

Social Structure in Poland, 1988–2003. POLPAN 2003*

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Spis treści

1	Project summary	1
2	Funding and research teams	2
3	Project description, methodology, and expected results	3
3.1	Introduction	3
3.2	Theoretical inspiration and research background	4
3.3	Research questions	4
3.4	Data and fieldwork	7
3.5	Theoretical and practical importance of our research	8
4	Endnotes	8
5	References	9

1 Project summary

The aim of this project is to continue our research on social structure and its change during the post-communist transformation in Poland. The earlier phases of our research are described in two edited volumes *Social Patterns of Being Political* (2000) and *Social Structure: Changes and Linkages* (2002), as well as in a number of journal articles. We plan to extend this research into the new century, posing the following research questions: What social divisions have been generated by technological, economic, and political transformations? What changes are occurring in the class structure of Polish society? What are the main patterns of social mobility, and how have they changed in recent years? How is social stratification reflected in the standard of living? Which social groups gain and which social groups lose – in both objective and subjective terms – during the construction of a democratic regime and a market economy? How does one's location in the social structure influence political behavior, including support for political parties? To what extent does the perception of social conflicts affect inter-group relations? Which segments of the social structure form a base of support for post-communist transformation and European integration?

Research problems implied by the above questions are important since they pertain to the allocation of individuals (who they are and where they are located in the social structure) and

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the distribution of goods (who gets what and why). Both the allocation of individuals and the distribution of goods can be more or less efficient. The allocation of individuals is effective if (a) all relevant attributes of people correspond to the requirements of their positions, and (b) ascribed attributes are ignored in the process of assigning people to jobs. Distribution of goods is efficient if goods are divided among individuals according to their merits. In our analyses, we plan to assess allocative efficiency (the level of deviation from the ascriptive model) and distributional efficiency (the level of meritocracy). Although the need for such analyses is well articulated, our research is among the first where this assessment will be conducted in a comprehensive manner.

We propose to conduct a survey among a random (probability) sample of the adult population in Poland. The sample size is determined for 2,600 respondents. In this sample 72% of the individuals are those, who were interviewed in 1988, 1993 and 1998; presently they are 36 years old or older. 28% of the individuals are younger, including 13% of those whose ages range from 21 to 25. We plan to contact all respondents prior to the interviews in order to comply with recent legal regulations.

Using a panel sample allows us to study social inequality in a period of fifteen years. Combining both the panel sample and the cross-sectional sample seems to provide an optimal solution for data collection for the dynamic and static description of social structure. The main descriptive part of our study will focus on the state of affairs for 2003, with reference to the major changes between the current year and 1988, 1993, and 1998. Analyzing the data, we will use the newest mathematical and statistical apparatus, including structural equation modeling, linear programming, and models based on differential equations.

As a final product of the proposed project, we plan to complete two edited volumes and a series of journal articles. Some of these publications will include comparative analyses of our results and those obtained for countries of East Central Europe. In addition, we plan to distribute a data set in the SPSS format containing all the data from our study. This data set – with labels in Polish and English – will be available through major archives in Poland and abroad. After consultations with our colleagues in other countries, we know that there is a genuine interest in Polish data on social inequality.

Our project has been formulated after consulting both governmental (e.g., the Department of National Economy) and non-governmental (e.g., the Institute of Public Affairs) organizations with respect to their need for information about social inequality. In addition, our project has been coordinated with another project, Trends and Reconfigurations in Polish Public Thought, financed by the Research Council of Norway. In the budget of the Norwegian project, some money is reserved for the preparation of research tools and pre-tests for our survey; funds are reserved also for distributing the data set and financing international collaboration. The Mereson Center and other units of The Ohio State University have promised to contribute to our project by buying the needed computer programs and providing financial support for the conference about our research. These financial contributions permit us to request less support from the State Committee for Scientific Research.

2 Funding and research teams

The main source of funding of the 2003 study comes from the (Polish) Committee for Scientific Research.

Kazimierz M. Słomczyński – Principal Investigator. Co-Principal Investigators: Krystyna Janicka, Anna Firkowska-Mankiewicz, Bogdan W. Mach, Krzysztof Zagórski, Elizabeth Osborn, and Maciej Kryszczuk.

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1. The Research Council of Norway

Albert A. Simkus – Principal Investigator. Co-principal investigators Kristen Ringdal, Knud Knudsen, Krzysztof Zagorski, Kazimierz M. Slomczynski, and Bogdan W. Mach.

