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›HARD TIMES BUT OUR OWN‹*

Post-Socialist Nostalgia and the Transformation of Industrial Life in Poland

1. Post-Socialist Memories, Nostalgia and Oral History

›We knew everything about one another: we knew when someone's child or mother was taken ill; we knew what was going on. There was no need for corporate retreats. We got to know one another while working‹, a retired engineer from a pulp mill in northern Poland recalled on the subject of her former workplace.[1] Similarly, the recollections of a one-time shop floor worker at a tire manufacturer were saturated with references to family-like relations: ›people used to hang out together‹, she said. ›They would call on one another. Life was completely different. Later, when computers were introduced, people locked themselves up in their homes. Today they work around the clock and have no time for anything.‹[2] Both women were in their mid-sixties when interviewed in 2014 for an oral history project about memories of socialism and the post-1989 neoliberal transformation among industrial workers in Poland. The stark contrast between their recollections of the ›good‹ old times of the 1970s and 1980s and of the ›bad‹ present of the 1990s and 2000s echoes other post-industrial voices from around the globe. The case studies of British railway managers,[3] Serbian factory

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1 Archiwum Historii Mówionej, Dom Spotkań z Historią [Oral History Archives, History Meeting House, in the following AHM], IS_3_0026, interview recorded on 11 April and 16 May 2014, Świecie. All translations from Polish are by Radek Przedpełski or the author.

2 AHM IS_3_0061, interview recorded on 18 September 2014, 2h23, Olsztyn.

3 Tim Strangleman, The Nostalgia of Organisations and the Organisation of Nostalgia: Past and Present in the Contemporary Railway Industry, in: *Sociology* 33 (1999), pp. 725-746.

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workers,[4] German miners and steelworkers,[5] and Australian, US, and UK heritage sites[6] have all shown that post-industrial nostalgia is not only a common and collectively constructed sentiment. It can also mobilize resources to protect values and forms of social life that remain relevant in the present but are endangered by political, economic, cultural and technological changes. It is therefore not surprising that industrial socialism looks nicer in retrospect than it did at the time, when crowds of workers demonstrated against intolerable work conditions, shortages of consumer goods, and human rights violations.

Nevertheless, the Polish case of simultaneous transformations from dictatorship to democracy, socialism to capitalism, and Fordism to post-Fordism is important for further historicization, contextualization and explanation of the social function of post-industrial nostalgia. By analyzing vernacular memories of this period from oral history sources, this article attempts to add some nuance to the studies of post-industrial nostalgia. In contrast to certain currents of critical post-industrial and post-socialist studies, my article presents diverse memories of the system change. It shows that the 1990s are not remembered only negatively, and that nostalgia for the industrial ›golden age‹, though significant, is not the only mode of remembering the period prior to 1990. Doing justice to the fact that there are multiple memories of deindustrialization does not, however, undermine the critical potential of these nostalgic currents for showing what went wrong with transformation. Furthermore, the article differentiates between vernacular memories of industrial communities observed in oral history and political memories reflected at the main post-industrial heritage sites in order to stress that the critical potential of nostalgic memories has been largely absent in the public sphere.

In this article, I conceptualize nostalgia as a ›regretful memory‹ of an idealized period of the past.[7] Nostalgia can be an element of private, vernacular or institutional narratives. It conveys a sense of loss over something from the past that is missing in the present, such as objects, people, values, or forms of social life. The field of post-socialist studies has significantly contributed to the development of the research on nostalgia as a collectively constructed sentiment. In Germany, an initial ridiculing of *Ostalgie*, the longing for some aspects of GDR life, has given way to an avalanche of research trying to conceptualize forms of socialist nostalgia and its functions for the present.[8] Today, nostalgia is conceptualized in post-socialist studies quite broadly as a

4 Tanja Petrović, Nostalgia for Industrial Labor in Socialist Yugoslavia or Why the Post-Socialist Affect Matters, in: Mitja Velikobja (ed.), *Nostalgia on the Move*, Belgrade 2017, pp. 14-29.

5 Stefan Berger, Industrial Heritage and the Ambiguities of Nostalgia for an Industrial Past in the Ruhr Valley, Germany, in: *Labor. Studies in Working-Class History* 16 (2019) issue 1, pp. 37-64.

6 Laurajane Smith/Gary Campbell, ›Nostalgia for the Future‹: Memory, Nostalgia and the Politics of Class, in: *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23 (2017), pp. 612-627.

7 Andressa Schröder et al., Introduction: Why Juxtapose the Concepts of Nostalgia and Sustainability?, in: Schröder et al. (eds), *Futures Worth Preserving*, Bielefeld 2019, pp. 9-36.

8 Daphne Berdahl, ›(N)Ostalgie‹ for the Present: Memory, Longing, and East German Things, in: *Ethnos* 64 (1999), pp. 192-211.

›discursive practice stemming from a (shared) feeling of loss and potentially serving any political agenda‹.[9] It is historicized through a focus on varied nostalgic content, diverse mnemonic agents, and different locations in which it has been expressed.[10]

The development of research on post-socialist nostalgia reflects a more general, double, agenda of nostalgia studies. On the one hand, the focus on nostalgia as a collectively shared sentiment has been criticized for bringing vague psychological categories into historical and sociological research. Scholars are therefore struggling to find more analytical and empirical approaches to conceptualizing nostalgia.[11] On the other hand, some studies of nostalgia are normatively oriented because their intention is to reveal counter-narratives to hegemonic approaches to history. For instance, the famous distinction by Svetlana Boym between ›restorative nostalgia‹, associated with a conservative yearning for ›genuine traditions‹, and ›reflective nostalgia‹, creating an ironic distance between now and then, but also mediating between the past and present, has been reinterpreted in this direction.[12] Various revisions of her concepts proliferate in current literature, and a whole branch of inquiry focuses on reflective nostalgia's critical function for the present and future.[13]

My article is situated on the border of this analytical-critical agenda. The bulk of its argument draws on the findings of an oral history project. Nostalgia has been an essential concept in oral history, because narrators often tend to sentimentalize and idealize the past. Oral historians show that nostalgia serves some purposes of the narrators, including the critique of the present and enforcing the sense of individual or group identity.[14] Oral history projects also refer to nostalgia to explore problems that communities face today.[15]

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9 Otto Boele/Boris Noordenbos/Ksenia Robbe (eds), *Post-Soviet Nostalgia. Confronting the Empire's Legacies*, New York 2020, p. 6.

