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An Interdisciplinary Model of Centre--Periphery Relations: A Theoretical Proposition[1]

The paper proposes a model in which centre-periphery relations defined at a high level of generality (from the global level down to regional structures) can be analysed from a perspective of a number of disciplines, including political science (e.g. Rokkan's theory of peripheries and centre-periphery cleavages), sociology (e.g. Bourdieu's theory of the forms of capital) and linguistics (discourse analysis including code switching and politeness theories). It focuses on the nature of the discourse of peripheral elites which, as it is argued, live in a two or more dimensional social space and communicate in at least two separate codes (particularly languages): peripheral and central. Using the above mentioned theoretical concepts, the paper offers an attempt at theorisation of the mechanism of mutual perception of the centre and the periphery.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to provide a preliminary presentation of a new approach to theoretical description of relations between the broadly defined centre (core areas) and the periphery (dependent, subordinated areas). The theoretical model discussed here makes reference to quite an abstract perception of the 'centre' and the 'periphery', which may correspond to various levels of spatial organisation, from the global level of intercontinental relations to the local level of an internal structure of a given country's regions or other smaller territorial units. Totally abstract references of the reflections below to the 'centre' and the 'periphery' defined in a symbolic space or – using the language of Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu, Wacquant 2001) – in conventional 'fields' of social interaction, seem also to be possible. Thus, one may discuss a literary, musical or religious field where central and peripheral areas are distinguished. Although many of the reflections presented here could probably be applied to such non-geographical abstract centre-periphery relations, these applications will not be discussed in this paper.

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Traditional 'centre-periphery' models usually focused on one of the selected dimensions of spatial relationships: economic, political or cultural. Classical economic theories include for example 'the world system' theory by Emanuel Wallerstein (e.g. Wallerstein 1974), which divided the world into four basic categories: core, semi-peripheries, peripheries and external areas not included in the world system. In his theory, Wallerstein emphasised the economic dominance of the core over the peripheries as well as the weakness, non-stability and dependence of the latter on the core centres. Theoreticians of the 'relative development' school, following in his footsteps, present a similar approach, describing in particular the dependence of Latin America on the developed countries of the West. At the same time, one should point out to a number of theories analysing economic centre-periphery relations in a more positive light, also drawing attention to an advantageous influence of the core on the periphery. For example, the 'polarised growth theory' by François Perroux, which the author himself defined in an abstract and non-geographical meaning, shows a positive role of the centres. Perroux highlighted their stimulating role for the development of the entire economic system. A similar approach is presented by the authors of many subsequent versions of the theory of economic activity concentration. The concepts of the so-called clusters may in particular be considered as their most recent form, which may be perceived as a specific form of the core centres creating the poles of positive development impulses.

Another area of the studies on the centre-periphery relations which is important from a theoretical point of view includes research concerning the emergence of modern nation-states and development of their political systems. Stein Rokkan is a classic researcher in this field, known for many theoretical papers on centre-periphery cleavages perceived in terms of political and cultural dimensions (e.g. Lipset, Rokkan 1967). The centre, in this approach, is understood as the centre of political dominance which uses the state machinery to subordinate the entire territory of the country to itself. Provinces resisting these activities are the peripheries proper. In his studies, Rokkan also emphasises the important cultural dimension of the centre-periphery tensions. A modern (i.e. of the Enlightenment type) nation-state makes an attempt to subordinate the sphere of culture and religion to itself. In particular, it standardises the national language, subordinates the Church to the state and has ambitions to control the media. These aspirations are resisted by peripheral regions disagreeing to give up their cultural and religious distinctiveness. Significantly enough, the culture and religion spheres are largely of an instrumental character for the modern state; however, they are usually the key social resources for peripheral regions (cf. Rokkan 1970).

Together with the 'postmodern' growing interest in the role of culture in social sciences, in recent years we could observe the development of theories analysing only the cultural dimension of the centre-periphery relations. One of their well-known fields includes 'postcolonial' studies initiated by the famous work of Edward Said (1978), which point to the existing cultural domination

of the metropolis over its former colonies, even after formal political relation-ships have ceased (e.g. Chakrabarty 2000). Another field of research concerning cultural relationships includes studies on the rebirth of regionalisms in post-modern nation-states. They highlight the significant role played by the cultural identity of periphery inhabitants and their occasional strong perception of the centre's cultural dominance (e.g. Keating 1988). The intention of the model pre-sented here is to demonstrate the combination of the very relationship between the centre-periphery relations and theoretical concepts drawn from other areas of social sciences, in particular sociology and linguistics (discourse analysis).

2. The centre and the periphery and Pierre Bourdieu's theory of capitals

Pierre Bourdieu's theory, and in particular his concept of the three basic forms of capital, may seem to be the meeting point of various research fields concern-ing the centre-periphery relations discussed in the paper. We should bear in mind that apart from the classical economic capital, he also distinguished social capital and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986). He defined the social capital as: *the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition or in other words, to membership in a group which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a credential which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.* According to Bourdieu, cultural capital comprises three main subtypes: 'institutionalised' cultural capital in the form of formal education; 'embodied' cultural capital in the form of internalised cultural norms, including aesthetic competencies, manners, knowledge of high culture forms, etc, and 'objectified' cultural capital in the form of objects having cultural value. The three types of capital distinguished by Bourdieu are also the dimensions in which social status and hierarchy can be described. They seem to correspond to the above mentioned three dimensions of the description of spatial hierarchies between central and peripheral areas.

