji 2023a–d).

[7] The practice did not apply to some senior administrative and academic staff members.

[8] One student, for example, defended the position that he was generally opposed to the practice of shortening the distance in relationships with pupils, because it was misleading: it suggested that the relationship is based on partnership and equality, when in fact it was part of a highly hierarchical environment in which even relatively harmless conflict tends to highlight clear divisions between those who have power and those who are subjected to it.

[9] This was done, for example, through the 'self-reflection' written at the end of the first semester, which included a compulsory self-assessment based on a numerical scale in a selected area included in the Teacher Development Standards (orig. Nauczycielskie Standardy Rozwoju, NSR) and then identifying an area for improvement.

[10] It was dubbed: „Two stars and a wish", i.e., two positive things noticed and one that should be improved.

supervision – in a strict and unorthodox sense.[11] We drew lots for the placement school, the tutor(s) (from among the staff), met the placement partner (another student) and the mentor(s) (a tutor working at the placement school). Once every fortnight each of us had consultation session with our tutor, focusing on our individual needs. Based on the information received from the staff, students knew that our tutors were also constantly supervised.

Following the so-called 'zero' camp held in August 2020 in Łochów, we were a well-organised and cooperative group, which, it seems, was a prerequisite for education in the spirit of an 'open door' idea. The first two months were marked by a fairly widespread enthusiasm among the students, probably related to the fresh start, a lot of novelties (newly met students, staff, tutors, placement school, partner from the same placement school, mentors, for some students – moving to another city). By November and afterwards, informal student conversations were dominated by grumbling about 'not having time to do things,' 'being overworked,' given the large number and intensity of classes, the redundancy in the content of individual courses pointed out by the students, and finally by their impatience and anger[12]. There was talk about uncertainty of 'bearing' the burden of studying and the possibility of not graduating, students looked for information on the obligation to pay back the scholarship they had been awarded in case they failed to graduate.

Over time, especially in spring 2021, these feelings and observations began to be explicitly articulated in selected courses (facilitated by the creation of a safe, 'inclusive' atmosphere in which 'we can tell each other everything' and the systematic encouragement to express our emotional states related to a particular technique or 'stage'), which can be interpreted as the student group testing some of the 'rules' as applied at the SE (for example, the principle of pluralism). Contradictions were also sometimes pointed out in messages and recommendations formulated by the staff during different courses (for example, a discrepancy between the recommended general self-care, and taking care of our wellbeing, that we should design lessons that are 'good enough' and not – every single time – 'the best,' and the constant control or the pressure to improve the lessons we designed).[13] This has sometimes led to paradoxical situations, where during

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[11] In brief, it consisted of bringing teachers together, revealing ('putting on the table') the biggest problems currently faced by all the people gathered, then jointly selecting one problem to be addressed. The person whose problem had been selected specified what kind of advice he or she needed, filled in the relevant contextual information, after which everyone – based on their best intentions and as impartially as possible – commented on the problem. At a later stage, more lively and less structured interactions between participants were also possible.
In the unorthodox version, it was simply a discussion focusing on problems arising in the placement schools.

[12] An additional, non-negligible aggravating factor was the transition of most schools to on-line teaching.

[13] One of the tutors, at the time we widely shared the sense of being overworked and when it became a topic of our discussion, referred to her personal experience, encouraging us to be more attentive to our own needs and the signals our body 'sends' us: "Sometimes all it takes is a small thing, a small pleasure that we put off every day 'for later, 'for an eternal 'never'.

courses focusing on the development of our educational and management skills, we would have spent most of the time talking about us, as a group, being over-worked, exhausted and that therefore needing to learn to 'let go,' while at same time not skipping the classes, or staying on until the end of the regular scheduled time, be involved in activities of 'confessing,' 'deliberating,' clarifying the right attitude towards the issue which, it was tacitly assumed, would be a constant part of our professional life.[14]

However, it seems that, despite the growing irritation resulting from general overworking (mitigated e.g., by the techniques provided to us by staff [15]) has indeed succeeded in creating a positive, trusting atmosphere, encouraging people to reveal all sorts of reflections about themselves, their pupils, their past and present life and work situations, as well as sometimes challenging situations taking place in placement schools, etc.[16] This was an important element of the holistic teaching process at the SE, and it also seems to have been highly valued by the students in general, due to the nature of the profession, in which teachers' emotional 'resources' – i.e. their capacity for empathy, reflexivity, ability to listen, create space to speak for others and identify others' emotional states – are as important as their knowledge and teaching skills.

Something you can easily do for yourself. Take a long bath, for example. And I tell you, do it for yourself, now. Don't put it off. You need it here and now. Fill the tub with water, just as you like it, light some scented candles. And that's it. It can provide so much. I urge you, do something like that for yourself." To the ears of the audience – a number of students living in a dormitory with a communal bathroom featuring five open showers in a row, available to all the residents of a given floor – this exhortation sounded unequivocally grotesque. In addition to the humorous element, these kinds of interactions formed the basis for the bottom-up construction of a distance from, or even resistance to, certain practices, recommendations or the specific language in which they were formulated (cf. footnote 26).

[14] Such situations were the subject of numerous jokes and resulted in the emergence of a kind of comical/tragic 'black humour' among the student group. We constantly applied parody to the absurdly deformed and objectifying corporate language sometimes used by our tutors, for example using Polonized English expressions: "Dear all, I would like you to smarten up [orig. *wysmartowali*] your goals today!" Interestingly, in most of such interventions I noted, the staff members 'caught themselves' doing these 'lapses,' making utterances that had 'inadverten-tly slipped out,' and immediately corrected themselves or made such expressions the subject of mitigating thematization.