2. The (US) Council for Eurasia and East European Research.

Kazimierz M. Slomczynski - Principal Investigator. Co-Principal Investigator: Elizabeth Osborn

3. The Mershon Center at the Ohio State University

Kazimierz M. Slomczynski and Goldie Shabad – Co-Principal Investigators

The 2003 study was finally prepared by researchers associated with the Research Team on Comparative Social Inequality: Kazimierz M. Słomczyński (Head), Krystyna Janicka (Deputy Head), Bogdan W. Mach, Anna Firkowska-Mankiewicz, Krzysztof Zagórski, Michał Bojanowski, Maciej Kryszczuk, and Katarzyna Wilk.

3 Project description, methodology, and expected results

3.1 Introduction

The research questions of our project are as follows: What social divisions have been generated by technological, economic, and political transformations? What changes are occurring in the class structure of Polish society? What are the main patterns of social mobility, and how have they changed in recent years? How is social stratification reflected in the standard of living? Which social groups gain and which social groups lose – in both objective and subjective terms – during the construction of a democratic regime and a market economy? How does one's location in the social structure influence political behavior, including support for political parties? To what extent does the perception of social conflicts affect inter-group relations? Which segments of the social structure form a base of support for post-communist transformation and European integration?

Research problems implied by the above questions are important since they pertain to the allocation of individuals (who they are and where they are located in the social structure) and the distribution of goods (who gets what and why). Both the allocation of individuals and the distribution of goods can be more or less efficient. The allocation of individuals is effective if (a) all relevant attributes of people correspond to the requirements of their positions, and (b) ascribed attributes are ignored in the process of assigning people to jobs. Distribution of goods is efficient if goods are divided among individuals according to their merits. In our analyses, we plan to assess allocative efficiency (the level of deviation from the ascriptive model) and distributional efficiency (the level of meritocracy). Although the need for such analyses is well articulated, our research is among the first where this assessment will be conducted in a comprehensive manner.

We propose to conduct a survey among a random (probability) sample of the adult population in Poland. The sample size is determined for 2,600 respondents. In this sample 72% of the individuals are those, who were interviewed in 1988, 1993 and 1998 in the POLPAN study; presently they are 36 years old or older. 28% of the individuals are younger, including 15% of those between 26 and 30 years of age (interviewed in the 1998 POLPAN study), and 13% of those between 21 and 25 years of age (not interviewed in the POLPAN study).

In our analyses, we plan to distinguish three periods of the post-communist transformation in Poland: 1989-1993, 1994-1998, and 1999-2003. For the first period, we will use data from the first wave of the POLPAN panel (Domański and Słomczyński, 1994; Słomczyński 2000); the second period corresponds to the second wave of the POLPAN (Słomczyński 2002). The main part of our analyses will refer to 2003 and to the period 1999-2003. This part will be based on a new (third) wave of the panel study, supplemented by the sub-sample of those who were 16-20 years old in 1998.

3.2 Theoretical inspiration and research background

The scope of the project is governed by the basic assumption that there is a need for the integration of the two approaches to social structure: relational and distributional. In accordance with sociological tradition, an analysis of social structure in terms of social relations, particularly relations of the control and subordination of certain social groups to others, can be identified as the class approach. Another approach concentrates on the analysis of the distribution of commonly desired goods; this is the stratification approach, for which the central question is who gets what, through what channels and with what consequences. Both approaches are interrelated, as we demonstrate in two edited volumes: *Social Patterns of Being Political* (2000) and *Social Structure: Changes and Linkages* (2002). We propose to continue both approaches in our future research.¹

Although we are receptive to theoretical innovations, we base our research on the rich tradition of Polish sociology which includes the analytical approach of Stanisław Ossowski, the class theory of Julian Hochfeld, the historical orientation of Jan Szczepański, and the research program of Włodzimierz Wesołowski. We also use modern empirical research on social structure which began in Poland with the work of Adam Sarapata, Stefan Nowak, Włodzimierz Wesołowski, Stanisław Widerszpil, Jan Małanowski, and Michał Pohoski. Their classical contributions – discussed in Wesołowski and Słomczyński (1977) – provide a framework for historical comparisons that can be made using our panel data for 1988, 1993, 1998, and 2003. For the comprehensive analyses that we plan, studies conducted by Henryk Domański, Krzysztof Zagórski, Marek Ziółkowski, Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński and Jacek Wasilewski are of great importance.