Ivan Szelényi was the precursor of applying the concept of the three forms of capital to describe the divergences between individual societies and their evo-lution. Especially in his well-known book entitled *Making Capitalism Without Capitalists,* published with his associates (Eyal, Szelényi, Townsley 1998), Szelényi drew attention to the fact that individual societies may be described from the perspective of hierarchies of various types of capital. Along with the evolution of societies, the relative importance of these capitals as determinants of social status within the society will also tend to evolve. The principles of mutual conversion of capitals, which may be compared to changes in foreign exchange rates, will also be developed. Consequently, in certain periods and in certain social systems, the possession of specific forms of capital (e.g. economic, cultural or social) may result in special advantages, while in other societies and other periods, the same forms of capital will have a marginal value, and persons

treating them as the main resource will not able to acquire any significant social position.

In his initial work, Bourdieu primarily focused on a static description of relations between various types of capital (and their fields) in the contemporary French society. Szelényi with his associates demonstrated that the structure of capital hierarchy was unique for each society and subject to constant changes. For example, communist countries in particular could be described as fields with a dominant role of political capital which in Bourdieu's theory is defined as a subform of social capital.[2] However, liberalisation of the communist systems, followed by their collapse, may be described as replacing of the role of political capital by economic capital. The role of the latter became particularly important after liberal economic reforms had been implemented in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Whether economic capital became the dominant capital in the societies of the region is still a controversial issue. As it seems, it definitely remains subordinated to the political capital in Russia. Eyal, Szelényi and Townsley (1998) emphasise a particularly privileged role of cultural capital in the countries of Central Europe, especially in Poland and Hungary. They believe that, for example, the conversion of political capital into economic capital (commonly known as 'seizing the property rights to formerly state-owned assets by the nomenclature') never occurred there in a pure form. Cultural capital was the catalyst of the process and only owners of this capital managed to effectively exchange their privileged social positions defined by the ownership of political capital in the communist era for significant economic resources after 1989. Thus, although in Poland, with its relative weakness of the state, one can discuss the current low position of political capital,[3] it is difficult to claim it has any overwhelming dominance, as cultural capital still seems to remain its strong competitor. Its influence manifests itself, among others, in a significant role of intellectual elites in the social and political life and a strong tradition of the intelligentsia, as compared with other countries in the region (Zarycki 2003).

An unambiguous determination of mutual relations of the respective capital types in a given community (i.e. in a social group, country or region) is never possible since the hierarchy of respective capitals and their subforms, including the principles of distinguishing and separating their fields, continues to be the subject of disputes which are symbolic fights about the methods of defining

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[2] It should be pointed out that social capital is interpreted here according to the definition by Pierre Bourdieu, i.e. differently than in the definitions by such theoreticians as Robert Putnam or James Coleman. It means, among others, that it is not perceived as an explicitly positive resource, and is mainly defined as individually-owned rather than collectively-owned. Combined social capital resources of members of a social group may of course be recognised as its aggregate property, but in this structure, they will not necessarily be available for everybody on an equal basis. To find more about the two approaches to the social capital determined here, see Zarycki 2004a.

[3] A certain strengthening of the role of the state could be seen after the parties with relatively state-control-oriented programmes rose to power in 2005, i.e. Law and Justice (PiS), Self-defence (SO) and the League of Polish Families (LPR).

social status. Mutual relations of the capital types and their relative value will always be in a way a subjective evaluation influencing the way of defining our social status.

In the most developed Western societies in particular (that is, in the core areas of the world system), the relations between economic and political capitals are rather ambiguous. As Bourdieu frequently wrote, the role of their cultural capital is commonly regarded as subordinated. However, the relation between the sphere of politics and the sphere of money is still disputed. Although he defined the social hierarchies in the French society primarily in terms of economic capital, and less of cultural capital, Bourdieu also claimed that the field of power was a dominant field in all societies since it could verify the principles of operation of all other fields (e.g. through the nationalisation mechanism, it can take away the resources of economic capital or at least change the rules according to which the economic field operates). However, there are also opinions that the above-mentioned statement by Bourdieu is no longer valid in the globalisation era since the phenomenon of globalisation may in particular be regarded as a revolutionary process whereby the importance of economic capital is increasing and the importance of political capital is decreasing, a symptom of which includes the dwindling strength of modern states versus multinational corporations. Some authors such as for example Agnew (2005) suggest that a spectacular takeover of the explicitly dominating position of economic capital versus political capital could recently be observed especially in the United States. In other words, he argues, the United States is the first state in modern history whose institutions are subordinated to the interests of big capital. This is also what, in his opinion, constitutes the specific nature of the new type of hegemony. Unlike all earlier huge global powers, the United States use the state institutions as tools of their dominance in a very restricted way. The US do not conquer new colonies, but in the majority of cases, make other countries dependent by means of economic mechanisms. If we agree with this opinion, it should be acknowledged that not until now (and only in one country of the world) has the vision of Karl Marx, who defined the state as an institution serving to protect tangible interests of the owning class, fully materialised.

3. The compensation principle

In view of the above considerations, we can say that economic capital in the theoretical model outlined here, especially in the globalisation era, may be defined as the dominating capital and also as the key resource of the world's core regions. The contemporary centres are areas of a strong concentration of economic capital, and their social stratification system is characterised by the dominance of economic capital over other forms of capital as determinants of social status. In other words, the logic of economic capital may be described as the dimension of social inequities, prevailing today in the global scale, and at

the same time of dominance, in particular the dominance of central areas over peripheries in geographical terms.