[15] A good example of a bodywork technique was the workshop on breathing (online) and dealing with stress-related tensions. Since by that time I had developed a tendency to clench my jaw, I was happy to internalise the new technique of skilfully unclenching it by doing a self-massage.

[16] I allow myself this kind of phenomenological description claiming (limited) intersubjectivity because 'atmosphere' seems to be an important category to describe the SE social world (it appears regularly in the statements of SE community members). Similar sentiments were also shared with me by other SE students, who studied there later, which would indicate the relative persistence or repeatability of this phenomenon.

2.2. „All change begins with a teacher"[17]: an autoethnography of becoming a teaching professional

I made the decision to enroll at the SE in the summer of 2020. Before that, I had not seriously considered such a career path, but the circumstances under which I was making this decision led me to do so. At the beginning of March 2020, I returned from a scholarship I did abroad. With the scholarship expiring, I planned to support myself, at least for a while, as I had before, i.e. doing proofreading and editing jobs. A few days after my return, the pandemic was officially announced followed by a lockdown. Everything came to a standstill, so did the work of publishing houses, and as a result, my commissions stopped.[18] My partner at the time was unemployed. We were living on savings that were dwindling and then using loans from relatives and friends. It was under these circumstances that I found out about enrolment opportunities at the SE, which also offered student scholarships amounting to two thousand Polish zloty per month[19] and accommodation in the student dorm. With the prolonged lockdown, I decided I had no other choice but to apply to the SE to train as a teacher of Polish language and literature. I managed to secure a place, without any major obstacles.

2.2.1. Adaptation

I had mixed feelings on my first contact with the SE community. It was an almost week-long camp in Łochów, with a programme packed with activities from morning to evening. As we were told later, this first segment was deliberately introduced into the study structure (even before the actual start of the year) in order to show 'in a nutshell' what studying at the SE involved, so that people could opt out 'in advance'. Indeed, many people commented on the number and the intensity of classes, not having much energy left to socialize at the end of the day, being forced to prepare and recuperate before the next day. In the end, however, most stayed on to study at the SE. I hesitated, but due to my life and material situation, the matter was already decided. The second striking feature of the classes was their team-oriented character – a very large proportion of the tasks and activities forced us to work together, to solve problems together or to find solutions.[20] This

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[17] One of the SE advertising slogans.

[18] My experiences during this period broadly correspond to the experiences of precarious workers as captured in research on the work environment in the context of Covid-19 (Gardawski et al. 2022: 177).

[19] It turned out to be paid as a donation, taxed on the recipient side, which made its real monthly value around PLN 1700.

[20] This, at times, for myself, was difficult to bear and I would leave the gathering for a few minutes to 'catch my breath'. Interestingly, I noted that a few more people were 'coping' with the situation in a similar way. One evening, when I went to a local pub to have a beer and some 'breathing space' I met people from the SE. They were people who already had a lot of work experience but had taken a year off to study. Both experienced teachers unanimously agreed that

fulfilled two purposes – integration and socialising. We were socialised into the basic SE educational methods, namely methods based on group work. This is related to the third didactic premise that was first presented to us at the camp and which was repeatedly emphasized later on: the idea was that we as trainee teachers in our classes should think not only about *what* the subject matter of the course is, but also – or perhaps especially – about *how* the content we are taught in the SE is given. The *how* is part of the teacher's workshop, and our SE instructors did not wish to teach us their methods extensively, but in an embodied way, so that we had a 'first-hand' experience of how the method works in a group in which we are the learners (i.e. pupils), and so that it could 'become a habit'.[21]

I moved in the dormitory called Żwirek (where half of the students were staying), which is located 300 metres away from the building where we had our classes (the CENT building was visible from my room window). It helped the final integration of our group. In the first semester I was sent for a placement to one of the public elementary schools in the Ursynów district in Warsaw, and in the second semester – to an elite public high school in the central Śródmieście district. I had a good rapport with my tutor, and naturally she became one of the first people – apart from my peers – with whom I regularly shared my thoughts on various elements of studying at SE. The issue of the 'great turmoil [*smuta*]' following the failed teachers' general strike back in 2019 and the absence of this subject at SE quickly became salient.[22] Based on these recognitions, we decided to organise a meeting with representatives of the various trade unions.[23] In order

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what was going on here was 'pure madness,' 'a strain for their nerves,' and seriously discussed whether they would be able to 'survive' in that environment.

[21] There are three levels of how teaching methods are taught at the SE:
1. Extensively (*someone talking about the method X, explaining it and how to apply it, etc*);
2. Formally (*someone uses the method 'on the students,' students are cast in the role of pupils, we are the method's 'objects'*);
3. Through internalisation (*I – in the role of a trainee teacher – use a given method at school during classes I lead or during mock classes as part of the practical and theoretical modules at the SE*).

Example: theoretical classes for the Polish language teaching pathway devoted to self-narratives (analysis of texts by Jerzy Trzebiński), the next step involving the introduction of a 'writer's notebook,' writing original texts and reading them out loud during the classes, the last step being the implementation of writing workshops based on 'writer's notebooks' in our placement schools (with an occasional visit from our tutor). A frequent element of the second (intermediate) stage is the practice of a 'frozen frame,' i.e. the tutor would suddenly stop the whole group didactic process (usually at a key moment) and immediately require that the participants provide a protocol description of the sequence that had just happened, by asking "What happened just now?" In case there are any problems with constructing an adequate description, the tutor would ask follow-up questions: "What did you just do? What helped you to understand? What prevented you from understanding?". These moments best correspond to the ever-present, methodical element (*how*?) included in most teaching practices at the SE.