In our project, we will perform original cross-national analyses. We will focus not only on Hungary and the Czech Republic – primarily using data generated by Szelenyi and Treiman (1996), and Szelenyi (2002) – but also on all countries of Eastern Europe that may be admitted to the European Union in the first wave – that is, in addition to Hungary and the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Slovakia, and Slovenia. We will use data generated by the International Social Survey Program and the European Social Survey. We have easy access to these data sets since some of us collaborate with the contributors to these projects .

3.3 Research questions

We intend to work on several research issues raised and described in *Social Structure: Changes and Linkages* (Słomczyński 2002). Below is a list of the main issues:

1. „Old” and „new” elements in the social structure. We aim to identify both the „old” elements of social structure (in particular, those responsible for the low level of development in the country), as well as its „new” dimensions (in particular, those facilitating the economic growth). Here are the main „old” elements: (1) the nomenklatura, which is the structural implementation of directive-distributive management at both the national and the regional levels; (2) the heavy-industry working class, initially being a political

slogan but soon becoming a distinct segment of the population and an important political force in the communist state; (3) the peasantry, defined by the individual ownership of arable land, yet dependent on state-controlled access to agricultural equipment and involved in the state distributive system of agricultural products; (4) employees in redundant bureaucratic positions, actually representing hidden unemployment; (5) active organizers of the informal economy; and (6) semi-institutionalized opposition to the mainstream, communist-regime-supported, organization of life. What has happened to these segments of the social structure? How have they „adjusted” to current conditions? In our previous research, we obtained only a partial answer to these questions. Methodologically, we have improved our ability to gather the necessary information to answer these questions.

Major changes in the social structure result not only from the transformation of „old” elements but also from the emerging „new” elements, mainly stemming from the implementation of democracy and capitalism. The main new categories are: (1) career politicians, (2) full-fledged capitalists, (3) financial and managerial specialists, and (4) professionals in electronic information management. Since these categories are relatively small, to describe these groups and their location in the social structure, we will need additional material. Such material is available from the Research Center for Public Opinion (CBOS) to which we will have full access (Krzysztof Zagórski, the director of the Center, is a member of our team).

2. Changes in the class structure. In recent years a heated discussion has emerged in international sociology circles on the issue of whether class divisions are still important in contemporary capitalist countries (Clark and Lipset 1991; Hout, Brooks, and Manza 1993; Goldthorpe and Marshall 1992; Breen and Rottman 1995; Sorensen, 1991). The question of whether class „has died,” or remains alive, was also addressed in terms of post-communist societies. Slomczyński and Shabad (1977) summarized this discussion and supplied data on the evolution of social classes in East Central Europe. Using their work, we propose to apply a class schema adjusted to the post-communist transformation. We distinguish the following classes: (1) employers, (2) managers, (3) experts, (4) office workers, (5) first-line supervisors, (6) self-employed, (7) skilled manual workers, (8) unskilled manual workers, and (9) farmers. In *Social Patterns of Being Political* (2000), Słomczyński and Shabad rejected the hypothesis about the death of class (see also, Domański, 2000). However, in order to test this hypothesis in a comprehensive way, we intend to include three other class schemes – those of (1) Goldthorpe, (2) Wright, and (3) Esping-Anderson (see Grusky, 1994).
3. Social mobility. Goyder (1984) compared two approaches to the study of social mobility: the categorical analysis of the mobility table and the regression analysis of status attainment. These two approaches, still dominant in the literature on social mobility, should be considered as complementary rather than alternative (see Mach and Wesolowski, 1986). Both are represented in *Social Structure: Changes and Linkages*. We intend to continue using these approaches, broadening the scope of our analyses for new problems.

For the first time, we are able to distinguish two types of mobility: (a) structural mobility that results from eliminating old positions and creating new ones, and (b) exchange mobility that occurs among positions existing at the origin and destination. It would be useful to examine these two types of mobility in a dynamic manner, during a period of recession in particular. What happens to people forced to move because of the bankruptcy of their firms – do they find jobs in new firms, assume old positions, or become unemployed? What happens to those who resign from relatively stable positions? We are prepared to answer such questions since we are able to gather information about the history of positions.