At the same time, it could be argued that the peripheries very often use the strategy of compensation for their weaknesses to offset their dependence on the centre, in the economic dimension taking the form of advantages given to other forms of capital. In particular, one may discuss the reference to cultural and social capitals, mentioned earlier. It is possible to distinguish many subforms depending on the context, and indirect forms. Thus, for instance, in the paper quoted above (Zarycki 2004a), I described how various ideological concepts of the modernisation of Poland might be characterised in a theoretical language of various forms of capital as compensation models of the Polish economic capital deficit. Therefore, it is possible to distinguish, firstly, some concepts of strengthening the Polish state, which may be described as a programme of appreciation of its political capital. Secondly, one should mention the traditional concept of strengthening the role of religion as the basis of the Polish national identity, and of the Catholic Church as a substitute for the weak state system. They may be described also as a programme of the appreciation of social capital, however, not in its purely political but merely a communal and religion-related vision. At the same time, there is an aspect of cultural capital visible here as well, which is a significant factor of religious identity and an important resource of the Church. A vision of the modernisation of Poland proposed by the intelligentsia, emphasising the role of a bottom-up process in the building of civic society under the leadership of the intelligentsia is even more underpinned by cultural capital. In general, Poland seems to be a country which attaches a relatively great deal of importance to cultural capital as a factor compensating for the weakness of the state and the society. The intelligentsia, defined first of all in terms of cultural capital, continues to play a significant role as the key fraction of the social elites and an important representative of the country in the external world.[4] Culturally defined pictures of Poland are also considered to be an important asset of the country in its international politics (among others, the weight attributed to democratic achievements and the power of the First Republic of Poland, the suffering of Poland and the Poles in the period of partitions, in World War II, and in the communist period, the achievements of Polish artists, intellectuals and scientists as well as social and political activists and priests under the leadership of John Paul II). Thus, one may propose the thesis that in case of Poland cultural capital constitutes its key resource supposed to compensate for the peripheral status of the country and its deficit of economic capital in relation to the centre, coupled with a parallel weakness of political capital resources.

On the other hand, contemporary Russia seems to be a country where political capital still remains the key capital compensating for the peripheral status

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[4] At the regional level, one may also find many examples of using cultural and social capital to compensate for a peripheral weakness. For examples from the Śląskie, Świętokrzyskie and Warmińsko-Mazurskie voivodeships – see Zarycki 2005; Zarycki, Tucholska 2004.

and dependence on the central countries. Both economic and cultural capitals in contemporary Russia have rather secondary functions, subordinated to the dominant political capital, since both the key elites of the country and the logic of social processes where the state almost always wins with the big capital as well as a peripheral sense of dignity are defined in terms of the latter. In colloquial speech, they may be illustrated by the following statement: *We are not as wealthy and modern as countries of the West (centre), but our state is extremely powerful and ensures an appropriate status and influence in the world for our country*. In the case of a strategy based on the compensatory use of cultural capital, an equivalent statement might read: *We are not as wealthy and modern as countries of the West (centre), but our noble history, education and achievements in the field of culture and science ensure universal respect for us and the right to belong to the communities of the West (core)*.

Here, one may again draw attention to two separate aspects of the compensatory privileges of individual forms of capital. Firstly, in the domestic aspect, they become the key dimensions of social stratification. Thus, the elites in peripheral countries and regions will be defined to a lesser extent in economic categories and to a larger degree – in social categories (e.g. political, clan-related, religious) and/or cultural (e.g. in terms of education and cultural competencies). Secondly, privileged capitals will play a key role in external relationships of the peripheries both with central areas and areas located lower in the global hierarchy. In particular, one may indicate cases where the subsequent forms and subforms of capital are used by the subsequent levels of peripheries in order to compensate for their weaknesses against stronger partners and domination over weaker, subordinated regions. Russia and earlier the Soviet Union may serve as an example, which, as it has been mentioned above, may be described as a peripheral region in relation to the West, compensating for its weakness by an extremely strong privilege of the political capital position. By means of this capital, it subordinated, as it is known, a major part of Europe to itself, with individual countries in turn compensating for their weakness in relation to Moscow by their cultural capital. Poland is a particularly good example in this respect since it attempted to build its sense of independence in the communist period, and even of superiority over the Soviet Union, mainly in the cultural dimension. The trust in the power of the Polish culture, its status as a high culture, at the same time being a part of the Western (central) circle, may be analysed here as an ideology of compensation for the dominance of political capital by means of cultural capital. Similar cases may be described in many other regions of the world, both at international and regional levels.

In this context, it is worth emphasising that classical compensatory capitals, that is cultural and social capitals, are characterised by a lower degree of liquidity in comparison to economic capital, as well as by limited possibilities of conversion and a longer accumulation period. This mainly refers to cultural capital whose acquisition usually requires a long time to develop formal knowledge or informal cultural competencies. A complete mastery of the latter is often possi-

ble only thanks to early family socialisation. Certain types of social capital such as being a member of nobility or aristocracy are also hardly exchangeable and are extremely stable (a noble title, just like education, once acquired is practically impossible to lose). Economic capital, in turn, is by definition characterised by a maximum degree of liquidity and an immediate potential for exchange. At the same time, according to many economists observing the way in the world economic system operates, peripheral areas are characterised not only by lesser resources of economic capital but also by a significant level of instability. Perhaps even the stability of economic systems would be a better measurement of the position of the centre and the periphery in the hierarchy than the mere degree of economic affluence. This way or another, fluctuations of the world economic system cycles are perceived with a strength approximately proportional to the degree of peripherality of the world's regions. It seems that we can also speak of a mechanism of the centres' buffering the negative effects of financial crises by shifting their costs to peripheries. The effect of these regularities includes instability of economic capital resources in the peripheries, followed by an instability of the economic elites in these parts of the world. Therefore, a way to ensure the stabilisation of the social position in such a structure is reference to capitals which are significantly less exposed to crises and sudden devaluation: in particular to social capital (i.e. membership of institutionalised and non-formal social groups) and cultural capital (cultural competencies, e.g. manners and lifestyles, high artistic or technical culture). Elites in peripheral countries (regions), building their status on these forms of capital, can ensure its stability in a much better way, since they are not exposed to economic cycles.