[22] As the authors of the study *Working Poles during Covid-19* write: "In the focus groups conducted with teachers, there is a noticeable impact of the experience of the failed 2019 strike, in which some of the respondents took part, and all the respondents had heard about it and at least observed the events" (Gardawski et al. 2022: 88).

[23] We had wanted to devote it to the recent strike and the lessons learned, but the consultation showed that the knowledge of basic union topics among trainee teachers was so limited that we needed to focus the meeting on what trade unions are, which ones operate in the education

to strengthen our position, I rallied support for this initiative (all students sup-ported it) and sent a letter to the management. We got approval and a meeting was held at the end of October.[24]

In addition to the practical issues, a large part of our consultation sessions concerned, on the one hand, systemic issues related to education (the logic and consequences of successive reforms, exam standardisation, interpretation of recurrent research into education, etc.), and on the other hand, my doubts about the educational model at the SE. With the sense of trust that quite quickly devel-oped between us (a derivative of general atmosphere among students and staff), I shared freely my observations on the radical psychologization of language at SE, the "corporate" approach to school, the huge quantitative disproportion between classes focused on psychology and those oriented towards sociology or anthropology, and the ways in which the latter were conducted, which most often resulted in relativisation of the mostly unambiguous conclusions of the social studies being discussed.[25]

After a while, there was another tendency that became apparent, and which continued until graduation. There formed two groups of students, with somewhat fuzzy group boundaries, the first expressing a general acceptance, if not a 'pro-gressive' affirmation, of the methods, techniques and values instilled in the trainee teachers at SE, and the second expressing scepticism, distance and criticism, in many ways, and far more often in informal situations than in official ones ('admitting' on felt that way when one 'could').[26]

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sector, etc. We had planned to organise another meeting focused on the recent strike, but in the end, it did not happen.

[24] Representatives of the Polish Teachers' Union (Związek Nauczycielstwa Polskiego), Workers' Initiative (Inicjatywa Pracownicza) and Solidarity (Solidarność) attended the (online) meeting. Most students and a few employees were present. There was not enough time to answer all the questions, we forwarded them to the panellists who answered in writing.

[25] A good example is the way in which Bourdieu's concept of the reproduction of class differences by the school system and Przemysław Sadura's Polish empirical research inspired by it were discussed. In both cases, students were given space to subjectivise their research conclusions ("And you, what do you think, is this really the case or not?"; "What does your experience suggest?"; "Do you agree with this?") and the students' answers were fully accepted, despite the fact that it was clear that the students did not accept the research findings, avoided confronting them or completely distorted their meaning (there were, for example, statements that a person is keen on adopting individual approach to a student, and that it is irrelevant "what background he or she has", "where he or she is from", or that it is possible to "do a good job" at any school, i.e. completely at odds with the "structural" conclusions of sociological research, the tutors did not correct these statements in any way, in fact, I sometimes had the impression that they were enthusiastic about what was said).

[26] It seems that the former attitude was more popular among people coming from or having lived in Warsaw for a long time (probably members of the middle class), whose school and academic careers were associated with 'good' schools (public schools with high selection thresholds or private ones) and leading university centres in the country, while the latter attitude prevailed among people coming from rural areas and smaller towns, whose school careers, at least for a cer-tain period, were associated with, as they themselves said, 'ordinary' schools, public and district ones. This is mere speculation and one of many possible interpretations of the observed trend.

The most common arguments provided by the second group were that in the realities of an 'ordinary' school, i.e. with large classes of more than 30 pupils, most of the directives and recommendations instilled in us cannot be applied; that SE 'agenda' is addressed to a specific group of pupils, teachers, schools, but cannot be universally applied. Secondly, people argued that many of the ways of doing things make sense insofar as they are a team-implemented programme, consciously implemented by the staff or at least a large part of it, but that they become meaningless when implemented by a single teacher.[27]

Because of the general atmosphere of safety, trust and cooperation, in the following months, I also allowed myself to bring my scepticism – from the level of informal conversations with students (during lunch breaks, over a cigarette, in the dormitory, etc.) and individual consultations with instructors – to the official level.[28] Reactions were varied, but after a while some of our tutors not only changed their sceptical attitude towards this kind of perspective, but I was also assured, in informal exchanges, that in the years to come, it was planned to introduce workshops on trade union-related topics to be held on a regular basis. There were also plans to make a film providing relevant information.

2.2.2. Wellbeing instead of well-to-do

In order to translate the observed increasing level of fatigue and overworking into a topic of discussion, together with two other students, we conducted a survey among all trainee teachers. The results, which were presented to the SE, clearly indicated that most people worked more than eight hours a day, a large number also worked at weekends, and also a substantial number suffered from a whole range of mental and physical ramifications, which in the long term, could lead to professional burnout. We pointed out a fundamental contradiction that underpinned socialisation of trainee-teachers: on the one hand, we were advised to take care comprehensively of our own individual well-being, while on the other hand, we were forced to work beyond the traditional labour standard (40 hours

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[27] Some of the content of these informal 'criticisms' formulated in unofficial conversations made their way to the official level and received some responses from the SE staff. A good synthesis of the latter is provided by Aleksander Pawlicki's public statements concerning a "discrete revolution" that, in his opinion, is taking place due to the actions of SE-trained teachers being introduced into the 'bloodstream' of the Polish educational system.