10 Maria Todorova/Zsuzsa Gille (eds), *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, New York 2010; Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper, Memory in Post-Communist Europe: Controversies over Identity, Conflicts, and Nostalgia, in: *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 32 (2018), pp. 924-935 (and this special issue as a whole); Veronika Pehe, *Velvet Retro. Postsocialist Nostalgia and the Politics of Heroism in Czech Popular Culture*, New York 2020.

11 For some recent discussions, see e.g. Tobias Becker, The Meanings of Nostalgia: Genealogy and Critique, in: *History and Theory* 57 (2018), pp. 234-250; Michael Hviid Jacobsen (ed.), *Nostalgia Now. Cross-Disciplinary Perspectives on the Past in the Present*, London 2020. See also the excellent essay by Stuart Tannock, Nostalgia Critique, in: *Cultural Studies* 9 (1995), pp. 453-464, where the author argues that despite its limitations, the concept of nostalgia needs to be recognized as a valid way of constructing and approaching the past by individuals and communities of all social groups.

12 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, New York 2001.

13 See e.g. S.D. Chrostowska, Critical Longing: On Nostalgia's Role in Critique, in: *Dandelion* 7 (2016), pp. 1-12.

14 See e.g. Jennifer Helgren, ›A Very Innocent Time‹: Oral History Narratives, Nostalgia and Girls' Safety in the 1950s and 1960s, in: *Oral History Review* 42 (2015), pp. 50-69; Barbara Shircliffe, ›We Got the Best of That World‹: A Case for the Study of Nostalgia in the Oral History of School Segregation, in: *Oral History Review* 28 (2001), pp. 59-84; Maya Sutton-Smith, Remembering Negdels: Nostalgia, Memory & Soviet-Era Herding Collectives, Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection, Spring 2017, URL: <https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2569>.

15 Linda Shopes, Beyond Trivia and Nostalgia: Collaborating in the Construction of a Local History, in: *International Journal of Oral History* 5 (1984), pp. 151-158.

The article focuses on the particularities of nostalgia of industrial workers who experienced abrupt workplace changes during the privatization, downsizing, and remaking of organizational culture in the early 1990s. Between 2010 and 2016, I led a team of researchers in recording 137 biographical narrative interviews with employees of twelve Polish socialist enterprises that were sold to multinationals in the mid-1990s.[16] Our research related to a critical strand of literature on post-socialism in East-Central Europe on the one hand and, on the other, to a wider context of labor transformations under global capitalism, and supplemented the earlier studies of transformation with its focus on how the processes of privatization and industrial reorganization were remembered by (post-)socialist employees after the decades that had passed since the ›shock therapy‹ of the 1990s.[17] In conducting the interviews, we asked for an uninterrupted life story, which we then followed up with questions relating to the interviewees' recollections of work and private life under socialism and capitalism, and to their evaluation of these two periods of their lives.

The 23 interviews analyzed for the purposes of this article derive from five factories privatized according to a similar scenario but belonging to different industrial sectors and acquired by diverse international corporations.[18] The interviews in three provincial towns in southern, northern and north-eastern Poland were conducted with employees of a chemical processing plant acquired by a German company, a pulp mill bought by an Austrian firm, and a tire manufacturer absorbed by a French corporation. Two firms

16 ›From a socialist factory to an international corporation. Archival collection of narrative biographical interviews with industry employees‹, URL: <http://odfabrykidokorporacji.pl>. The interviews are archived in the Oral History Archive of Dom Spotkań z Historią (History Meeting House) in Warsaw.

17 See Sue Bridger/Frances Pine, *Surviving Post-Socialism. Local Strategies and Regional Responses in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*, London 1998; Michael Burawoy/Katherine Verdery (eds), *Uncertain Transition. Ethnographies of Change in the Postsocialist World*, Lanham 1998; Elizabeth C. Dunn, *Privatizing Poland. Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor*, Ithaca 2004; Chris Hann (ed.), *Postsocialism. Ideals, Ideologies, and Practices in Eurasia*, London 2002; Caroline Humphrey, *The Unmaking of Soviet Life. Everyday Economies after Socialism*, Ithaca 2002; Kaja Kaźmierska/Katarzyna Waniek (eds), *Telling the Great Change. The Processes of the Systemic Transformation in Poland in Biographical Perspective*, Łódź 2020; David A. Kideckel, *Getting by in Postsocialist Romania. Labor, the Body, and Working-Class Culture*, Bloomington 2008; Adam Mrozowicki, *Coping with Social Change. Life Strategies of Workers in Poland's New Capitalism*, Leuven 2011; David Ost, *Defeat of Solidarity. Anger and Politics in Postcommunist Europe*, Ithaca 2005; Kinga Pozniak, *Nowa Huta. Generations of Change in a Model Socialist Town*, Pittsburgh 2014; Alison Stenning et al., *Domesticating Neo-Liberalism. Spaces of Economic Practice and Social Reproduction in Post-Socialist Cities*, Malden 2010; Aleksandra Sznajder Lee, *Transnational Capitalism in East Central Europe's Heavy Industry. From Flagship Enterprises to Subsidiaries*, Ann Arbor 2016; Vera Trappmann, *Fallen Heroes in Global Capitalism. Workers and the Restructuring of the Polish Steel Industry*, London 2013; Katherine Verdery, *What Was Socialism, and What Comes Next?*, Princeton 1996.

18 Fifteen audio interviews are archived under AHM reference numbers: IS_1_0018; IS_1_0007; IS_1_0019; IS_1_0006; IS_3_0061; IS_3_0059; IS_3_0023; IS_3_0026; IS_3_0025; IS_3_0033; IS_3_0032; IS_3_0096; IS_3_0097; IS_3_0111; IS_3_0107. Others are only available in the form of anonymized transcripts due to specific arrangements with the interviewees. The edited versions of all these interviews were published in the collection: Aleksandra Leyk/Joanna Wawrzyniak, *Cięcia. Mówiona historia transformacji [Cuts. Oral History of Transformation]*, Warsaw 2020. The section of this article on two modes of remembrance of transformation draws on the overview presented in the introductory chapter of this book.

were located in Warsaw: the chocolate manufacturer Wedel, dating back to the late nineteenth century, which after 1989 was taken over in turns by an American, a British and an Asian corporation;[19] and the automobile factory FSO (Fabryka Samochodów Osobowych [Passenger Automobile Factory]), a symbol of the Polish socialist automotive industry and of the hopes for capitalist modernization when it was acquired by a Korean company in the 1990s.[20] In the long run and with the exception of FSO, which collapsed in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis of 1997, all privatizations were successful – the factories succeeded in staying on the market as subsidiaries.