4. The dual social world of the periphery

This strategy of the elites results in the creation of a dual social world in peripheral areas since the periphery creates its own systems of social hierarchies, which may be specifically described as systems privileging selected forms of capital with a compensatory function. At the same time, however, peripheries are in a constant interaction with central areas whose social organisation logic is a dominant point of reference for the periphery. Inhabitants of the periphery, and in particular peripheral elites, live in a social system which has at least two dimensions, often guided by a conflicting logic.[5] In particular, the capitals that they have at their disposal offer a different status in various dimensions of

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[5] The number of dimensions of the social periphery world will depend, among others, on the degree of complexity of a centre-periphery hierarchy. Firstly, there may be numerous levels of core centres, each of which may create a separate dimension of the social world. Thus, e.g. for inhabitants of a village in the Mazowieckie region, additional dimensions will include the social world of a district town, Warsaw, and the global centre. Secondly, a bigger number of the dimensions of social life in the peripheries may result from competition for influence in a given periphery area among a bigger number of core centres. The region of Upper Silesia may be an example here, which is located in an area of cultural influences of Warsaw, Kraków, Wrocław and Germany, which builds a multi-dimensional social world in that region.

their social world. Therefore, their social status in those dimensions is different. For instance, economic capital owned by a representative of the periphery may represent a significant resource in the context of his or her region, ensuring him or her the status of a member of the economic elite. The same capital in central countries may turn out to be relatively insignificant. Similarly, cultural capital, for example in the form of certain competencies or formal education, may prove to be almost useless in a peripheral context (e.g. lack of institutions which would be able to use persons with high qualifications), at the same time being extremely valuable in central areas. Other forms of cultural capital, corresponding to other competencies, familiarity with other traditions, cultural conventions or specific aesthetic tastes, may be found to be extremely valuable in specific peripheral areas and totally useless or even burdensome in central areas of various levels.[6]

This multi-dimensional social world of the periphery very frequently leads to social tensions between clashing systems of values and logics of social stratification. In the 'critical' perspective, most frequently connected with the left-wing social thought, such tensions are usually interpreted as an outcome of the dominance of the centre over the periphery, imposing the central system of values, institutions and language onto the peripheries. At this point, I would not like to go into deep ideological and normative contemplations, but to merely indicate the existence of the above-mentioned conflict of the social organisation logic. Its nature may be diversified and cause differences in evaluation, but its existence seems to be more or less inevitable to a smaller of lesser degree. As Sosnowska (1997) correctly demonstrated, the Polish social sciences discourse can serve as an example of tension between periphery and central logic of the social world, with the majority of its representatives making attempts to describe the Polish peripheral social reality by means of a theoretical language developed in the centre. The example proves that the conflict in question usually does not manifest itself in the form of tensions between representatives of the centre and the periphery, but more often it takes the form of disputes among the inhabitants of the peripheries themselves, and more precisely – among all individuals who, irrespective of the physical location, identify themselves or are identified with the social world of the periphery. Therefore, on the one hand, there are some members of the peripheral community who refer to local values, hierarchies and local language, not necessarily in a strictly linguistic meaning, but mainly in terms of the world of meanings and notions that they use. On the other hand, however, there are those who primarily refer to values, aesthetic and moral standards and culture codes coming from the centre. The latter are not

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[6] It is worth mentioning that an interesting phenomenon occurs from time to time, when a specific cultural capital of a given periphery area is considered as a negative value (that is, decreasing a social status) in the centre directly dominating in a given context, being much more appreciated in higher-level centres. Thus, ethnic or regional minorities are still sometimes subject to repressions in some nation-states, but the status of their cultures in the global scale sometimes turns out to be much higher.

only of crucial importance in interactions with representatives of central areas, but, firstly and foremostly, as a rule have a higher social status in the periphery and are used to enhance their status in a local social context.

In light of the above, we may conclude that the social world of the periphery is characterised by a constant tension between various types of competing social logic. This tension often results in a dysfunction of peripheral institutions, which are frequently structured on the basis of examples drawn from the centre, sometimes simply copied from the 'central' context. In the peripheral context, in a different logic of social hierarchies and values, they often turn out to be dysfunctional or will unexpectedly modify their mode of operation, adjusting it to the environment. It sometimes turns out that they serve totally different social groups and other interests than those which should theoretically be the beneficiaries of a given organisational type. Sometimes, despite their partial dysfunction, they are kept as important elements of integration with central areas which formally require their existence or informally force the peripheries to maintain institutions compliant with the central standards.

5. The disruption of peripheral elites

The consequences of the above phenomena for peripheral elites are particularly interesting since it is these elites that can best perceive the multi-dimensional nature of the periphery's social space. Lower social classes of the periphery may, to a large extent, ignore the symbolic world of the centre. They usually have no daily contact with the centre, rarely travel to the centre, their social status is low in general so they do not find it worthwhile to invest in the assimilation of the central culture and the acquisition of social status symbols that are valued especially in the centre, etc. The higher the status of the members of a peripheral community, the more important for them is the possibility of unconstrained functioning in the social sphere of the centre. Apart from the reasons including the usually higher social status of the central culture, an important reason for peripheral elites to become interested in the world of the centre is their specific social function. It consists, among others, in a comprehensive intermediation between the centre and the periphery. This intermediation refers to all dimensions of social life, and primarily to the economic dimension. In the critical discourse of the dependists, the negatively viewed economic elites which act as intermediaries in contacts with the global centres are commonly dubbed as 'comprador bourgeoisie'. This term refers to social groups which dominate in the peripheries and which in fact represent economic interests of the centre, at the same time betraying their indigenous communities and facilitating their exploitation by the global capital. This critical view of the Latin American elites could be regarded as one-sided; however, it shows the tension that is a part of life of the elites in peripheral regions. On the one hand, they act as the centre's representatives (and champions of its interests, according to left-wing intellectuals) in the periphery, and on the other – as representatives of the periphery in

