

The Political Economy of Reform in Post-Communist Poland

Economies and Societies in Transition series

Janice Bell, Social Science Analyst, European Branch of the Office of Research, United States Department of State, US

This book assesses the prevailing attitudes of both support and disenchantment among Poles towards transition, in the light of their own experiences. In particular Janice Bell uses statistical indicators on economic well-being, regional voting results and public opinion survey data to analyse the socio-economic influences on patterns of voting behaviour, and finds unemployment to be a crucial denominator.

Groundbreaking in its perspective, this study will appeal to all those concerned with the social implications of reform programmes in former communist countries.

'The book presents us with a wide panorama of socioeconomic changes that have occurred in Poland since the 1989 turning point together with a penetrating insight into their causes and what impact they have had on political life . . . Bell's handling of statistical data and rich material she discovers make her analyses thorough, reliable, and accurate. It also should be noted that a great merit of the book is that the author does not limit herself to mere numbers. She makes attempts at interesting interpretations, so that the reader is not at a loss for an appropriate understanding of processes that are under way here. Bell knows that numbers only manifest some social forces but do not explain them. It is a sociologist's job to do that. And, in this respect, the book fits well into the list of studies that could be called guidelines into the period of transition.'

– Jan Klos, Journal of Markets & Morality

'This book is a well-researched analysis of the political economy of postcommunist Poland, covering voting patterns from the presidential and parliamentary elections between 1990 and 1997. It relies on a sophisticated quantitative methodology that successfully combines a great deal of public opinion data and regression analysis of statistical data . . . an insightful and stimulating book that provides enriching reading on an important aspect of Poland's postcommunist experience.'

– Harald Wydra, Slavic Review

'I learned more from this book about the impact of the economic and social costs of reforms on politics than from any other published either in English or Polish. It is an objective book, offering both empirical evidence and analysis. It should be recommended to anybody interested in the political economy of post-communist transition.'

– Tomasz Mickiewicz, University College London, UK

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2001 264 pp Hardback 978 1 84064 123 3 ~~£89.00~~ £80.10 ~~\$128.00~~ \$115.20

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