Amongst the narrators, diverse in terms of gender, class, and political views, were former chief executives, managers, trade union representatives, administrative staff, and shop floor workers. Born after the Second World War, they began their professional careers in the 1960s and 1970s. They spent the most of their professional lives in a single factory. Their spaces of experience and their horizons of expectation were shaped by the modernization of Polish industry in the 1970s based on Western patents and loans; by the 1980–81 anti-systemic revolt of the Solidarity trade union and social movement; and by the country's economic depression in the 1980s. In their prime, they entered a period of transformation which radically changed their workplaces. Most of them remained employed until their retirement, while others changed jobs or went on to collect pre-retirement allowance. What makes this particular group interesting vis-à-vis the current state of research is that they do not belong to the widely researched category of ›losers‹ of the transformation processes associated with Poland's once predominantly industrial sites, such as a textile center in Łódź (central Poland)[21] or a coal mine in Wałbrzych (Silesia).[22] And yet, as we shall see, this group represents the ethos of industrial milieus affected by nostalgia for the socialist past.

There are various means of isolating nostalgia from oral history accounts, including a focus on individual narrative strategies, metaphors used, and non-verbal forms of expression. However, for the purposes of this article, I was interested in the most general content of the interviews, as I sought to answer three questions: what stories do the interviewees tell about the socialist past and the transition moment? What value judgments do they convey? To what extent are their stories and values nostalgic about industrial socialism? Technically speaking, I coded fragments of interviews about work experience under socialism and about the transition moment; and I tried to find the dominant themes of these recollections.

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19 On this factory, see Karolina Mikołajewska, Alienation and Rush towards Change: Introducing Capitalism to a State-Owned Polish Enterprise, in: *Oral History* 42 (2014) issue 2, pp. 69-80.

20 Mariusz Jastrząb/Joanna Wawrzyniak, On Two Modernities of the Polish Automotive Industry: The Case of *Fabryka Samochodów Osobowych* and Its Staff (1948–2011), in: *Acta Poloniae Historica* 115 (2017), pp. 37-68.

21 Agata Zysiak et al., *From Cotton and Smoke. Łódź – Industrial City and Discourses of Asynchronous Modernity 1897–1994*, Łódź 2018.

22 Tomasz Rakowski, *Hunters, Gatherers, and Practitioners of Powerlessness. An Ethnography of the Degraded in Postsocialist Poland, transl. Søren Gauger*, New York 2016.

In the next sections of this article, following a brief summary of the neoliberal breakthrough in Poland, I discuss two main modes of remembering transformation, namely as future- and past-oriented. While the former reflects the mainstream neoliberal narrative of the 1990s, the latter has been more open to nostalgic feelings towards socialism. I then reconstruct two main themes of post-socialist nostalgia: the sociability and agency of the workforce. As well as being the most common themes in the analyzed interviews, they also bring with them a reflective potential regarding what is felt to be missing in the post-1989 work environment. In the concluding section, I argue that this nostalgic potential has been repressed not only by the mainstream neoliberal narrative but also by the mnemonic framework of post-socialist heritage institutions. By concentrating on political representations of the Solidarity movement, they failed to provide space for other forms of industrial memory.

2. The Neoliberal Breakthrough in Poland

In East-Central Europe, the so-called transformation meant a radical remodeling of political, economic, social and cultural institutions and coincided with an acceleration of global capitalism in the 1990s.[23] The governments of the former socialist bloc yielded to the pressure of international institutions and the ideology of the Washington Consensus. The focus on budget discipline, liberalization of markets, and the implementation of privatization processes seemed to be the only viable means of wresting the region from a deep economic depression. Experts, social scientists, and media commentators argued for the universal role of the market.[24] Even though the term ›neoliberalism‹ itself was not in frequent use at the time in the region (›market economy‹ or ›capitalism‹ were more common), a large share of the political and cultural elites saw no alternative to the neoliberal scenario.[25] East-Central European countries, wrote anthropologist Michał Buchowski, ›accepted neoliberalism as an idea for organizing the economic, social and cultural order. Sold to the [region's] societies as a package, it became a hegemonic discourse, ceaselessly reproduced at different levels of public life.‹[26]

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23 Nina Bandelj, *From Communists to Foreign Capitalists. The Social Foundations of Foreign Direct Investment in Postsocialist Europe*, Princeton 2008; Dorothee Bohle/Béla Greskovits, *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*, Ithaca 2012; Philipp Ther, *Europe since 1989. A History*, Princeton 2017.

24 Jacek Kochanowicz, Private Suffering, Public Benefit: Market Rhetoric in Poland, 1989–1993, in: *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 28 (2014), pp. 103-118; Rudolf Kučera, Making Standards Work: Semantics of Economic Reform in Czechoslovakia, 1985–1992, in: *Zeithistorische Forschungen/ Studies in Contemporary History* 12 (2015), pp. 427-447.

25 Jane Hardy, *Poland's New Capitalism*, London 2009.

26 Michał Buchowski, *Czyściec. Antropologia neoliberalnego postsocjalizmu [Purgatory. The Anthropology of Neoliberal Post-Socialism]*, Poznań 2017, p. 25 (translation by the author).

In Poland, fast institutional changes occurred against the background of an exceptionally dire situation: the decline of industry and the still robust role of the industrial class underpinned by the legacy of the Solidarity movement. The decisions of the first democratic government backed by international advisors were guided by the promise of reducing the country's enormous foreign debt. In 1990, the government implemented a host of laws developed by the team of Minister of Finance Leszek Balcerowicz, aiming at controlling hyperinflation and introducing macroeconomic reforms in the spirit of the Washington Consensus, including its postulate of speedy privatization of the industrial sector. The plan was initially supported by Solidarity, whose members feared the takeover of state property by members of the socialist nomenklatura. The participation of foreign capital in privatization was to ensure the success of the systemic transformation, thanks not only to the funds involved, but also to technologies, know-how and market outlets. As early as 1996, when a majority of promising enterprises had been privatized, Poland – by virtue of its admission to the OECD, as well as its efforts to join the European Union and the World Trade Organization – began to be perceived as a stable Central European market.