4. Differences in the standard of living. In our previous research, we focused on how much money is allotted for food and luxury goods. In particular, we tested two hypotheses. The first hypothesis says that as the overall economy in Poland improves and the country progresses from the communist and post-communist organization of economic life, relative spending on food decreases. The second hypothesis postulates that as the overall economy in Poland improves, spending on luxury goods increases at the expense of savings. Both these hypotheses pertain to a rising standard of living. In addition, we studied housing conditions.

In future analyses, the list of variables defining standard of living should be expanded. In particular, we should include a number of variables related to interpersonal communication and information management, such as cell phones and computers. Does the new technology diminish inter-group divisions?

5. The process of adaptation to a market economy. The issue „which segments of the social structure have been the main source of support for the post-communist transformation and which segments, have been the main source of opposition” is still unresolved. In an earlier study, we found that four types of variables influence the extent of approval for systemic change: (a) the age-dependent location of an individual in the job market, (b) the individual’s economic status involving a subjective evaluation of income attainment, (c) social and cultural capital consisting of, but not limited to, educational resources, and (d) personality characteristics. Generally, persons who are younger and better located in the job market, economically advantaged, and possessing cultural and social capital express more support for systemic change than persons who are older and more poorly located in the job market, materially disadvantaged, and less educated. In addition, persons who score highly on the scales of authoritarianism and anxiety, and those with low self-esteem, express strong disapproval of systemic change.

Subsequent studies revealed that an improvement in economic status results in a reduction of negative attitudes toward systemic transformation when other factors remain controlled. These studies also demonstrated the role of personality factors – combined with structural factors – in shaping approval for the post-communist transition in Poland. Thus, we are well prepared to identify and analyze a relatively extensive set of variables influencing support for a market economy.

6. The impact of one’s location in the social structure on political attitudes and behavior. In recent studies, we focus our attention on political biographies, party preferences and voting, and support for democracy. One of the most interesting results is that both personal economic hardship and macroeconomic conditions determine protest voting, defined as switching one’s vote to an opposition party.

This result is interesting since it bridges variables defined on the micro level (personal economic hardship) and the macro level (unemployment by regional units, voivodships). An increase in the unemployment rate in the voivodship of residence directly increases the probability that an individual will engage in protest voting. Some interaction with individual income does occur. The effect of this interaction differs across social classes. We will explore it not only with respect to protest voting but also with respect to support for democracy and other political attitudes. We also intend to examine whether hardship plays a key role in „throwing the rascals out.”

7. Perception of social conflicts. In previous research, we examined the perception of conflict between rich and poor, non-manual workers and manual workers, supervisors (managers) and supervisees (employees) ordinary employees, and rulers (authority) and ruled (the rest

of society). We plan to extend the list of possible sources of conflict, including political orientation and ethnic groups. The latter should be studied in the context of generational cohorts, and attitudes toward the past (e.g., an assessment of the impact of minorities on Polish culture) and the future (e.g., orientation toward immigrants).

Compared to the initial phase of the transformation, in 1998 the impact of normally important stratification variables, such as education and occupation, diminished. In contrast, the impact of psychological variables – such as the image of the pre-1989 period – increased. Does this trend continue even fifteen years after the fall of communism?

8. Winners, losers, and the European integration. Some social groups gain from the post-communist transformation while others stand to lose. Winners are more likely than losers to be supportive of further political change. Insofar as individuals are made aware that there are winners and losers in the European integration process, support for Poland's joining the European Union is based primarily on utilitarian calculations of costs and benefits. We plan to analyze the economic bases for gains and losses in the context of the European integration.

Research issues of this proposal should be treated as interrelated. We intend to analyze them jointly in order to answer the basic question: How do both allocative and distributional efficiency change in Poland in comparison with other countries. Generally, all indicators of allocative efficiency deal with lowering the level of ascription – that is with lowering the impact of demographic and social-origin characteristics. In analyzing research issues about old and new elements of social structure, changes of in class structure, social mobility, or differentiation of the standard of living, we will focus on the impact of ascription. We will also examine the impact of IQ – at least its relatively stable components (por. Firkowska-Mankiewicz, 1999 i 2002).

Indicators of distributional efficiency refer to the relationship between individual investments and rewards. Our analyses indicate that during the post-communist transition the level of meritocracy increased. Political attitudes and behavior, the perception of social conflicts, and attitudes toward European integration form a new context for meritocracy – the main dimension of distributional efficiency which we will examine in detail.