[28] I would include, in particular, activities such as: writing a dissertation (topic of own choice): Is SE a neoliberal institution?, carrying out (together with two other people) a survey among students about the amount of work at the SE and the symptoms of excessive pressure, and then presenting the findings, a portfolio and a final essay investigating the question – Who will educate an educator? – and finally, discussing the nature of the network of schools cooperating with the SE (private or community schools, public schools with high selection thresholds or public schools located in the parts of the city where they are only attended by middle class children; lack of vocational schools) to highlight the process whereby trainee teachers undergoing high-quality training are 'pulled' by such 'good' schools.

a week), which was tacitly accepted and at times even encouraged.[29] Summarising the results of the survey, we identified four structural risks leading to burnout and suggested some mitigation measures.[30]

Graduation at SE involved a three-day official event, during which each trainee teacher gave a 15-minute speech presenting their 'journey' within SE. Who were we when we started our programme? Who are we now, when we are graduating? What has happened along the way? How have we developed? What has been difficult? What am I grateful for? The answer to these kinds of questions structured student statements and over the 10 months of study we were regularly reminded of this 'grand finale', its importance was stressed, and so was the fact that we were expected to tell the assembled 'SE community' (students, their relatives and families, staff, sponsors and alumni) how we had developed over the year.

Seeing the clear pre-forming of participants' statements verging on enforcing bias,[31] I have chosen to give a more balanced speech, focusing on my development as a teacher in terms of my skills, and on my 'critical' development, i.e., the evolution of my own thinking about education as political. I have deliberately limited talking about myself and the profession in terms of a 'vocation'.[32]

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[29] At an early stage, when we started to officially articulate our difficulties, the faculty members were vocal about their "American experience": during their training in the US, they observed an even greater "pressure" put on students. They stressed that the programme there lasts two years, the average number of working hours per day is higher than in Poland, etc. It was argued that we should not complain, because our workload is not as bad. In addition, the staff praised the 'work ethos' in the US and pointed out deficits in motivation among Polish teachers.

[30] Threats included: 1) economic factors (low wages); 2) the vocational (missionary) aspect of the profession; 3) the creative component of the profession; 4) weakness of trade unions. We identified as potential remedies: 1) union activity at the workplace and/or national level; 2) establishment of material cooperatives' 3) teacher supervision.

[31] Among students, people were voicing an opinion that we were, in fact, expected to praise the SE.

[32] I based my speech (titled *What will educate an educator?*) on a statement by Małgorzata Jacyno: "there has been an unprecedented homogenisation of the issue of biological survival with the problem of meeting certain moral standards. French sociologists have already written much about how economic inequality is experienced. It turns out that people can talk about sex, depression, family, relationships, while they cannot talk about economic inequality. – It is too intimate. How much do I earn? What I make of it? What do I worry about? Why does it drive me crazy, why am I not sleeping and have to take medication, why do I hate myself sometimes? And there is a lot of research that shows that these three public policy institutions – housing, health care and education – granted the people of Europe the comfort of being civilised. If public services are in decline, then something starts to go wrong in the very basic fabric of society." In my speech, I talked about who I was when I entered the SE (a precarious worker stripped of odd jobs by the pandemic), what was the primary motivation for going to university (having a roof over my head, the monthly scholarship payment) and who I was becoming (a professionally trained precarious worker looking for jobs and a roof over my head). Using the 'safe space' atmosphere systematically generated in the SE – I wished to highlight, using my own example, how the proposed vision of 'professionalisation' – with all its valuable skill elements – is compatible with the existing structure of exploitation, and can even, according to certain interpretations, support it (both offering a whole range of techniques for individual coping, and promoting a "community of self-development", while pushing to the margin the actions oriented towards collective efforts to improve the situation). See *Czy ta, czy inna partia – my już zostaniemy państwem*

In line with the convention, there followed three questions from the audience gathered in the auditorium of the CENT building. After my speech, one of the SE's top executives took the floor and pointed out that my speech was missing the point and faulty, that I had crossed the line and that I had not been asked to make this kind of comment. When I declared my wish to respond and clarify the matter, the person prevented me from doing so. Two later 'voices' from the audience (a female student and a tutor) – I cannot reproduce their content – were conciliatory regarding the first comment. In the course of the exchange between myself and the senior staff member, one of the SE staff members came up to the camera that was in front of me and switched off the transmission (meant for those attending online).[33]

My speech brought the day's proceedings to a close. Before the audience dispersed, the same SE executive took the floor again and speaking from the podium, asked that the next contributions, due to be delivered the following day, have more merit.[34] I was surrounded by a group of students who declared solidarity with me and criticised the incident. Two members of staff invited me to the SE headquarters, and we had a conversation lasting several minutes, in which they stressed that "I had done nothing wrong", that the attack on me was unjustified and that I had the right to feel angry and worried. They also asked about my plans.[35]

When I left the SE premises, the lobby was still packed with formally dressed attendees of the event, and students kept coming up to me and animatedly discussed the incident, declaring their support. Two members of staff behaved in a similar way. They asked to have a word with me, and then begun by nervously complimenting my speech, to later explain that the attitude of the executive was due to the presence of American sponsors. The vast majority, however, avoided me, to the point of purposefully looking away.[36]

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półperyferyjnym z beznadziejnymi szkołami i szpitalami (with Małgorzata Jacyno interviewed by Grzegorz Sroczyński [2019]).

[33] I have received numerous messages from concerned members of staff and students who were not present and who asked me to explain what happened.

[34] This was interpreted by some people as a warning.

[35] The whole situation came as a huge surprise to me and caused me a great deal of stress. As I was informed by members of staff and students that the broadcast of the speech had been censored, I considered reporting the incident to university authorities or independent student organisations. I proceeded with a speedy consultation on the matter, but I gave up, fearing further consequences and, above all, due to the fact that at the time I was planning to continue my education at the University of Warsaw and apply for another scholarship from the same source (PAFF). I was physically and mentally exhausted, moving out, the scholarship ended in May, so I had to urgently look for a job and simply did not have the energy to put up a fight.

