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Translated title:

Social Structure in Poland: Class Dimension of Social Inequality

Abstract:

In the introductory part of this paper we argue against the “death of class” hypothesis. Since 1945 in Poland social classes have been entities clearly stratified according to the basic individuals’ resources – such as formal education, occupational rank, and job income – and general attitudes toward self and society. Using historical data, we show that during the “real existing socialism” class structure was relatively egalitarian, with exception of the nomenklatura positions. Our own main empirical analysis is based on the data from the Polish Panel Survey POLPAN, a study conducted every five year since 1989. We demonstrate that social classes become more polarized with respect to general social stratification position measured by education, occupational status and income. We also find that winners of the post-communist transformation – employers, managers, and professionals – reveal stronger pro-market and pro-democracy stances than other social classes, with unskilled factory workers and farmers as most apparent opposite groups.

Key words:

social classes, post-communist transformation, pro-market attitudes, pro-democratic attitudes, Polish Panel Survey