Following the outstanding work of Amartya Sen, *Development and Freedom* (1999), all research on social structure should include freedom as an important dimension of human existence. Sen demonstrates that a large amount of social inequality stems from conditions hampering the ability of individuals to make economic decisions. Our analyses of the political context of social inequality – presented in *Social Patterns of Being Political* (2000) – form a solid base for considering allocative and distributional efficiency along with political and economic liberty. We plan to extend these analyses so that we are able to discuss Sen's problem concerning the relationship between social structure and freedom as it is broadly understood.

3.4 Data and fieldwork

The data for a comprehensive description of social structure and its changes during the post-communist transformation will be taken from a survey. In its main part, the survey will include the POLPAN panel, conducted in 1988, 1993 i 1998 (Słomczyński, Białocki, Domański, Janicka, Mach, Sawiński, Sikorska i Zaborowski, 1989; Domański i Słomczyński, 1994; Słomczyński 2000 i 2002).²

We plan to conduct our new survey in autumn of 2003. This survey will cover the entire post-communist period, 1988-2003, divided into three phases: 1988-1993, 1993-1998 i 1998-2003. However, our survey can also be treated as a cross-sectional survey for 2003. Generally, this

survey ($N = 2,600$) would be representative for the adult population aged 21 and older. The core of the sample will be the panel sample of the POLPAN study consisting respondents 36 years old or older. In addition, the sample will consist those respondents who were interviewed in 1998 (but not earlier, that is those who were 21-30 years old in 1998) and new cases (persons 21-25 years old in 2003).

The questionnaire consists primarily of items that have been extensively used in our previous research. However, the entire questionnaire is pre-tested. We are well aware of the importance of high quality field work; we will use our experience to see that the interviewers are well trained and effective. We will also control the entire coding process.

Generally, research on class structure and social stratification employs an advanced mathematical and statistical techniques. We plan to use the covariance analysis (LISREL, EQS), multidimensional scaling (MDSCAL), log-linear modeling (GLIM), multinomial logit regression (LN-MULTI), linear programming (SIMPLEX), the analysis of dynamic data (RATE), and other statistical techniques.

3.5 Theoretical and practical importance of our research

Research on social structure, belonging to basic research in sociology, is particularly important for two reasons. First, the theory of social structure – supported by empirical evidence – is necessary for the construction of other theories, including a theory of the post-communist transition. A comprehensive theory of the post-communist transition must address the question of how specific segments of the social structure react to social change and how the social structure influences this change.

Second, empirical research on social structure is needed since a number of sociological sub-fields use stratification variables – an example being the sociology of religion, the sociology of medicine, sociology of the family or sociology of youth. Moreover, research on public opinion should make a reference to particular groups and their location within the social structure. We also would like to indicate that our project has been prepared after consulting both governmental (e.g., the Department of National Economy) and non-governmental (e.g., the Institute of Public Affairs) organizations with respect to their need for information about social inequality.

Data from our project – protecting individual records according to current law – will be publicly available. We plan to distribute our data in the SPSS form on CD-disks, as is the case for other research supported by the State Committee for Scientific Research. This distribution will be carried out through data archives in Poland and abroad. In our previous studies, data were available for international cooperation as is seen in *Social Patterns of Being Political* (2000) and *Social Structure: Changes and Linkages* (2002) and a number of journal articles.

We plan to publish two edited volumes and a series of journal articles stemming from the proposed research. Both edited volumes will appear in English. We will submit the major papers to the *American Sociological Review*, the *International Journal of Sociology* and the *European Sociological Review*.

4 Endnotes

1. Edited volumes *Social Patterns of Being Political* (2000) i *Social Structure: Changes and Linkages* (2002) are a part of a final report of the project KBN 1 H02E 015 14, *Social Structure of Polish Society: Stability and Change in 1988-1998, and Forecast for 2008*, with Kazimierz M. Słomczyński as a principal investigator, and Krzysztof Zagórski, Krystyna Janicka, Bogdan W. Mach and Elizabeth Osborn as four important members

of the research team. Thus, a core of the proposed research team for the new wave of the panel study (POLPAN) is the same as in the previous wave (1998).

2. Besides the project KBN 1 H02E 015 14, Social Structure of Polish Society: Stability and Change in 1988-1998, and Forecast for 2008, members of the research team conducted other studies, including those on psychological functioning of individuals from different social backgrounds.

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