

# **PUBLIC POLICIES**

# SOCIAL DICTIONARIES

Series edited by

Wit Pasierbek and Bogdan Szlachta



## PUBLIC POLICIES

Edited by Artur Wolek



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**S O C I A L  
D I C T I O N A R I E S**

**PUBLIC  
POLICIES**

EDITED BY

**Artur Wołek**

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Proofreading  
Michael Timberlake

Editing and proofreading  
Anna Grochowska-Piróg

Cover design  
Studio Photo Design – Lesław Sławiński  
Layout and typesetting  
Jacek Zaryczny

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## Foreword

In 2019, the team members of the Ignatian Social Forum decided to continue the work that was initiated by the publication of the *Social Dictionary* in 2004. Scientists from both Polish and foreign academic centres contributed to this publication, which contained over one hundred extended essays that discussed the findings of recent humanities and social science research.

This new project is more extensive than the original *Social Dictionary*. The aim of the project is to present the state of knowledge from within various fields of humanities and social sciences as they are at the beginning the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They plan to show man, who is developing within diverse civilizations, cultures and societies, who adheres to many religions, and who honours diverse patterns of behaviour and products that condition his behaviour. However, rather than divide the humanities and social sciences according to the fields and disciplines listed by various international or national (departmental) institutions, we will divide them according to research areas that have been investigated by “officially acknowledged” scientific disciplines, with the use of a range of methods that yield a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary view. The research subject areas include issues considered particularly important to the humanities and social sciences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that relate to man and his social environment, political and public affairs, and international relations. The analyses, which consider diverse

research perspectives, allow a multi-faceted approach to problems that are typically addressed by only one discipline and broaden the horizons of the research undertaken by the Authors of the articles. They look for an “interpretative key” that will allow them to present the most significant issues related to each of the main categories; sometimes these issues are controversial or debatable among scientists. These research areas give the titles to the four volumes of the new *Social Dictionary*. This “interpretative key” would not be important if the articles published in each volume resembled succinct encyclopaedic entries; however, it becomes significant because the entries take the form of 20-page articles that follow a uniform pattern. The considerations presented by the authors are devoted to the essence of the analysed category: its history, subject matter, and practical recommendations. Written by Polish scientists representing not only different academic centres and scientific disciplines but also different “research sensibilities”, they are based on theoretical reflection accompanied by practical considerations. We also treat Catholic social teaching as one of the “interpretative keys” because it is impossible to ignore twenty centuries of the legacy and richness of Christianity.

We hope that this volume will satisfy the Reader as it offers not only an opportunity to learn about scientific approaches to the vital problems faced by contemporary man, states, and societies, but also an insight into sometimes difficult aspects of modernity as viewed from a Catholic perspective. We also hope that the Reader will appreciate the effort of Polish scientists who, while undertaking original reflection on these issues, go beyond mere presentation of other people’s thoughts, as they are aware of the importance of the intellectual achievements of Polish science.

Series editors  
Wit Pasierbek and Bogdan Szlachta

# Introduction

Public policy research is finding its place within Polish scientific discourse with some difficulty. The approach within this research that focuses on ways of solving collective (public) problems in researching politics, or even more broadly in researching social reality, is still not part of the standard research toolkit of Polish social scientists. Students of political science, sociology, and administration are taught about the existence of such an understanding of politics and even sometimes even about sectoral policies, but few universities teach how to analyse public policies within their standard curricula.

This state of affairs probably results from Poles' stereotypical perception that politics is simply a struggle for power and self-interest. Deep-rooted in Polish culture, the longing for a conflict-free Polish People's Republic that consists of glass houses and politicians who care about the common good and are in touch with reality often leads to cynicism. Polish voters do not believe that politicians are able to solve the pressing problems of collective life and thus do not expect politicians to propose public policy solutions. Voters make sense of the world of politics by means of collective identities created around symbols that evoke emotions.