As a result of these processes, within a few years Poland's social landscape underwent radical changes. During the first four years of the transformation period, the number of industry employees shrank by almost a third. The ›shock therapy‹, as Balcerowicz's Plan came to be called, promptly resulted in a clash between the liberal values prioritizing economic calculation and the workers' mounting disappointment, fear, and anger. During the two critical years of 1992 and 1993, a total of approximately 14,000 strikes were organized, which demonstrated the lack of social approval of the rapid transition to a market economy. The drastic increase in unemployment in the 1990s contributed not only to the disintegration of the industrial class and their growing aversion towards, and distrust of, politicians and trade unions, but also to the gradual decline in support for reforms, including privatizations with foreign capital. Time pressure and the absence of fully developed institutional and legal instruments played a significant role here. Despite a diversity of structures, agencies, expert bodies and opinions, privatization processes were often chaotic, which did not inspire confidence in them.[27]

Those privatized enterprises which managed to survive on the market as subsidiaries of global corporations underwent major changes and adapted to post-Fordist modes of organizing work and production. Mass layoffs were accompanied by a rapid shrinking of the social fabric of the workplace, which once served not only to legitimize

27 Barbara Błaszczyk/Piotr Kozarzewski (eds), *Zmiany w polskich przedsiębiorstwach. Własność, restrukturyzacja, efektywność [Changes in Polish Enterprises. Ownership, Restructuring, Efficiency]*, Warsaw 2007; Juliusz Gardawski (ed.), *Polacy pracujący a kryzys fordyzmu [Working Poles and the Crisis of Fordism]*, Warsaw 2009; Andrzej Karpiński et al., *Jak powstawały i jak upadały zakłady przemysłowe w Polsce. Losy po 1989 roku zakładów zbudowanych w PRL-u [How Industrial Plants Were Established and How They Collapsed in Poland. The Fate of the Factories Built in the Polish People's Republic]*, Warsaw 2013; Maria Jarosz, *Foreign Owners and Polish Employees of Privatized Enterprises*, Warsaw 1997.

Miners during a general strike at the Sieroszowice Copper Mine owned by the KGHM Polska Miedz SA copper combine in Sieroszowice, Poland, 10 August 1992
(picture-alliance/PAP/Adam Hawalej)

socialism but also to facilitate communal relations, providing a space for education, recreation, caring for one another, and leisure. Warehouses, resorts, clinics, technical schools, and nurseries were either sold or given away. Factory flats were sold to the tenants at preferential rates. The owners resold them later on the open market, which meant that the workers ceased to live as the tight-knit group they once were. The older generation who stayed on in the factories had to cope with new priorities, new, usually younger, colleagues, new bosses, new means of communication, and new technologies. One effect of this was that social relations, friendships, and mutual trust were considerably weakened. The change affected everyone, albeit in different ways, be they a manual worker, executive, president, or a trade union activist.

3. Two Modes of Remembering the Transition in Industrial Milieus

At the time of recording our interviews, in the mid-2010s, the transition moment was remembered in very diverse ways. The specific incidents described by the interviewees differed according to the industry branch, corporate culture of the new owner, factory location, and their profession, class and gender; and the meanings and emotions they attached to what had happened to their factories and their lives in the 1990s varied. However, beyond many particularities, our research revealed two general and dominant modes of remembering the transition: a ›there-was-no-alternative‹ future-oriented approach and a ›moral economy‹ past-oriented approach. The former was a direct reflection of the neoliberal mainstream narrative of the 1990s and comprised ideas of rational economic calculation, neoliberal work ethic, and managerial technocracy. It emphasized values such as modernization, technological development, a strong position on the global markets, improvements in the organization, appearance and safety of a workplace, as well as the prosperity of future generations and the benefit to the local community and the country in general. By contrast, the other dominant mode of remembering the transition placed the decay of community values at its core, often drawing examples from the socialist past. The decision to use ›moral economy‹ to label various forms of dissatisfaction about the downsizing and reorganization of post-socialist factories follows those reinterpretations of E.P. Thompson's original idea that stress its significance for deindustrialization.[28] In general, the concept denotes norms and values evoked during the processes of social groups becoming disembedded from their traditional institutional settings as a result of market forces. As I will show below, the moral economy of Polish industrial staff expressed itself in nostalgia for some forms of organization of work under socialism.

28 Tim Strangleman, Deindustrialisation and the Historical Sociological Imagination: Making Sense of Work and Industrial Change, in: *Sociology* 51 (2017), pp. 466-482; E.P. Thompson, The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century, in: *Past & Present* 50 (1971), pp. 76-136.

Unsurprisingly, the ›there-was-no-alternative‹ mode was displayed more readily by those able to exert some agency in the 1990s, i.e. higher-ranking employees, including executives and managers, engineers, and highly qualified manual workers. The narrative of modernization they developed functioned on two planes of reference: on the level of the whole enterprise, the local community and even the entire country; and on the level of personal experience. On the general level, they did not so much articulate an uncritical enthusiasm for the ongoing change, but rather the conviction that there was no escape from it. The radical restructuring of the company was perceived as inevitable because it alone ensured survival within a rapidly changing global capitalist market. On the personal level, the interviewees mentioned opportunities to acquire new skills and improve their qualifications thanks to the access to new technologies, foreign experts and know-how furnished by the parent companies, as well as the availability of specialized training and language courses. They told stories of promotions and a sense of appreciation for a work ethos based on individualism, hard work, and commitment to restructuring. They drew attention to salary and wage increases and improvements in occupational health and safety, such as a significant reduction in harmful conditions (e.g. noise, dirt, and contact with hazardous substances). Finally, they spoke of adventure, overcoming adversity, and deriving satisfaction from their own achievements. Some of these recollections demonstrate traits of nostalgia for the 1990s rather than for socialism. Sentimental anecdotes from socialist times do appear at the biographical level, but as recollections of little importance for the future-oriented reflection on the past.