the centre. These functions are performed by economic, political and cultural elites in relation to the social fields which remain under their control. The periphery's cultural elites can also be described using Bauman's metaphor (1998) of 'translators', that is intermediaries in the explanation of the two worlds in question. They attempt to describe the world of the periphery in the language of the centre, and try to describe the social world of the centre to the residents of the periphery in a language that they can comprehend (and especially via the media that they have access to). As above, the notion of language should be primarily understood in an abstract sense, that is in a sense which in scientific literature is normally ascribed to the notion of 'discourse'. This does not necessarily mean a different national language, its variety or dialect, but a discourse that has a specific style, a sphere of social references and a certain linguistic and conceptual complexity. In addition to their 'ancillary' role, the periphery's cultural elites can be accused – just as the 'comprador bourgeoisie' – of supporting the centre in achieving a symbolic domination over the periphery, that is, of imposing the centre's cultural values on the world's periphery. In this function, the peripheral elites could be termed using the second of Bauman's metaphors that he applied to intellectuals in the same work, that is, the 'legislators' who impose values and cultural norms onto the periphery in the name of the centre. According to critics of peripheral intellectual elites, the cultural norms and moral judgments forced by them on their own societies on behalf of the centre can have no lesser impact than legal norms laid down by formal legislators – the parliaments. In this way, the periphery can be perceived as an area which gives undue privileges to cultural capital and its 'usurpatory', 'aristocratic' elites as compared to the democratically elected political elites. This is one of the several reasons why democratic institutions in the periphery can have a much more 'window-dressing' nature than in the centre. Another aspect of this problem is enhancing the status of the 'compensatory' social capital in the periphery, especially in its informal aspects. This means giving more privileges to clans, castes, informal circles and other relatively closed, hierarchical and undemocratic social groups. Southern Italy can serve as an excellent example of a peripheral region strongly influenced by such social structures.

The choice of the orientation of individual fractions of the peripheral elites, between the role of the representative of the centre and its interests vis à vis the periphery, and the role of the representative of the periphery and its interests vis à vis the centre, seems to depend on many contextualised factors and as such would be rather difficult to forecast or model. On the one hand, we can distinguish elite's fractions with 'deep' orientations, that is the ideologies of 'serving' the centre which are strongly rooted in the system of values (for instance with a view to 'modernising' the periphery) or of 'serving' the periphery (for example to protect its threatened identity). On the other hand, the choice between the 'peripheral' and the 'central' option for some fractions of the elite will be more context-based and pragmatic. Therefore, their operation will largely be based on the principles of the 'rational choice theory' and on comparing the benefits and

advantages connected with these two functions. Their roles can therefore vary: from protectors of the centre's interests, terrorising the periphery with slogans calling for a total subordination to the interests and the culture of the centre, to leaders of peripheral rebellions, blackmailing the centre with the contemplated insurrection of the oppressed community.

It should be pointed out that peripheral elites seen in such a perspective can be depicted using the categories developed by Pierre Bourdieu to describe social groups in the middle of the social ladder. First and foremost, peripheral elites as a rule have the status of the 'dominated part of the dominant class'. This is the term Bourdieu used to describe well-educated classes, and highbrows in particular. On the one hand, all these groups belong to a broadly understood elite and take part in the strengthening of the existing system of social domination and as a rule derive profits from the existence of such a system. On the other hand, they have no access to the key resources of the system, mostly economic in character, which moves them away from the real centre of power and generates frustration arising from a sense of being underestimated and overwhelmed. Such a situation makes it easier for the cultural elites to identify with marginalised groups and creates the conditions for their claiming the right to represent the lowest social strata.

Another aspect of this ambiguous social status of peripheral elites, which can be found, though in a slightly different context, in Bourdieu's works, is the duality of the social world of the middle classes. As Bourdieu points out, members of the middle class, who in their majority come from the lower classes, at the same time aspire for an elite status. Among members of the middle class in well-developed countries, family socialisation in a different cultural context than the sphere of social aspirations can lead to a tension between two dimensions of social space, characteristic for peripheral elites. In both these instances, these dimensions clearly differ in terms of their social status. According to Bourdieu, the effect of such a duality is the division of the experienced world of the middle classes into two categories: 'home' and 'work; 'private life' and 'life for show'; 'private aesthetic choices' and 'public aesthetic choices', 'really embraced values' and 'publicly declared values', etc. Such tensions are minimised by the upper classes which are socialised by high art and culture – that is, space where they spend all their later life, and by the lower classes that have no 'haute culture' aspirations. Seen in such a perspective, one of the major differences between the centre's elites and the periphery's elites would involve a high degree of the dichotomy of the social world of the latter. Therefore, for the representatives of peripheral elites, functioning in the central context is as a rule a 'game' in the Goffmanian sense of 'presenting the self in everyday life'. Such people usually focus their energy on meeting the challenge, which is to convey an impression that they are fully-fledged members of the world of central culture. In effect, they are extremely sensitive to any possible suggestions or allusions to their 'peripheral', and not fully 'central', patterns of behaviour. Members of peripheral elites can frequently compete as to who better internalises the central

culture, its aesthetic values, lifestyles, etc. Representatives of the central elites are usually blissfully unaware of this problem because they do not have to prove their special status to anyone. As a result, they have a much more casual and frequently nonchalant attitude to the cultural norms of the centre – that is, to their own indigenous world, as their affiliation with it cannot be challenged or questioned. At the same time, such norms represent an undisputable world of universal values and symbols of social status for the peripheral elites.