[36] Similar behaviour occurred during the following day, which was brought to my attention by others. It was an emotionally difficult experience, because until the incident I had a good rapport with many staff members (I felt part of the SE community), I would even be inclined to describe this rapport as 'close,' which resulted from the organisational politics and group management (cf. section 2.1.). Now, I had to fight against a persistently recurring sense of guilt, a conviction that I had 'spoiled the atmosphere,' 'abused trust,' etc. I also harboured a well-founded belief that the incident definitely did not make it any easier for my peers to speak the next day. Although, on an intellectual level, I had no doubts as to the rationality and legitimacy of my own perspective (although the incident prompted me to thoroughly analyse whether I had

The atmosphere during the final day of the event was 'grim'. A board member called on us to foster 'good' atmosphere and informed us that there would be a special non-compulsory meeting the following day to clarify 'a certain situation'. Interestingly enough, one of the speakers that day, in their intervention commented extensively on the structural conditioning of the teaching profession contributing to the risk of professional burnout. After the meeting, she was reprimanded by a member of staff, who said that it was "not the time or place" for such statements. This incident, like the previous one, was also vividly commented on by the student group, who expressed solidarity with the speaker.[37]

2.2.3. Psychological intervention

Despite my doubts, I attended the announced 'special' meeting for those interested in clarifying 'the whole situation,' explaining to myself, that it was about 'taking responsibility' for a situation of which – in a sense – I am the 'perpetrator'. The meeting was chaired by a member of the board (the same one who hoped for restoration of a 'good' atmosphere, and who was not present during my speech), a dozen people came, as well as the executive staff member. We sat in a circle. The chairperson started the meeting by encouraging participants to share their emotions, their feelings about the 'whole situation', which for all of us – the community that we are – came as a shock. She encouraged people to open up and share even the 'difficult emotions' that 'we all have within us'. It indeed happened and more people spoke up. Most of them expressed genuine concern, and a recurring theme was the gap between what they had hitherto thought of the place (that it was communal, safe, inclusive, etc.) and what it had turned out to be (disciplining, punitive, hierarchical). After several dozen minutes, the executive sitting in the circle finally spoke. At the outset, the person stipulated that they would now talk about how they feel and then proceeded to describe 'their perspective'. We learned that they felt like a mother whose children were being attacked and had to immediately stand up, shield them with their own chest; that they felt that someone was doing symbolic violence (*sic!*) to the institution they manage and so they had to stop it, giving little thought to how their words might sound.

Of course, I was the last person to speak. Following the intervention of the senior executive, I felt it was time for me to take the floor. I said, among other things, that although the person in a position of authority hides behind 'talking about their emotions,' I would take their statement as still having objectifiable content; that it was absurd to talk about 'symbolic violence' of an individual against an institution.

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inadvertently personally 'offended' someone, etc.), on an affective level, I had to 'deal' with this kind of looming emotion both during these events and for some time afterwards.

[37] Expressions of solidarity were limited to the unofficial talk, the student group took no other action.

Finally, I addressed the content of the attack and asked for a substantive polemic or retraction of those words.

Following these two interventions there was another round of statements by students, sometimes very long and emotional. After an hour and a half, it seemed that people had 'talked it over', the tension began to subside and we felt the meeting was about to end. The senior executive expressed their 'ritualistic' apology, the meeting ended and we left the building. I stood with a few more people and we talked about the event. There was a feeling of relief, that it was now over. I felt a whole lot of contradictory feelings that I did not know how to name. With every passing moment, I felt increasingly manipulated and used to protect the image of the institution. It persisted long after I graduated from SE.

3.1. „The famous new methods!": the content and form of the post-Fordist interpellation schema

In his classic text *Ideology and ideological state apparatus: Notes towards an investigation* (1971; orig. 1970), Louis Althusser considers the influence of the modern school as exemplary of how the administrative-state apparatus *interpellates* the individual to adopt subjectivity desired by the system. The picture of school that emerges from the essay, as well as the type, scope and strength of its impact on the individual, clearly correspond with what in Poland is dubbed the 'Prussian model' of education, still in force as the default option in most public schools in the country.[38] The text by the French philosopher may to this day present the paradigmatic description of school interpellation under the conditions of the Fordist regime of production.[39]

There is no single, universally shared characterisation of the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism in Poland. We know that the late 1980s saw the beginning of the transition from the model of socialist Fordism (with large state-owned enterprises, the primacy of heavy and raw material industries, and high concentration of the working class) to a 'liberated' market economy 'without adjectives' (Gardawski, ed., 2009: 61–62). Some researchers point out that the process of adapting and transforming the Polish economy in line with the principles of post-Fordism began immediately after (cf. e.g. Dunn 2004). On the other hand, many years of research on the social structure and class divisions in Poland allow us to assume that "the Polish society was still a Fordist society in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, it had not crossed the barrier separating industrialism from post-industrialism, Fordism from post-Fordism" and only

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[38] Its basic characteristics are: sitting in desks facing the blackboard, keeping one's eyes on the teacher who is always at the centre, raising one's hand before speaking and waiting for the teacher's permission, leaving and entering the room with the teacher's permission, the beginning and conclusion of the class signalled by a bell ringing, etc.

[39] I adopt the framework concept developed by Althusser and his continuators (Poulantzas 1985): the school as a source of interpellation schemes; the school as an institution of social reproduction and its correlated forms of subjectivity; the dependence of the school, deterministic in nature, on the sphere of production.

"with the entry to the European Union the time of Fordism came to an end" (Gardawski, ed., 2009: 91).