The recollections of mass layoffs in the 1990s only somewhat tarnished this positive image of change. In some cases, mass redundancies involved close friends and relatives losing their jobs. For instance, a senior machinist from Świecie, a paper mill privatized by an Austrian company, recounted that he could keep only two employees out of a group of twenty mechanics he had supervised in the 1980s when his factory was restructured. He had to select himself who would be dismissed, without being given any external criteria. Even though he managed to place some of them in other departments and to secure unemployment benefits or pre-retirement allowance for others, and despite his explanations that ›it's not me letting you go, it's the system‹, he remembered that his former employees would not shake his hand upon leaving the job.[29]

One way to cope with memories like these was to stick to the neoliberal narrative with its argument that incurring short-term social costs was necessary in order to attain economic growth and improvement in living standards in the long run, and to discredit the socialist economy and its full employment policy as irrational from the standpoint of a logic of profit and efficiency. This was articulated emphatically by an engineer from the same factory, who reduced employment by two-thirds after his promotion to the position of an executive in charge of restructuring human resources:

29 AHM, IS_3_0033, interview recorded on 29 May 2014, 3h43, Świecie.

›I had a mission to fulfill, and I was aware that if we did nothing, it would have been to the detriment of the majority, or everyone, both the employees and the region. So, some people experienced the hardship of losing a job and failed to find another one. It was certainly hard for them, but it is possible that in hindsight they also found a justification and a conviction that it was for the good of their children, perhaps grandchildren, because this work will last longer and will be for the next generations. I sincerely hope so.‹[30]

In contrast to the notion that ›there was no alternative‹, the ›moral economy‹ mode of remembering the transition was used by employees at various levels, from engineers to shop floor workers, who found no place for themselves in the neoliberal narrative, even if they did not incur material losses during the transformation. Not unlike the ›there was no alternative‹ narratives, a significant share of the many micro-narratives, anecdotes and reflections focused on layoffs. However, they were seen not as a necessary step to a better future but rather as the ultimate threat to the industrial community and a source of loyalty conflicts: ›A family member loses a job. [You experience] a sense of guilt that you stayed on the job while she was forced out. Why won't you do it for your sister [get your sister a job], for your cousin? You, a member of the supervisory board? I saw despair. These women were made redundant overnight: in Świecie, where there was practically no work for women‹, recollected a female engineer who, despite making a career in the post-transformation period, describes the 1990s as a nightmare.[31]

Importantly, the interviewees did not defend the full employment policy of the socialist era. Several narrators mentioned that ›drunkards‹, ›thieves‹, and ›shirkers‹ needed to go, but the lack of transparent redundancy criteria – and the tacit ageist or anti-female policies – were criticized. The interviewees remembered the layoffs as being conducted in a rash, illogical, haphazard manner. They complained about the chaos and the fast pace of the decisions. Criticism of the layoffs extended to contesting the employment policy more generally for valuing youth over experience or attachment to the company. Senior employees vividly remember when the generation of the ›young wolves‹ made their first appearance in the workplace – the fresh university graduates who, upon starting the job, immediately landed senior positions because they spoke English.[32] The ›young wolves‹, lacking attachment to their workplace and frequently changing jobs, were said to lack respect for traditions and for skills perfected by experience. ›They treated the company as a career springboard. For the purposes of their CVs, they needed to be placed in a listed company, in some appropriate department, to have an executive or a specialist position. They did not stay with us for longer than a year, maybe two or three. They went higher. [...] They made a mess and left.‹[33]

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30 AHM, IS_3_0032, interview recorded on 22 May 2014, 2h55, Świecie.
31 AHM, IS_3_0026, interview recorded on 11 April and 16 May 2014, Świecie.
32 AHM IS_1_0012, interview recorded on 26 June, 19 August and 12 September 2011, Warsaw.
33 AHM IS_3_0026, interview recorded on 11 April and 16 May 2014, Świecie.

The moral economy of layoffs is also about dashed hopes that the companies would see older employees as assets – with all their experience, substantive and institutional knowledge, commitment, loyalty, attachment to the company and the brand, and sense of identification with the workplace. These criteria, however, would ultimately lose out to the vague logic underlying the redundancies. The result was regret, bitterness, and a sense of injustice. One of the female workers recalled: ›The foreman kept asking me to come in on Saturdays to clean up. I would always go. [...] A steam hose and two or three pairs of gloves: the hose was scalding hot. And I would always go, wouldn't I? And in the changing room they all made fun of me, saying there was never enough work [at home] for me because I only had one child, so that's why I worked Saturdays. [...] When they started laying people off, I thought to myself: if you never refused work, you'll be protected. But my dedication didn't count, did it? That hurt a lot.‹[34]

The moral economy mode of remembering the transition also concentrates on criticizing rising competition, anxiety, and insecurity, the deteriorating work atmosphere, changes in workspace, lack of time for maintaining social relations or absence of attachment to the workplace and co-workers. New disciplinary techniques, especially much stricter supervision of shop floor and office workers, made it difficult to maintain social ties. Talking during production was forbidden and movement around the shop floor restricted. As the worker quoted above related, ›if [the supervisor] had managed me directly, it would have been tolerable. But he just stood there on the landing and watched. Just like in a prison.‹[35] Employees at nearly all levels encountered new professional demands: learning foreign languages or computer skills, as well as mastering new production, accounting, or reporting technologies. The interviewees spoke of mounting rivalry, competition with new, younger staff members, and a high level of stress. Those who successfully met the demands admitted to self-exploitation: ›I reached a point where I would start at nine o'clock and I would leave at two, three or four o'clock in the morning. That was seven days a week‹, a senior manager from the chocolate factory said.[36] An electrician from the same factory echoed, ›those who gave in to self-doubt and couldn't handle this, would end up in a different department or on the street‹.[37]

34 Anonymized interview, not archived in AHM DSH, recorded in 2015. Fragments published in Leyk/Wawrzyniak, *Cięcia* (fn 18), pp. 53-67.

35 Anonymized interview, not archived in AHM DSH, recorded in 2015. Fragments published in Leyk/Wawrzyniak, *Cięcia* (fn 18), p. 53-67.

36 AHM IS_1_0018, interview recorded on 26 April 2012, 2h22, Warsaw.

37 AHM IS_1_0007, interview recorded in 2012, 2h22, Warsaw.

4. Themes of Post-Socialist Industrial Nostalgia: Sociability and Agency at Work

Against the backdrop of abrupt neoliberal change, a rise of nostalgia for the socialist ›golden age‹ was already becoming apparent in 1993–97 after the post-communist parties had won the elections in Poland. Sociological surveys from the time showed that the 1970s, in particular, were fondly remembered.[38] Similar attitudes were observed in other countries of the region. Kristen Ghodsee's influential ethnographic account of the social and economic changes in Bulgaria connected the rise of nostalgia for socialism with the destructive ways in which the transition to a market economy was handled.[39] However, the interviews collected in our project showed that such compelling narratives about the role of nostalgia in transition economies, though indicating significant trends, require qualification. For our interviewees, nostalgia was not the only way of remembering socialism. Rather, a distinctive feature of all interviews was their ambiguity towards socialism. There was certainly no ›regretful memory‹ for the ideology of the socialist system: Marxism-Leninism was either ignored, disregarded, ridiculed, or criticized. Narrators, especially former Solidarity members, criticized the country's dependence on the USSR, corrupt power relations, the lack of freedom of speech, various forms of injustice, and shortages of consumer goods. The communist party was represented as an annoying element which made life difficult even if it was benign in the 1970s and 1980s. The critical references to socialist times at the workplace level also related to hazardous work conditions, dirt, stench, and contact with harmful substances.