As has been pointed out earlier (Zarycki 2000), one of the practically inherent features of peripheral areas is the division into a pro-periphery and an anti-periphery orientation, prevalent in most of the dimensions of their social space. In particular, this division applies to peripheral elites and is especially well visible in the sphere of politics. Unlike the core areas, where the axes of political conflict are not so strongly based on the external context, in the peripheral areas disparities between social groups are defined in terms of the role of the external world (that is, the centre) in relation to the identification of their economic interests, cultural values and political concerns. In general terms, we could say that the 'anti-central' party in the periphery will by definition be a champion of enhancing the role of, and protecting those capitals which in a given region are regarded as the key resources, compensating for the region's weaknesses vis à vis the centre. On the other hand, the 'pro-central' party will be a more or less radical proponent of subordination to the social logic of the centre and recognition of the hegemony of the forms of capital prevailing in the centre. As mentioned above, in the global scale, this will usually mean the logic of economic capital, whereas political capital can be regarded as the dominating form of capital in other contexts; however, such a role is unlikely to be performed by cultural capital.

6. Communication codes of the centre and the periphery

We should bear in mind that tools which have been developed as part of the so-called discourse analysis (e.g. van Dijk 2001) can be successfully used in the analysis of tensions between thus defined centre and the periphery (np. van Dijk 2001). As mentioned above, the 'languages' used by the centre and the periphery can be viewed as disparate codes of meaning. In such a context, and in the analysis of the discourse of peripheral elites in particular, the so-called code switching theory can be particularly useful (cf. Myers-Scotton 1993). The dilemma connected with the choice of language (i.e. code) in which members of peripheral elites are to communicate, quite well pertains to the area of this specific linguistic concept.

In view of the above, it is only natural that in the majority of contacts with representatives of the centre, members of peripheral elites will use the central code, and in contacts will representatives of lower social strata of the periphery, they will switch to the peripheral code as the only code which is understood by both parties of the interaction. However, when members of the peripheral elite

communicate with each other, the choice of language is no longer obvious. On the one hand, it is possible to recourse to the central code. Its definite advantage is that it leaves aside social hierarchies of the periphery, especially those defined in terms of social and cultural capital. If the parties involved in the interaction are not fully-fledged participants of the interplay in the social field of the centre, then the social hierarchies of the centre which are encoded in its discourse do not have any immediate applications to them. In such a situation, the discourse becomes in a sense an abstract neutral plane for communication, which in many cases can be regarded as its asset. On the other hand, there may occur differences in the degree to which the centre's discourse has been mastered, or, more broadly speaking, the centre's culture because it extremely seldom comes as wholly natural for members of peripheral communities. The individual who achieves a better mastery of the centre's culture, and especially its communication code, will automatically gain an advantage over all other individuals. In many situations, this will be an unfavourable circumstance which will hinder reaching an accord. However, in other situations it may prove to be an asset, especially when individuals who are relatively better rooted in the central culture will want to emphasise their advantage. In extreme cases, a member of the peripheral elite may address representatives of peripheral lower classes (especially those who are defined in cultural terms) in a refined central code, even if the latter are not able to comprehend any of the communicated message. The only pragmatic message conveyed will be the stressing of the cultural superiority of the speaker, and the fact that such a discourse is literally unintelligible will in this case be seen as an advantage.

Similar dilemmas appear when representatives of peripheral elites want to choose a familiar peripheral code for their internal communication. On the one hand, it can activate the entire spectrum of social and cultural indicators of social status in the local context. References to them, which are implied by the very use of the peripheral code, can create additional and unwelcome barriers to interaction. In certain circumstances, emphasising such social and cultural disparities may be intended in order to stress the social distance, especially when this is done by persons who are privileged in a given sphere. However, in many contexts the choice of the peripheral code may result in a reverse implication: it may reduce social differences and build a sense of community. It is so because reference to the peripheral code will automatically imply recognising the centre as the common 'meaningful alien', which is often perceived more or less negatively. On the other hand, the peripheral code is a natural and fully internalised code for all representatives of the periphery, including peripheral elites. For this reason, using the code does not create such barriers as when communication is based on reference to an external code, which in many cases will be internalised by the members of a peripheral community to a varying extent.

These reflections could be summed up by a conclusion that communication based on the use of the central code will normally imply negotiations concerning status, relating to the extent the central culture has been internalised by the inter-

locutors. Communication based on the peripheral code will imply the process of a mutual evaluation of its actors in relation to the fields of compensatory capitals, mainly social and cultural capital. In practice, communication (especially between sophisticated members of the peripheral elites) will frequently be characterised by constant changes of the code, thereby stressing both the freedom of movement in the two social worlds and the distance towards the speaker's own, multi-dimensional and ambiguous, social status. Due to the possibility of frequent code changes, the notion of contextual cues introduced by Gumperz (1982) can prove useful in the analysis of the discourse of peripheral elites; that is, such elements of discourse which specify the context addressed by the speaker, particularly the code in which an utterance is made. Such signals, frequently hidden, which may render a part of a given utterance ironic (especially jokes about the ambiguous character of the speaker's own social status), are on many occasions indispensable for a full understanding of the nature of peripheral discourse.

7. Mutual centre/periphery perception

The theoretical model of the centre-periphery relationships outlined above offers tools for making some generalisations concerning their mutual perception. Below, we discuss some regularities which can be observed in the centre-periphery and the periphery-centre perception.

7.1. The centre as seen by the periphery

For representatives of the periphery, the hegemony of dominant capitals (which in most situations means economic capital) in the centre has its advantages and disadvantages. Firstly, from the periphery's perspective, the centre is not riven by conflict between the many dimensions of the social world that the periphery has to cope with. It is perceived as a 'shallow' world, in the pejorative meaning of the word. Devoid of characteristic ambivalence and inconclusiveness so typical of the periphery, the centre lacks the lure of the familiar 'mysteriousness'. In addition, the relative character of the social world and its individual dimensions is not so obvious in everyday interactions, which can be seen by the periphery's residents, so well accustomed to moving from one dimension to another, as being 'trapped in one-dimensionality'.