As the researchers of the politics of education point out, the economic transformation of the country and the whole region also spelled specific transformation programmes for education.[40] The rapid processes of de- and (partial) reindustrialisation were accompanied by the material and ideological degradation of the vocational education system[41] and transition towards general higher education, as well as a rapid growth of the private higher education sector (especially related to law, marketing, economics and management).[42] All this leads the researchers to conclude that it is possible to speak of the existence of an 'educational programme of corporate economics' in Poland, which, in their view, is characterised, inter alia, by the predominance of information over understanding and interpretation, the emphasis on external testing, on the role of competition and rivalry in development, and on rewarding efficiency and bureaucratic rationality (Potulicka, Rutkowiak 2010: 23–27). In general, the projected – and promoted – model of pupil performance is marked the *self-made-man* figure. Other scholars – focusing on the reproduction of class differences by the Polish school system – draw attention to the growth of the private tutoring sector and the link between this fact and e.g. peer relations (Sadura 2017).

Against this background, characterisation of the pattern of interpellation promoted by SE that emerges in the proposed approach is quite distinct. Based on the present ethnography, a holistic reflection on the educational process at the School of Education and critical reflection on the sociogenesis of the institution – and following the premise of testing interpellation schemes on oneself (cf. section 1 and footnote 21) – I distinguish five main pillars of the mode of interpellation, indicating to which specific requirements of post-Fordism they respond. These include, respectively: contract work, group work, management through objectives and projects, supervision, psychological intervention.

Contract work proposes a radical 'ownership' of the educational process by the learner and their full involvement in the production of rules governing coexistence, with the intended consequence of increased involvement in teaching processes as such. It responds to the need for democratisation and participation, whose historical emergence social scientists link to the crisis of Fordism and the demands formulated against it by 'artist critique' (Boltanski, Chiapello 2007). Placing contractual regulation at the centre of coexistence is also fundamentally consistent with the typical characteristics of the function of 'contractual relations' in the neoliberal system (Harvey 2005). Formal equality and initial participation

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[40] In 1992, the World Bank produced a report on desirable directions for the transformation of Polish education; in 1999, an education summit organized by IBM called for reforms that directly responded to corporate expectations (Potulicka, Rutkowiak 2010: 63–65).

[41] Analogous phenomena have occurred in Western countries, for example in France (see Beaud, Pialoux 1999; cf. also Woliński 2022).

[42] The Polish-American Enterprise Fund was also involved in its promotion and expansion process (cf. Matys 2020: 153–154).

and commitment (often superficial), make it impossible to evade prevailing norms and rules, and ruin many of the basic ways of contesting the school system.[43]

Radical reliance on group work – perhaps the most widespread and default technique in SE (to the point it was sometimes transparent to community members) – presents both a challenge in terms of diversity of characters and personalities (inclusion and benefiting from the 'resources' of people with introverted, solitary tendencies, etc.), and fits perfectly with all recommendations of social 'inclusion,' 'leveling the playing field,' etc. The technique – in practice, based on initial supervision of 'implementation', i.e. making sure all students in each group speak, join in, etc. – addresses the need to optimize efforts, participation and flexibility. Based on the logic of gradual intensification of social exposure, it effectively achieves greater participation and commitment to the goals set for the teams.[44] Just like in the case of the first technique, it radically impedes any gestures of refusal, contestation, evasion, and forbids escapist or melancholic attitudes. Its key element – responding to the need for flexibility – is to change the composition of the teams frequently, so that the interpellated pupils do not "get used to it", remain on their toes, but also have no opportunity to form tactical alliances and the resistance infrastructure reduced to bare minimum (cf. Barszczewski 2016: 81).

Another element, i.e. goal and project oriented management, perhaps the least represented in ethnography, is also an important element of the SE interpellation scheme. A very common procedure in the courses, one that we were also expected to use during our placements in schools, was to inform the students (preferably writing it on the blackboard) about the goal of a given day's session and the specific skill or competence they would develop or strengthen.[45] It is also a way to address the need for democratization and 'informed participation'. On the other hand, diverse projects constitute an opportunity to express 'authenticity', 'diversity', 'creativity', and, above all else, to highlight the 'path' followed in the educational process. They are both an intersection of collectivist and individualist methods of interpellation. 'Projects', by definition, are limited in time and space, and require the ability to cooperate and flexibly adapt to changing conditions.

On the surface, teacher supervision may seem like something reserved exclusively for 'new trainee-teacher forming methods'. It is meant to act as a regulator of tensions and 'difficult emotions' that employees experience in connection with their work.[46] It is also supposed to be a source of practical solutions to these

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[43] According to observations and consultations with people who 'work with the contract', very often the teacher may – consciously or unconsciously taking advantage of their stronger position within the school system – introduce the elements required to ensure they can exercise effective authority into these contracts, and do so on their own or 'using' their pupils.

[44] Many students reported that the method proved effective during classes in schools.

[45] It was part of a broader teaching strategy called 'formative assessment'. For more details, see (in Polish): https://sus.ceo.org.pl/ocenianie-ksztaltujace/ocenianie-ksztaltujace-2/ (CEO 2024).

[46] „For several decades, public policies have been geared not toward systemic action, writes Małgorzata Jacyno, but toward regulating the mood of public opinion, prescribing and modeling various 'social competencies', that is, ways of being and speaking that euphemize the sense

problems.[47] It remains unclear whether, in case of 'difficult emotions' caused by structural professional circumstances (salary issues, promotion issues, 'over-working' or work intensity), supervision could become a space for solving them, and what type of solutions it could formulate and facilitate in practice.

However, generalizing its mechanism of operation, it is clear that systematic encouragement to express one's emotional state, to probe and report one's current state of mind, procedures meant to create 'safe spaces' are inherent in many of the diverse techniques used in SE. The ability to name and communicate one's emotional states – being 'in touch with oneself' – becomes a basic 'competence' on a par with reading and writing[48] (measured e.g. in PISA studies).