The second reason for the difficulty in thinking in terms of public policy is the rationalism contained in the genetic code of this approach. Although the entire history of the public policy sciences, which was initiated in the 1960s, can be seen as a struggle against the original assumption of the rational decision-maker, instrumental rationality is still a fundamental reference point in the teaching of public policies and is also common in discourse devoted to them.

*Social Dictionaries. Public Policies* enters the discourse on public policy at a time when a large group of Polish researchers are applying this approach, but there is still no consensus on whether we can talk of the public policy sciences as a discipline. Despite being formally recognized as such, many researchers still point to its limited body of paradigmatic statements and lack of a specific methodology, i.e. the features that characterise long-standing scientific disciplines. In this sense, public policy research is simply a specific interdisciplinary approach to politics.

*Social Dictionaries. Public Policies* tries not to enter into this dispute, so it is not a summary of the state of public policy research but an invitation to discuss this research with specific reference to Poland. It delineates a map of the most important notions and issues in public policies but does not claim to present a corpus of knowledge on this discipline.

Hence, the structure of *Social Dictionaries. Public Policies* is as follows: first, it introduces and analyses the key dilemmas of public policies. Next, it presents selected aspects of the process of policymaking (decision making, policy implementation, evaluation) and reviews several sectoral policies, some of which have been studied for many years (social policy, educational policy), and some of which are relatively new and appear in public policy textbooks less frequently (innovation policy, family policy). Finally, this volume addresses problems that have emerged as important topics for discussion within this discipline in recent decades (the globalisation and Europeanisation of public policies, imitation and copying in public policies and local public policies). Each article combines the Polish perspective with a presentation of the state of research, as it seems that tools that have been primarily developed on the basis of Anglo-Saxon science require verification in the radically different social contexts of countries such as Poland.

The editor and authors of *Social Dictionaries. Public Policies* hope that it will contribute to the popularisation of approaching political life from the perspective of public policy. We hope that it will give all those interested – researchers, doctoral students, students) a useful tool with which to further develop public policy sciences and will, above all, contribute to their better understanding of social reality.

Volume editor  
Artur Wołek

Artur Wołek

Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3872-2925>

# Politics, public policy, and the public policy sciences: in search of an identity

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Public policy is a specific approach to politics that emphasizes the actions that are undertaken by public authorities in order to solve problems of collective (public) importance. Public policy differs from the prevailing perceptions regarding politics in that it focuses not so much on rivalry and the struggle for power and resources within politics but on choosing one of the available paths for dealing with public problems.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** This approach to public policy has always been present in considerations of the nature of politics. However, it became an independent theory in American scientific reflection on public administration in the 1950s, which gave rise to public policy science as a scientific discipline. Characteristic features of this early approach to public policy were the fact that it was grounded in a pattern of instrumental rationality, and its emphasis on knowledge as a factor that enabled the creation of optimal solutions to public problems. The development of reflection on public policies largely equates to various means of questioning the premise of rationality.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The theories concerning the process of creating public policy that were most popular in the last two decades have not formed part of a paradigm that would be valid in public policy science. However, on the basis of these theories it is possible to reconstruct a set of statements that are uncontested and form a commonsensical essence of public policy science. At its core is a belief in the bounded rationality

of public policymaking that results from distrust in the cognitive processes of policy makers. Consequently, the importance of ideas/values as a key factor in policymaking is appreciated. As a result, the distinction between public policy and politics as a power struggle is blurred, but analyses of public policies still provide unique tools for understanding the world of politics.

**Keywords:** public policy, creating public policies, bounded rationality

## Defining politics

The dimension of politics, which today is described by the term “public policy”, has always been present in reflections on social life but has rarely been at the centre of policy studies. Aristotle (1973), who was primarily interested in the best, most stable political system of polis, analysed the regulation of weights and measures and the monetary policy of Athens, which were issues that undoubtedly remained in the field of public policy. Thus, it is evident that there is a tradition of defining *politics* as the art of governing, within which *public policy*, i.e. the actions of public authorities whose aim is “to solve problems of collective (public) importance”, plays an essential role (Chrabąszcz and Zawicki, p. 18). More often, however, politics is defined as power, or the struggle for power. If the most important thing in politics is who makes the final decisions about the distribution of insufficient resources, then the public policy dimension takes a back seat.