By contrast, the ›regretful memory‹ related mainly to social relations and community values in the workplace. The interviewees clearly idealized this dimension of factory life, unlike other sources from the period which speak of alienation, denunciations, humiliations, rivalries, thefts, and alcoholism. In the oral history accounts, such negative phenomena are marginalized, if mentioned at all. Post-socialist nostalgia can be understood against the background of stressful memories of the transition. It completes the moral economy picture by offering representations of relations at work which are driven not by economic calculation but by mutual care, trust and respect. As such, it can be approached as a critique of post-socialist practices and an alternative vision of work relations which failed to materialize after 1989.[40] Two of its key themes were most salient in the analyzed interviews: nostalgia for the sociability, the ›family-like‹ forms of working life, and nostalgia for (one's own or class) agency.

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38 Piotr T. Kwiatkowski, *Pamięć zbiorowa społeczeństwa polskiego w okresie transformacji [Collective Memory of Polish Society in the Period of Transformation]*, Warsaw 2008, p. 348.

39 Kristen Ghodsee, *Lost in Transition. Ethnographies of Everyday Life After Communism*, Durham 2011.

40 Joanna Wawrzyniak, Transforming Industry: On the Corporate Origins of the Post-Socialist Industrial Nostalgia in Poland, in: Joachim von Puttkamer/Włodzimierz Borodziej/Stanislav Holubec (eds), *From Revolution to Uncertainty. The Year 1990 in Central and Eastern Europe*, London 2019, pp. 182-201; Karolina Mikołajewska-Zając/Joanna Wawrzyniak, Nostalgia jako narzędzie krytyki transformacji:

The first theme is linked to the longing for a social space conducive to sociability and providing a sense of personal security. As in numerous other cases of industrial work, the respondents employ the metaphor of the factory as a second home and the factory employees as a family. One of the founding fathers of nostalgia studies, the British sociologist Yiannis Gabriel, considered this metaphor fundamental to community-building in all sorts of organizations because it describes a form of social life where all individual needs are fulfilled through solidarity and care. This metaphor is also associated with nostalgia for a particular place (the factory premises), as well as the memory of ›significant others‹ such as colleagues/peers, or company founders.[41]

In the case of socialist factories, this reference was quite literal, given their policies of employing whole families. In addition, the welfare world of socialist enterprises with sites belonging to production plants, such as allotment gardens or holiday resorts, helped to strengthen robust interpersonal bonds. These spaces of conviviality were remembered fondly and recalled in numerous recollections as a second home that was lost in the transition process. A sentimental account by a constructor from the car factory captures the sense of rupture and unwanted discontinuity caused by the political and economic change: ›My sons didn't call my friends »Mister or Miss so-and-so«, they called them »Uncle« and »Auntie«. It was a great thing but later on [after 1989] these friendships sadly disappeared. I don't know, maybe because of the political events that appeared on the horizon?‹[42] Additionally, at the chocolate manufacturer, the family-like relations between co-workers were conflated with the collective memory of the Wedels, the family who had owned the business in the interwar period. The workers repeated numerous stories about the Wedels and liked to call themselves ›the Wedel family‹, despite the fact that the owners had left the factory after its nationalization in the late 1940s.[43]

In female workers' stories, personal bonds took the form of mutual help and group solidarity revealing itself even in the most intimate situations: ›The idea was not to gossip. What happened in the lab, stayed in the lab. There were no cases of one girl telling on another. If you needed something, you would say: »Listen, I've got visited by Aunt Flo, you know.« »Okay, no problem. I'll come to your afternoon shift now, and you do the night.« As they say, one for all, all for one. I didn't take any parental leave because if necessary, we would substitute for each other‹, said a lab technologist from Świecie.[44] Such forms of female companionship came to an end during the time of

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Mit dobrego właściciela w opowieściach pracowników fabrycznych [Nostalgia as a Tool of Criticism of Transformation: The Myth of a Good Owner in the Stories of Factory Workers], in: *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej [Qualitative Sociology Review]* 12 (2016) issue 2, pp. 36-54.

41 Yiannis Gabriel, Organizational Nostalgia – Reflections on ›The Golden Age‹, in: Stephen Fineman (ed.), *Emotion in Organizations*, London 1993, pp. 118-141, here pp. 125-131.

42 AHM IS_3_0097, interview recorded on 22 April and 13 May 2015, 3h38, Warsaw.

43 AHM IS_1_0006, interview recorded on 28 April and 7 May 2010, 5h12, Warsaw.

44 AHM IS_3_0023, interview recorded on 22 March 2014, 1h20, Świecie.

transformation layoffs. The interviewee finished her story: ›That's when the panic started. It seems to me they made it so people would tell on each other, so the girls would start bickering.‹

The class and gender content of post-socialist nostalgia is particularly visible in the longing for informal hierarchies. Female shop floor workers expressed a nostalgic affection for paternalistic forms of organization, alluding to such protective figures as the good father, the wise old master, the maternal supervisor, or a helpful, sisterly or brotherly co-worker, symbolizing order, care and fairness in workplace relations. While engineers valued peer friendships and horizontal relations, the strong patriarchal traits re-emerge in stories of the executives who spoke at length of how they took care of the personal affairs of their employees, finding apartments for them, helping them to acquire scarce goods, and administering fair punishment for pilfering or drinking on the job. The nostalgia for a patriarchy ensuring emotional and social security found renewed expression in the time of post-1989 transformation. Of twelve foreign companies that we analyzed in our project, a French corporation, which remained a family business in the 1990s, evoked the best memories. François Michelin, called ›Grandpa‹, was remembered as a good host and caring benefactor embodying the hopes for a positive outcome of the transformations: ›a family company with authentic, timeless values confronted with today's world, with competition, and with the atrocities of capitalism, too‹.[45] As with the story of the Wedels, the Michelins were remembered as the fair, good owners, giving prestige and protection to the extended family of workers.