I choose to include the last element – the pattern of psychological intervention – even though it is atypical in the course of study in the SE. There are several reasons I do so. First, the event I described retroactively reveals features of the SE's educational ideology and, above all, the way the power is exercised and people are managed. Secondly, it is an extreme case of a tendency I tried to capture in my ethnography – the formation of attitudes of resistance and skepticism towards 'new methods' and attempts to 'integrate' them into the conversation following the principle of pluralism, which has been declaratively adopted in the SE. Without this element, it could be concluded that the main, if not the only, way of exercising power – involving the whole gamut of post-Fordist 'claims', such as participation, horizontality, initiative, creativity, sense of agency, flexibility – relies on distributed power, entirely replacing disciplinary power, characteristic of Fordist management methods. However, the disciplinary power turns out to be inherent, albeit in a latent form, ready to be used in rare situations where, for different reasons, the subjects interpellated in a 'distributed' manner do not act accordingly (Althusser 1971).[49] Thirdly and finally, various types of 'interventions' are an inherent part of any school universe, and therefore the described 'extraordinary' situation fits in fully within the horizon of pedagogical activities[50].

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of desperation, anger, hatred and fear associated with growing competition. After all, civilized citizens should, regardless of what and whether they have a future at all, control their emotions, be able to show empathy and respect to those with whom they are ruthlessly competing, and not get angry if they happen to lose" (Jacyno 2022).

[47] A sample problem to be 'worked through' in supervision: the group identifies some weakness of mine, something that arouses my hard-to-manage shame, fear, disgust, etc. They methodically exploit this disposition of mine, always skillfully balancing the possibility of paying attention and drawing consequences. How to deal with this?

[48] As Katarzyna Waniek pointed out – based on biographical interviews with people born after 1980 – "Preliminary findings show (…) that increasingly a young person's knowledge, including about what constitutes good life and how to shape a good or at least a better life, comes from therapeutic discourses (…) This is accompanied by the narrators' conviction that it is key to achieve deep and sincere relationship with themselves, combined with own autonomy" (Waniek 2023: 33, 46).

[49] This may be similar to the position of a student who claimed that shortening the distance between teachers and students is an ethical and cognitive hypocrisy (see footnote 8).

[50] During psychology-oriented courses, we learned about the patterns of 'small' and 'large' interventions and discussed their simulations.

I have briefly discussed the content of the interpellation scheme, as well as the requirements of the post-Fordist production regime. How to define – at the most general level – the form of this mode of interpellation? It seems that the most important characteristic, and the way this new mode of interpellation operates, is its radical incorporation by the therapeutic culture. The phenomenon confirms earlier diagnoses formulated by researchers, regarding a strong homology with other fields and the enormous symbolic effectiveness of the therapeutic culture's language, its associated practices and the identity based on "expansion of therapeutic culture… with the expansion of the ethos of the new middle class" (Jacyno 2006: 192). The phenomena observed at SE also seem to support the thesis of an emergent therapeutic habitus among the middle classes (Illouz 2010), supported by a specific carrier – or the infrastructure that sustains and models it – which is precisely the school and its associated interpellation patterns[51].

How are we to understand the specific intersection of therapeutic culture and the elements of the corporate habitus in this specific case study? On the one hand, it is related to the mutation of corporate habitus as such (see Szarecki 2017), on the other – it is the effect of the deep Americanization of Polish society, of which the PAFP and the network of organizations remaining in its orbit were an important link. This includes, among others, the Educational Enterprise Foundation, described in the anniversary publication:

> They registered it in May 1991. It was to help train future Polish managers. Over the next decade, it funded 25,000 scholarships for students to learn entrepreneurship. It became the largest non-governmental scholarship-funding organization in Poland (Matys 2020: 147)[52].

Thus, the corporate habitus has always been part of the 'genetic code' of the network of these organizations – first under the banner of the PAFP and then the PAFW. It is simply impossible for the new project – the School of Education – to diverge from its financial and ideological source[53].

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[51] The conclusions formulated here are also supported by the fact that elements of specific psychotherapeutic currents (above all transactional analysis, which is also widely used in business) are present and emphasized in the SE programme.

[52] The source I have used should be approached with great caution, for it has all the characteristics of hagiographic literature, heroizing the "pioneers" of American business in Poland, who, in the transformational phase of primitive accumulation, decided to invest in "high-risk" projects on the periphery of global capitalism (which, of course, had a salutary effect on Polish society and economy). The publication was commissioned by Enterprise Investors, which makes this understandable. However, it seems that at least in the factual layer it remains reliable, which is my rationale for using it.

[53] A separate issue, which I do not address here in a systematic way, is the extent and degree of influence of American educational methodologists on their Polish followers. Taking into account, for example, the syllabus of the course 'Philosophical disputes about education', one can formulate a preliminary conclusion that this influence is considerable and prejudices the hitherto liberal-conservative profiling of the SE. To substantiate this more robustly would require further and somewhat different research. It is worth noting, however, that the SE's substantive partner and co-author of its 'innovative programme' – Columbia Teachers College – serves

The most noteworthy is the reorientation of this version of therapeutic culture to values that are, at least in part, collectivist.[54] So far, researchers of therapeutic culture have agreed that the individual self remains at its center. However, the interpellation scheme reconstructed here clearly orients individuals towards collaboration, awareness of the skills and abilities of others, and one's own adaptability to these (in the specific context of pursuing the imposed 'goals' of course)[55]. It also shows the signs of institutionalization of the 'creativity dispositif' described by Andreas Reckwitz (2017: 234–235).