Secondly, due to the fact that normally economic capital is the dominant capital of the centre (at least its relative role in the centre is much greater than in the periphery), the centre is frequently viewed by the residents of the periphery as a ruthless world governed by the 'rule of money'. Judging people mainly on the basis of their usefulness for the economic system, referring primarily to the material and pragmatic dimension, which is a prevalent attitude in the centre, seems outright primitive from the peripheral perspective. Seen from the periphery, the world of the centre is viewed not only as brutal, materialistic and mercenary, but also as superficial and lacking a 'deeper', 'human' dimension.

The relatively clear principles of social life which are much better defined than in the periphery, and a clear hierarchy of capitals, may be seen as manifestations of this 'shallowness'. On the other hand, when seen from the peripheral perspective, a relative subordination of the cultural field to the dominant field (mostly the economic field) can be regarded as a sign of the 'barbarism' of the centre. In the periphery, some forms of cultural and social capital as a rule enjoy a great deal of autonomy as compared with economic or political capital. At the same time, some of them not infrequently acquire a sacral or para-religious status. Therefore, subordination of these field to the capitals which dominate in the centre may be viewed by the peripheries as a manifestation of moral decline, cynicism and utmost materialism.

On the other hand, however, such ostensible simplicity of the principles governing the centre, where no one – as is frequently claimed by its representatives – is interested in the social background, culture or family connections of the departers from the periphery, may be found very appealing by the latter. Meritocratic ideology, a relatively open social system (by comparison with the periphery), with its willingness to offer equal treatment to all players of the economic (or political) game, offers unique opportunities for success and breaking free from the vicious circle of the periphery's 'connections', clans and other relatively closed social capital networks, as well as traditional, hierarchising cultural capital structures which inevitably leave its indelible and irreversible mark. Seen from such a perspective, the centre may become a *sui generis* 'promised land' for many residents of the periphery. The centre can fascinate not only by its wealth and power but also by its efficiency, effectiveness, frugal yet refined aesthetics and overall modernity.

Generally speaking, however, centres are very frequently perceived by the periphery as places of domination which force their values, aesthetics and broadly understood culture onto the subordinated periphery. We could say therefore that the periphery is not only extremely sensitive to political and economic, but also to symbolic domination of the centre. In most cases, representatives of the latter are simply unable to see this aspect of symbolic violence in their own behaviours, when they treat the centre's cultural values as universal ones, and their transmission to the periphery – as beneficial attempts at 'modernisation'. In effect, they are frequently viewed by the periphery as arrogant, insolent and cynical representatives of the 'better' world. This impression may be reinforced by the self-confidence and certainty of their social standing, manifested on many occasions by members of the centre's communities in confrontation with the inhibited and full of complexes representatives of the periphery. It could also be pointed out that in addition to a feeling of being 'violated' by the centre in the symbolic sphere, the periphery usually believes that it has fallen victim to economic exploration owing to the conditions of trade exchange imposed by the centre. At the same time, demands for a compensation of economic domination and exploitation of the periphery are in most cases viewed by the centre as unjustified demandingness.

The centre's very limited knowledge about the periphery is an important element of its negative perception by the periphery. What peripheral communities find extremely upsetting is the ignorance of the centre's residents of their cultural and historical heritage. This heritage covers both the contribution of the region's inhabitants to the universal culture as well as the region's indigenous traditions and historical events, with a special emphasis on heroic moments in the history of the community and its sufferings – which altogether make up the regional identity. As a rule, it is the basic point of reference for the unique cultural capital of the periphery, which represents a significant, and frequently the main capital to compensate for the region's weaknesses in other dimensions. This capital is the crucial element which the periphery's inhabitants use to develop a sense of dignity. The lack of any knowledge about it or even the lack of references to it in the centre's discourse is tantamount to the lack of recognition for its worth. It can also be interpreted as an expression of impoliteness or lack of respect of the centre towards the periphery. Therefore, the peripheral critique of the central discourse in this sphere can be analysed using tools offered by the linguistic 'politeness theory' (cf. Watts 2003).

7.2. The periphery as seen by the centre

As mentioned above, the centre will frequently profess its lack of prejudices or preconceptions vis à vis the periphery. In the centre, the domination of economic capital as a rule implies a much more impersonal attitude to fellow humans than in the periphery. This means that what matters in the centre is talent, skills and willingness for hard and competent work, and not social background. The centre, therefore, usually acts as a relative proponent of meritocratic ideologies and assesses the external world from the angle of economic capital. The centre's special focus on the logic of its dominant capitals can lead to a specific bias in the periphery's perception. In such a situation, the periphery is often viewed as obsessively clinging to its historical, cultural and social traditions. These dimensions of social life, especially in their peripheral manifestations, are the least attractive and regarded as insignificant in the world of the centre. This could reinforce the view of the 'backwardness' of the periphery and its 'parochialism', and activate many other stereotypes traditionally associated with peripheral communities. One of the manifestations of such a perception of the periphery by the centre is the phenomenon which Edward Said (1978) termed as 'orientalism'. In the original meaning assigned to it by its author, the term denoted the perception of Near East countries as puzzling and exotic, that is – as alien and underdeveloped territories dominated by incomprehensible traditional cultures. Currently the notion extends to the perception of other peripheral areas by the broadly understood West.[7]

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[7] It should be pointed out that Poland could be treated as an object in the 'orientalist' discourse from the east and as an initiator of such a discourse towards its southern and eastern

The social hierarchies and divisions in the periphery based on cultural and affiliation criteria are very frequently regarded by representatives of the centre as expressions of Marx's 'false consciousness'. For the centre, the only 'real interests' are interests which are defined in the economic field, while other conflicts of interest tend to be perceived as aspects of the former. This is the reason why defining divisions in the political arena in cultural rather than economic terms, so frequent in the peripheries, is seen by the centre either as a manifestation of peripheral ignorance, naivety or 'backwardness', or as a sign of deliberate manipulation of the peripheral communities by the elites in their attempt to divert their attention from 'real', that is economic, interests.[8]