Besides a nostalgia for the lost sociability at the workplace, the transformation also brought about a complementary type of nostalgia, namely a longing for lost agency – one's own, or that of the whole group. An electrician from the car factory hinted at how sociability could be turned into class agency. After telling stories of how ›over a beer, we talked about work. There was comradeship, more than anything. There was no rivalry.‹, he recalled workers' demonstrations in the 1980s: ›There were hundreds of workers! When we were leaving the factory [...], it was a line the length of the whole of Jagiellońska Street. It was sheer power! Power that forced the authorities to embark on talks, on dialogue. But now there is nobody there, and there won't be ever again. Everything has been shattered.‹[46]

Engineers and qualified blue-collar workers who actively participated in the industrial modernization of the 1970s spoke of this era as a period of constant adventure. One of them, referring to building a factory in the city of Olsztyn, underscored the agency of the industrial milieu: ›The process of staff formation, management, organization was fascinating. Analogies to pioneering, to the Wild West, totally came to mind. [...] It was then that couples would form, children would be born. These were hard times but our own.‹[47] Despite higher wages and the availability of new technologies in

45 AHM IS_3_0059, interview recorded on 23 June 2014, 2h53, Olsztyn.
46 AHM IS_3_0096, interview recorded on 19 May and 24 June 2015, 2h58, Warsaw.
47 AHM IS_3_0059, interview recorded on 23 June 2014, 2h53, Olsztyn.

the 1990s, engineers and qualified workers missed the time when their creativity was strengthened by the experience of the shortage economy. Polish factories suffered an incessant stream of equipment failures and had no foreign currency to buy spare parts or new machines. The narrators shared lively stories of how they managed to solve such production problems through their own ingenuity, which enabled them to move up in the company's informal hierarchy. As an electrician from the Wedel factory reminisced, ›I was independent. No one controlled me. [...] After a couple of repairs [of an Italian unit], my ratings among the managers and foremen went up – from now on, they wanted no one else to do that. It was a new unit, but it kept breaking down. And if a unit fails, it causes all sorts of problems, the chocolate gets dry. People saw that I could fix this the fastest so they wouldn't have to scrape the chocolate off. [...] I loved that department and was appreciated there.‹[48]

A specific form of nostalgia for lost agency and unrealized alternatives was voiced by executives who had run the factories just before they were privatized, at the outset of the 1990s. They recollected numerous episodes in which they had taken part in countless meetings, study trips abroad, and negotiations with the state representatives and foreign investors, to find the best possible way of rescuing their factories from liquidation. The memory of this period of independence, self-reliance, and initiative in running the companies and in planning for their future continued to be strong even though this moment was short-lived because the decision-making process was soon moved to the governmental level. The nostalgic vision of their own agency in this process was accompanied by expressions of dashed hopes and reflections on alternative forms of privatization and, most frequently, a yearning for ways in which the company could have been kept ›in Polish hands‹, allowing for a minority share of foreign investment only, or privatization through a joint management and employee buyout. Some of our interlocutors still found it difficult to fully reconcile themselves with the experience of the gradual loss of agency and the feeling that the company was no longer ›theirs‹.[49] In this way, the socialist past was also nationalized and remembered as exclusively Polish.

5. Restorative, Reflective, or Repressed Nostalgia?

All such accounts of regretful memory of lost family-like sociability and agency hint at values that have been missing in the new capitalist corporate work environment rather than presenting an accurate picture of working conditions under socialism. But what about the critical potential of this nostalgia? It is not easy to align these accounts with either of Svetlana Boym's types of nostalgia. According to Boym, restorative nostalgia

48 AHM IS_1_0007, interview recorded in 2012, 2h22, Warsaw.

49 AHM IS_1_0019, interview recorded in 2010 and on 17 April 2012, 4h32, Warsaw. IS_3_0060, interview recorded on 8 September 2014, 6h14 min, Olsztyn.

is associated with a return to the genuine traditions, and at times with beliefs in conspiracies and dark forces that destroyed the good old world. Reflective nostalgia, meanwhile, accepts the ambiguities, intricacies, and discontinuities of the past. Some of the statements recorded in our project are indeed ›restorative‹, such as those of a lab technician from Świecie: ›Everything used to be good as long as there was communism and as long as Celuloza [the company] was state-owned. But ever since it was sold and all those restructurings started, horrible things happened – less educated people, parents of sick children, people who couldn't cope, they all had to leave. It was downright awful.‹[50] Others are ›reflective‹ in the way they combine nostalgia with a sense of irony, both critical and positive attitudes to socialism, and the ability to accept the capitalist changes. These nuances can be clearly discerned, for instance, in the account of an engineer, who, after sharing a few anecdotes about shortages and breakdowns in the newly opened plant in the 1970s, concluded that ›today the absurd aspects are seen more sharply but we were young then; we had a passion, we wanted to do something in life. This was our workplace – we did not care, did not notice that we were a part of something strange‹.[51] The latter part of his story contains not only criticism of both systems but also a search for opportunities in each of them.

It seems that ›reflective‹ and ›restorative‹ nostalgia are not clearly opposed to one another in personal accounts. The idea that post-industrial nostalgia (including ›restorative‹ accounts of socialism) might have a reflective function in society and enrich public discourse on the ambiguities of the past and present is worth retaining but needs greater consideration from a public memory perspective.

On this point, Stefan Berger in his analysis of the Ruhr region prominently argued that in order for ›reflective‹ nostalgia to become a socially productive and collectively shared sentiment, it needs to be supported by the heritage sector. This sector must be capable of delivering ›practical pasts‹ that are likely to empower communities, both to retain a sense of pride in the past and to adapt for the future. Berger also cited examples of other localities in the US and UK where the heritage sector is not very conducive to balancing industrial sentiments with post-Fordist changes.[52] In Poland, where the regime change and deindustrialization took place simultaneously, collective memory processes were complicated even further and resulted in a discrepancy between the content of vernacular industrial memory and political memory, which to a large extent dictates how industrial socialism can or cannot be turned into heritage.