Global, regional and local transformations of neoliberalism related to circumstances such as the Covid-19 pandemic, recession, the energy crisis and the war in Europe, which cannot be adequately described within the scope of this article, increasingly render obsolete the accepted ways of characterizing this political-economic regime. The present ethnography – grounded within an educational institution of considerable importance, with strong links to the Polish educational system – suggests that in the local context there has been a significant change in the prevailing patterns of school interpellation. On the one hand – in line with the theoretical perspective adopted here – such change appears to be an inevitable consequence of the full adaptation of the Polish economy to the conditions of semi-peripheral post-Fordism and its requirements;

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as the flagship anti-example in the classic work of American economists Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order*. In the section on the American education system, the authors focus on the training of American teachers, reaching the following conclusions: '(…) the curriculum of an aspiring teacher or school administrator is filled with an entire gamut of courses the intellectual vacuity, triviality, and tedium of which are proverbial. Instruction in subject matter cultivates pretentious ignorance (…) And the preoccupation with how to teach pushes all concern with what to teach into the background' (Baran, Sweezy 1966: 326). The authors go on – after referencing a series of quantitative studies indicating that US school employees are one of the least educated groups among the general university-educated population – to point specifically to the 'country's leading school of education' in New York and cite a list of doctoral dissertation topics defended there. They argue that 'The nature and quality of education for educators can be assessed by getting an idea of the basis on which the highest educational degrees are conferred'. They find the very way in which the topics are formulated and their 'subject matter' so meaningful that they only provide a list, deeming any analysis or criticism of them superfluous (Baran, Sweezy 1966: 327).

[54] In the context of the American education in the first decade of the 21st century, Harry Cleaver wrote that the emphasis exerted by individual schools on either group or individual work has fluctuated with changing trends in the management of workplaces. He claimed that when corporate managers use greater techniques such as the 'quality wheel' or 'teamwork', the impact of such innovations can also be found within universities (Cleaver 2004).

[55] Further exploration of this issue seems all the more important – for both research and political reasons – given that the habitual identification of a neoliberal tendency with individualism (contrasted with an emancipatory tendency identified – also habitually – with collectivism) is to some extent apparent even in the agendas of progressive student movements, both Polish and international, fighting against neoliberalism in education. Cf. the manifesto of the international network Universities at War: 'The path of education is designed to favor competition among students, instead of cooperation. Capital benefits from this competition because it gives form to an acceptant subjectivity. A subjectivity incapable not only of simply struggling, but even imagining and desiring a different world and university' (Universities at War 2024) [accessed: 16.09.2024]

on the other – it raises further questions, such as its scope, primarily in terms of class. In view of the historically unprecedented scale of privatization in the education sector,[56] the addressees of the 'new' therapeutic schemes and interpellation techniques might be primarily people having at least middle class backgrounds[57] (which does not mean that the scope of their influence is clearly limited to this sphere). This means that we have, and for an indefinite period of time will have to deal with coexisting, significantly different modes of school interpellation (therapeutic and the factory-like, post-Fordist and Fordist), and thus with a 'mixed' system, corresponding to the noticeable and constantly deepening class segregation within Polish education.[58]

In other words, maintaining that when it comes to affecting human subjectivity, modern neoliberalism primarily forms neoliberal individuals ('Entrepreneur of the Self') understood as self-centered, reflexive, competition-oriented, focused on self-development, etc., seems untenable in the light of empirical experience, and shows signs of a critical stereotype implicitly adopted and rewritten in subsequent studies.[59] The latter keeps evolving (through technological advances, changes in production techniques and modes of management, as well as macro-political events), and so are the ways of reproducing productive forces and the associated ideas and techniques of interpellation. The task of the social sciences and humanities is to perceive and describe these changes in order to be able to counter them effectively.[60]

tłum. Katarzyna Byłów

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[56] Data of the Polish Ministry of Education (see: https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/212) show that in the academic year 2021/2022 every ninth primary school and every fourth secondary school were private. However, these were attended by 'merely' one per twenty (for primary school) and one per ten students (for secondary schools). The calculations by Misza Tomaszewski (cf. also Budzyńska, Tomaszewski 2022). The authors note the fact that, as of 2018, the Ministry is publishing data in a way that makes it difficult to clearly grasp the process of such a 'creeping' privatization).

[57] That is, people who within the social division of labor occupy intermediate, managerial and management positions, related to managing human resources, organization of work, etc.

[58] These two modes of interpellation should be thought of as two 'modalities' permeating different spheres rather than characteristics of spheres that are clearly demarcated (by class or otherwise).

[59] I mean a certain trend. There are interesting attempts to face this problem, for example, in Andreas Reckwitz's work.

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SUMMARY

Therapeutic discourses and practices as neoliberal technology of power:

Auto-ethnographic case study of "Szkoła Edukacji"

The article is situated on the intersection of two genres of ethnographic writing: case study and autoethnography. The object of interest is the Warsaw School of Education, the patterns of interpellation developed and implemented within it (in Althusser's sense), while the starting point of the analysis is the author's year-long study within this institution. The aim of the ethnography is to show how therapeutic discourses

and practices become, within the institutions of social reproduction (schools, universities), a form of power and a tool for conducting neoliberal class policies. The author formulates a hypothesis about the appearance of a new therapeutic interpellation scheme, briefly discusses its content and form, and identifies the demands of the post-Fordist regime of production to which they are a response. Finally, he outlines the possibilities of interpreting the observed transformations as much in the perspective of the full adaptation of the Polish semi-peripheries to the conditions of post-Fordism, as in the final decomposition of the relatively egalitarian educational system 'inherited' from socialism and the so-called 'second wave of privatisation'.