

This book is about long-term changes to class and inequality in Poland. Drawing upon major social surveys, the team of authors from the Polish Academy of Sciences offers the rare comprehensive study of important changes to the social structure from the Communist era to the present.

The core argument is that, even during extreme societal transformations, key features of social life have long-lasting, stratifying effects. The authors analyze the core issues of inequality research that best explain “who gets what and why:” social mobility, status attainment and their mechanisms, with a focus on education, occupation, and income. The transition from Communist political economy to liberal democracy and market capitalism offers a unique opportunity for scholars to understand how people move from one stratification regime to the next.

There are valuable lessons to be learned from linking past to present. Classic issues of class, stratification, mobility, and attainment have endured decades of radical social change. These concepts remain valid even when society tries to eradicate them.