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Translated Title:

Besides Knowledge and Wealth: Inequality in Social Capital During the Transformation

Abstract:

The article discusses the significance of social capital in Poland during the system transformation from the point of view of stratification. In the first part the theoretical and methodological issues are explored, in particular the neocapital perspective represented mainly by Nan Lin, as well as the problem of operationalizing the concept of social capital. Further, the results of analyses based on two waves of research on the lives of "transformation generation", meaning the 18-year-olds of 1989, are presented. The differentiation of this cohort in terms of number of social contacts possessed by its members is significant, which from the neocapital perspective makes it one of significant factors of inequality. Moreover, the results of analyses give grounds to the conclusion that social networks play an important role in professional careers and in psychological functioning of individuals. One basic objection against the stratification significance of social capital is the fact that its "etiology" is better accounted for by the "repeated path" hypothesis than by simple inheriting.