

Domański, Henryk and Dariusz Przybysz. 2012. "Friendship Patterns and Social Inequality."  
*International Journal of Sociology* 42(1):31-59.

Abstract:

Like patterns of intergenerational mobility, patterns of assortative mating are assumed to indicate the ease or difficulty with which individuals are able to cross social strata. Our aim was to explore whether some significant changes in friendship patterns took place and to what extent they were followed by social openness in marital choices. To examine trends in assortative mating we use the POLPAN data from 1988, 2003, and 2008. Loglinear models are applied to assess: (1) the degree of association between the educational level/occupational category of respondents and their best acquaintances; (2) patterns of barriers to friendship; and (3) variation in homogamy for acquaintances with the same education and occupational category. We found that in 2008 the strength of the association between occupational categories of respondents and their friends was lower than in 1988. Still lower was the association between occupational categories of husbands and wives. These findings suggest that in 2008 social stratification was more open if compared to the degree of openness just before the collapse of the communist system. A decline in strength of the association was paralleled by a decrease in both friendship and marital homogamy, with the most remarkable decline taking place in the category of higher managers and professionals, which suggests that the intelligentsia was more open in 2008.