

Summary of the Ph.D. Thesis

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The title of the thesis: **Culture of Poverty in Warsaw Praga**

Key words phrases: marginalisation, exclusion, underclass, culture of poverty, stigmatisation, deviance, family, qualitative research, Praga.

Abstract:

The aim of the qualitative research undertaken and the dissertation submitted was to show that there exists in the Warsaw district of Praga an enclave of poverty with the characteristics of a culture of poverty – satisfying conditions to identify it as this and displaying the characteristics of a culture of poverty as described in the classic theory of Oscar Lewis and other later researchers dealing with poverty.

The paper consists of two parts, theoretical and research, preceded by an introduction and closing with a conclusion and a bibliography, the whole of which is accompanied by a relatively detailed table of contents.

Outlining the theoretical perspective of reflections on the culture of poverty, I present the related concepts of marginalisation and exclusion (these, being the broadest approaches, I present first) in European discourses related to the French, Anglo-Saxon and Polish schools of sociology, their most important representatives and concepts in the discourse on social inequality. I also present, additionally, the model of European social policy shaped in these discourses. I then turn to depictions of the underclass and the phenomena of anomie, deviancy, stigmatisation, observed at the lowest rungs of the social ladder in different societies by researchers of different schools of approach. The narrowest and at the same time the closest approach to the main thesis of this study is the treatment of the culture of poverty, both in the classical approach and by later researchers; here I was mainly interested in the perspective of Polish sociologists studying the problems of poverty after the political transformation. At

the same time, I point out the special position of areas of exclusion in Mary Douglas's general theory of culture - which breaks down the Russian doll-like construction of the concepts discussed.

I begin the research section by emphasising the qualitative nature of the research, presenting the ethnographic sociological method and the research techniques used, the main ones being unstructured free interview and participatory observation. I divide the research problems into a fundamental problem - formulated in the question about the basic categories of the culture of poverty in the consciousness of its representatives in the Warsaw district of Praga - and specific problems. Among the latter are the issues of the specific characteristics of the Prague culture of poverty, the relationship of the Prague enclave of poverty with other cultures, the similarities and differences of the Prague culture of poverty and the model, the Lewisian approach, and the relationship of the phenomena observed in the Prague enclave to other approaches conceptualising Polish poverty and social marginalisation.

Characterising the research sample, I describe the method of its purposeful selection and the process of obtaining respondents, as well as the time and place of the research - a neighbourhood shrouded in criminal legend and subjected to gentrification activities. I also raise ethical issues. The results of the research are presented according to the order of the most relevant cultural categories, identified through spontaneous grounding in the Prague enclave. The analysis of the research material allows us to identify the existence of a culture of poverty in the Prague enclave with characteristic, model features as well as with local, specific features (among other things, we are able to identify local institutions organising the social life of the Prague inhabitants, such as a multifunctional backyard bench and a children's blanket).

One of the fundamental conclusions about the Prague enclave (observed in its undoubtedly current declining) is the special position of the family, which stands out both structurally and symbolically. It is not at all poverty and suffering associated with various types of social pathologies, but the family that turns out to be the basic content of the culture of poverty of Warsaw's Praga - despite the fact that it is affected by all the problems associated with the Praga environment.

The conclusions drawn from the qualitative analysis dictate that the importance of the humanistic factor in the study of human-created communities should be emphasised, and that the immanent nature of the processes of social differentiation and exclusion should be highlighted.