

Zbigniew Bokszański. *Individualism and Social Change*. Warszawa 2007: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, pp. 157

In his book *Individualism and Social Change*, Zbigniew Bokszański offers a compelling sociological examination of how modernization processes have reshaped values, attitudes, and patterns of thinking in contemporary Polish society. Using individualism as his central analytical lens, Bokszański explores how world-view beliefs have shifted under the influence of modernity, situating these changes within a broader comparative and theoretical context.

The author emphasizes individualism as one of the defining features of the modern paradigm, alongside rationalization and structural differentiation, while also acknowledging that individualism has frequently become the target of criticism in late-modern debates for its alleged connection to moral decline, social atomization, and civic disengagement.

The book consists of seven chapters, each of which develops a different aspect of the relationship between individualism and processes of social change. The first chapter introduces the reader to the theoretical approaches to individualism, reconstructing its key concepts and their historical foundations. The following chapter is devoted to an analysis of modernization processes and their impact on individual values and orientations, with reference to patterns observed in Western societies. In the subsequent part, Bokszański discusses empirical data concerning value change in Poland, comparing these findings with international trends while simultaneously indicating the distinctive features of the Polish path to modernization. The final chapters constitute an attempt to interpret these results within a broader theoretical perspective, presenting individualism as both a consequence and a driving force behind contemporary social transformations.

From a methodological perspective, the research project seeks to determine the extent to which individualism characterizes Polish society. In other words, the study aims to assess how strongly individualistic tendencies—understood through the framework of Halman's theory—are expressed in people's values, attitudes, and beliefs. Zbigniew Bokszański offers an analysis of a crucial dimension of the modernization processes unfolding in Poland over recent decades, processes that have progressed at a pace markedly different from the trajectory of modernity in Western Europe.

A substantial portion of the book is devoted to the evolution of individual autonomy. The growing influence of individualism is increasingly regarded as a driv-

ing force behind the profound transformations occurring within contemporary value systems and the normative integration of modern societies.

Zbigniew Bokszański's analysis highlights a key facet of Poland's modernization processes, which have advanced over the past decades in ways that diverge from Western European patterns of development.

The book is addressed to students, scholars, practitioners, and others engaged in the humanities and social sciences. Bokszański's work offers a nuanced reflection on the ways in which individuals make sense of the social world under conditions of ambiguity and multiplicity. Referencing such thinkers as Halman and Inglehart, the author presents identity formation as a dynamic, interactional process that is thoroughly embedded in cultural context.

The book invites readers to look more closely at everyday interpretive practices, and its hermeneutic–phenomenological orientation makes it a valuable resource for anyone interested in the sociology of knowledge and theories of identity.

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