

BOOKS RECOMMENDED

Polish Sociological Review Recommends:



Wiesław Gumuła

Teoria osobliwości społecznych. Zaskakująca transformacja w Polsce

**[Theory of Social Singularities:
Startling Transformation in Poland]**

**Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.
2008, pp. 323.**

ISBN 978-83-7383-271-8

The purpose of this book is to present a research perspective which treats singularities as an important component of society and social theory. Issues concerning social singularities called in many different ways, among others: exceptions, peculiarities, particularities, oddities, uniqueness, strangeness, anomalies, enclaves of alternative order, were discussed as a part of one a systematic approach. The author proposes a set of assumptions which outline the foundations of such a theoretical orientation which treats the singularities as basic components of social theory; builds up a homogeneous notional model; collects theorems. They turn out into an outline of the theory of social singularities.

The category of social singularities expands considerably explanatory potential of a sociological theory, concerning social changes in particular. Radical and quick changes, sometimes called “transformation”, largely remain outside the scope of applicability of classical sociological theories which—by their nature—focus on the typical aspects of durability of society and diminish the importance of unusual disturbances or anomalies that come to the fore in transforming societies. Some of social anomalies may decisively contribute to unexpected social changes. So getting to the heart of the matter of the startling changes requires appeal to theories tailored to such processes—untypical, non-standard, partial, violating current regularities.

The author devotes much attention to social changes in Poland in 1976—2007. He describes them using a conceptual model which is an integral part of the theory of social singularities. Referring to the theory of social singularities, he also attempts to explain (or as preferred interpret) the processes that make up the transformation of Polish society. He also takes into account the typical determinants of social changes—as speaking about singularities makes sense if we include them in the context of common processes and typical social relationships. The problem which is connected with the transformation of the social system was formulated in the book in the following way: To which extent the transformation process has been influenced by typical social resources and to which extent they have resulted from peculiar factors?

Social changes occurring in the last thirty years in Poland have been of radical and spontaneous nature. Firstly, they are so profound that even they reach the nature of the regularities themselves. Not only the social reality changes but also vital rules according to which the changes have occurred so far altered too. Secondly, they are marked by an exceptional spontaneity. They contravene original objectives of those who initiated those changes and bring reverse effects. And most of all, they are surprising and sprinkled with unexpected turns. Radicalism and spontaneity are expressive features of the great transformation in Poland. The author shows that the odd social resources which are embedded in the social system are main source of radicalism and spontaneity of social changes. Individuals and communities draw on those singular social sources and create new social reality. The author treats the above observation as the basic hypothesis which allows to explain the transformation in Poland.

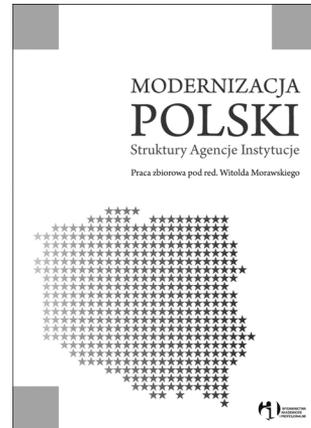
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**Modernizacja Polski.
Struktury, Agencje, Instytucje.**
[The Modernization of Poland
Structures, Agencies, Institutions]

edited by Witold Morawski

Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie
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Witold Morawski—

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