We could speak about the phenomenon of the 'economisation' of the periphery coupled with its concurrent 'culturisation', manifested by the aforementioned orientalism. Whilst 'culturisation' would strive to focus the centre's attention on the cultural dimension of the periphery, yet depicting it in a disorganised manner as a certain 'curiosity' and an aspect of mysterious exoticism, 'economisation' is an attempt at a complete marginalisation of the cultural dimension. Such an approach may lead to the production of an utterly one-sided description of the periphery's social reality, created in the language of the centre. A well-known example of a study in one-sided analyses of the social world of the (semi)-periphery using the centre's language is the work by Mouzelis (1986). In it, Mouzelis points out that narrowing the phenomenon of domination to the merely economic dimension is particularly inadequate in relation to countries which are outside the world's core areas. In their case, other modes of domination should be distinguished which could, arguably, correspond to Bourdieu's types of capital. Both authors concurrently called for expanding the Marxist analysis of social inequalities beyond the strictly economic dimension, and Mouzelis demonstrated that it was particularly necessary in the case of peripheral regions.

Even if the way the periphery is perceived by the centre is not overly fraught with 'economisation' or 'culturisation' (orientalisation), it can meet with critical reception in the periphery owing to the relativisation of the role of the periphery's social and cultural capitals, which turn the universally recognised values into objects of research and criticism. A particularly good example in the sphere of academic discourse involves works underpinned by the broadly understood postmodernist paradigm. On the one hand, these works, focusing mainly on

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neighbours. In particular, the works of such authors as Ryszard Kapuściński (1993) or Andrzej Stasiuk (2004) who depict the regions situated (respectively) east and south of Poland as exotic and puzzling lands whose inhabitants, with their entanglement in unintelligible social and cultural structures, can hardly be treated as equal partners. For more information about the 'orientalisation' of Russia in the Polish press debates, see Zarycki 2004b. In addition, an interesting discussion on the adequacy of the postcolonialism theory, including Said's input, in the analyses of Polish literature can be found in the periodical *Teksty Drugie* (e.g. Cavanagh 2003, Janion 2003 or Bakuła 2006).

[8] As an example of such a perspective applied to Poland as seen from the Western perspective, see the last work by David Ost (2005).

culture and symbolic linkages, highlight the relationships which until now were rather unobvious, also those between the centre and the periphery, such as the 'orientalism' syndrome. They also help better appreciate the role of cultural capital (which is so significant for the periphery) in social science and beyond. However, while trying to enhance the status of the cultural field in academic studies or political debate, they do it in a way which mostly tends to relativise the periphery's cultural values and assets. It is so because although the 'deconstructed' peripheral identities attract more attention, they are usually portrayed in the context which strips them of the status of absolute values they enjoy in the periphery. For researchers working from the centre (or members of peripheral elites who refer to the central discourse), peripheral identities are as a rule interesting social phenomena. Nonetheless, they tend to treat them as attention-grabbing illusions rather than entities having a real existence, comparable to that of economic capital, which has a much more 'objective' nature in the centre, unlike cultural identities. For residents of the centre, financial assets are the criterion which determines their social status; in other words, either one has money or not. In such a context, the sphere of culture, as being of secondary importance, can be an arena of casual 'games' with identity, its deconstruction, reconstruction and mutations created at discretion and at will. Such 'games' are much more difficult in the peripheries, where cultural identity and group affiliation can be of a considerably more 'objective' nature than financial assets. In the periphery, one has financial assets 'once and then'; one can lose them suddenly and regain them and this will not significantly affect their social status of members of the peripheral community. In the long duration perspective, it is much more grounded in the cultural and affiliation dimensions (i.e. the dimension of social capital).

We can say therefore that the habit of an ironic treatment of the one-dimensionality of the central social world by the periphery, and the reserve manifested by its representatives to the economic field as the key determinant of social status, are matched in the centre by the 'deconstruction' of peripheral identities. While the centre regards peripheral cultural identities as a secondary and relative reality, and they are seen as subjective social 'constructs' in the language of postmodernist social theory, the periphery – though it usually lacks its own independent and sophisticated language for social theory – tends to regard money as a relative social construct which tends to come and go, and yet the periphery's basic social structures last on, regardless of economic crises and 'ownership transformations'.

In view of the above, representatives of the central elites, who live in a comparatively one-dimensional social world, not only are unable to understand the periphery's communication code, but also frequently have serious problems with grasping the very idea of the multi-dimensionality of the periphery's social world. This seems to be the crucial problem affecting the way the periphery is perceived by the centre. In consequence, they are often viewed as strange and mysterious areas, and this perception can also extend to the departers from the

periphery. On the one hand, such mysteriousness can be regarded as a positive feature which attracts attention, one which is associated with a higher level of 'spirituality' and 'deeper' culture that can be encountered in the periphery. Sometimes the inhabitants of the centre, tired of their one-dimensional life, visit the periphery on a kind of pilgrimage, seeking an 'inner depth'. On the other hand, however, such mysteriousness can be associated with backwardedness, irrationality of the peripheral world, premodernity and superstitiousness.

Accusations of hypocrisy, distrust, insincerity, inconsistency and reticence voiced by the centre against the periphery's representatives can be seen as yet another consequence of the centre's inability to comprehend the multi-dimensionality of the social world of the periphery. At their best, the utterances and social behaviours of the periphery's inhabitants, referring to disparate communication codes, will be seen by the centre as incongruous. From such a perspective, the peripheral sense of humour will be particularly difficult to understand, being largely based on an ironic juggling of the peripheral and central contexts, and appealing to their incompatibility. Naturally, this list does not exhaust all the communicative aspects of problems which can appear in contacts between representatives of the centre and the periphery. It is to be hoped, however, that the problems discussed above convincingly show the analytical potential of the theoretical proposition put forward in this paper.

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