Post-socialist industrial nostalgia was, in effect, repressed in two ways. On the one hand, as discussed above, the entire neoliberal setting of the 1990s injected into society a powerful, dominant narrative that was not supportive of any positive memories of socialist industrialism. On the other hand, post-1989 memory politics was dominated

50 AHM IS_3_0023, interview recorded on 22 March 2014, 1h20, Świecie.

51 AHM IS_3_0059, interview recorded on 23 June 2014, 2h53, Olsztyn.

52 Berger, Industrial Heritage and the Ambiguities of Nostalgia (fn 5). See also Berger's contribution to this issue.

by political parties with their roots in the Solidarity movement of the 1980s. In the short-lived moments when the post-communist parties were in power, they adhered to neoliberal politics of memory in their renunciation of socialism.[53] The memory climate and policies have therefore largely been shaped by the liberal center (first the UW [Unia Wolności, ›Freedom Union‹] and later the PO [Platforma Obywatelska, ›Civic Platform‹]), and the right wing represented by the conservative AWS (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność, ›Solidarity Electoral Action‹) and in the last decade by the populist PiS (Prawo i Sprawedliwość, ›Law and Justice‹). These two political camps have dominated the representations of socialism and transformation in the fields of political memory, public memory and heritage.[54] Despite many differences, they have had one thing in common – they have disregarded or condemned any positive memories of everyday life in socialist times, because they rooted their legitimacy in the anti-communist opposition.[55] However, they have clashed with each other over the idealized representations of Solidarity and interpretations of the political and economic upheaval. In the narrative of the liberal center, Solidarity was a movement fighting for human rights and democracy and the transformation was another step along the ›Polish road to freedom‹. According to the story of the political right, Solidarity fought for national, traditional, and Catholic values, and the moment of transformation was highjacked by the conspiracy of the liberal elite with post-communists who betrayed Solidarity's ideals.

These memory politics had consequences for the heritage sector in Poland. For instance, a narrative about the democratizing role of Solidarity with the simplified image of political struggles under socialism and with no place for criticism of the austerities of transformation has been particularly salient in the main museums relating to the experience of socialist industrial workers, the European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk[56] and the Silesian Museum in Katowice, both created by more liberal-leaning political milieus. The PiS has criticized both museums ever since it came to

53 Michael Bernhard/Jan Kubik (eds), *Twenty Years after Communism. The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*, New York 2014; James Mark et al., 1989 After 1989: Remembering the End of Communism in East-Central Europe, in: Michal Kopeček/Piotr Wciślik (eds), *Thinking through Transition. Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe After 1989*, Budapest 2015, pp. 463-504.

54 Paulina Januszewska, interview with Jerzy Halbersztadt, Demontaż instytucji kultury trwa w Polsce od dawna [The Disempowering of Cultural Institutions Has Been Going on in Poland for a Long Time], in: *Krytyka Polityczna*, 17 February 2020, URL: <https://krytykapolityczna.pl/kultura/jerzy-halbersztadt-instytucje-kultury-polin/>.

55 Kate Korycki, Memory, Party Politics, and Post-Transition Space: The Case of Poland, in: *East European Politics and Societies and Cultures* 31 (2017), pp. 518-544.

56 Florian Peters, Solidarność Yesterday – Solidarity Today? The European Solidarity Center in Gdańsk Endeavors to Combine the Past with the Present, in: Cultures of History Forum, 12 May 2015, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25626/0041>; Anna Zębińska-Witek, Przeszłość w muzeach – dwa modele reprezentacji: Analiza porównawcza Europejskiego Centrum Solidarności i Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku [The Past in Museums – Two Models of Representation: Comparative Analysis of the European Solidarity Center and the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk], in: *Teksty Drugie [Second Texts]* 4/2020, pp. 213-232.

power, and managed to replace the director of the Silesian Museum.[57] However, the core of the ideological struggle was over the political representations of historical events and not the nuances of the industrial lifeworld. Other locations also fell victim to the dominant political memory. For instance, an exhibition about Edward Gierek, First Secretary of the Communist Party (1970–80) and a symbol of industrial modernization in the 1970s, in Sosnowiec, Silesia (2018) gave rise to a heated debate (involving conflicts between the regional authorities, local police, and the prosecutor's office) about whether or not it promoted a totalitarian system, an activity criminalized by the Polish Penal Code.[58] Various other representations of industrial socialism, including, prominently, Nowa Huta, an industrial district in Kraków turned into a heritage site, tend to concentrate on the architectural utopia of socialist realism or retro-style representations of the socialist iconosphere, even if they also allude to some bygone forms of social life.[59] Overall, the peculiarity of the country that had the largest industrial opposition to the socialist regime in the 1980s is that the battles over the political meaning of this opposition have overshadowed the memories of daily life and the demise of the very industrial community from which the opposition and its subsequent political parties derived their identity and legitimacy.

In this context, an important discovery of our project was that the non-institutionalized nostalgia of the industrial class is only weakly related to the political and public memory of 1989. This nostalgia has been defined by other chronologies and frames of reference, those of factory and industry, and is therefore closer to the memory of industrial communities worldwide than to the polarized memory of post-socialist politics.[60] At the same time, the politics-driven heritage sector has not yet opened its main exhibition sites to the polyphony of voices and experiences coming ›from below‹. Nostalgia for sociability and agency has thus fallen victim to repression, involving a silencing of some representations of the past in the public space and discourse.[61] This repression marginalizes and makes invisible stories that are inconvenient or simply unimportant for the dominant narratives. Under such conditions, industrial nostalgia

57 Hili Perlson, Yet Another High-Profile Museum Director in Poland Has Been Fired From Her Post by the Local Right-Wing Government, in: Artnet News, 5 February 2020, URL: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/silesian-museum-director-fired-1769376>.

58 Piotr Purzyński/Marcin Pietraszewski, Prokuratura zainteresowała się wystawą o Edwardzie Gierku w muzeum w Sosnowcu, in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13 June 2018; Valentin Behr, When Local Memory Confronts State Historical Policy: Staging Edward Gierek's Life in Sosnowiec, in: Cultures of History Forum, 3 September 2018, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25626/0088>.

59 Dominik Bartmański, Successful Icons of Failed Time: Rethinking Post-Communist Nostalgia, in: *Acta Sociologica* 54 (2011), pp. 213-231; Britta Timm Knudsen, The Past as Staged-Real Environment: Communism Revisited in the Crazy Guides Communism Tours, Kraków, Poland, in: *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 8 (2010), pp. 139-153; Pozniak, *Nowa Huta* (fn 17), pp. 100-123.

60 Leyk/Wawrzyniak, *Cięcia* (fn 18), pp. 41-51.

61 On repression as a heritage practice, see for instance: Britta Timm Knudsen/Christoffer Kølvraa, Affective Infrastructures of Re-emergence? Exploring Modalities of Heritage Practices in Nantes, in: *Heritage & Society* 13 (2020), pp. 10-31.

has been given little opportunity to become a reflective and critically useful mechanism to protect values that remain relevant in the present, such as the importance of sociability and agency in the workplace. The story of industrial socialism as ›hard times but our own‹, with all its contradictions, therefore remains confined to personal recollections that can be teased out through oral history, and has as yet been unable to become a productive element of public memory in Poland.

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