## Politics and public policy

Politics revolves around power struggles, while public policy focuses on what people in power do when they are not directly involved in this struggle. From the point of view of exercising power, solving public problems is not neutral. It is still politics (i.e. in deciding “who gets what, when, and how” (Lasswell 1936)), but this dimension can be clearly distinguished from election campaigning, party rivalry, or competition between different centres of power.

Choice, which is the decision to follow one of many possible paths of action, is the essence of public policy. Choices are made by public authorities; a charmingly simple but deceptive definition of public policy from a popular American handbook states that “public policy is anything a government chooses to do or not to do” (Dye 2005, p. 1). Public policy also includes the activities of non-public entities (e.g. companies and non-governmental organisations), provided that they participate, even indirectly, in the exercise of public power. Analytically speaking, the choice of policy consists of the intentions and goals of those in power, their actions, and the consequences of those actions.

Following this approach, it is not difficult to notice a pattern of instrumentally rational action that underlies the concept of, and scientific reflection on, public policy. This pattern was the foundation of Harold Lasswell's work (1951), entitled *The Policy Orientation*, which gave rise to conscious reflection on public policy. Lasswell postulated the creation of the policy sciences as a new interdisciplinary field of knowledge that would be oriented towards action (solving public problems) and supporting the values of a democratic society, which would help to make the best political choices based on scientific knowledge.

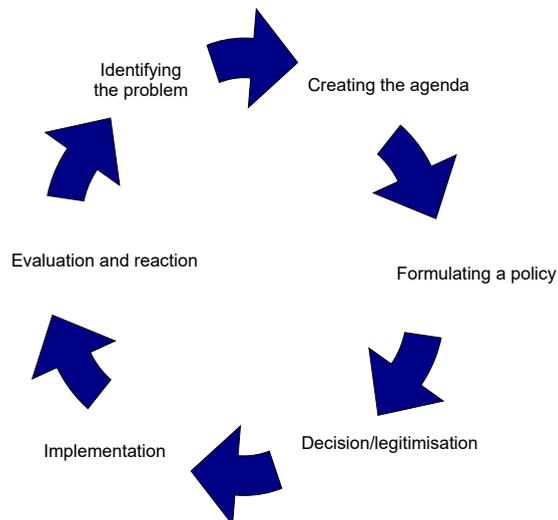
Since the 1960s, reflection on public policy, which was initially conducted almost exclusively in the United States, has clearly taken two divergent paths. On the one hand, the industry of public policy analysis, whose employees work at various levels of government, has been developed together with an increasing number of non-governmental centres where possible political solutions are analysed and adopted as part of their advocacy work. On the other hand, scientific reflection on public policy is becoming increasingly similar to other social sciences: it has created its own conceptual framework and it strives for its own methodology. This makes it possible to talk about the existence of public policy sciences (science), although there is no consensus on whether this is already a separate discipline within the social sciences or a sub-discipline of the political sciences (Anioł, 2018). One thing is certain: although scientific analyses conducted by public policy researchers are grounded in social reality and are practice- and action-oriented, they are only read by other researchers. Thus, Lasswell's project to create policy sciences has failed. What differentiates public policy science from other social sciences (and what derives from the spirit of policy sciences) is its open prescriptivity, its readiness to give recommendations to practitioners, and an awareness of being rooted in the values held by researchers and the values inscribed in political choice.

## Rational decision making in policymaking

Lasswell's novel ideas were nevertheless shaped by American scientific reflection on public administration, which was initiated by Woodrow Wilson (1887) and continued by Frank J. Goodnow, Frederick Winslow

Taylor, and, after World War II, Herbert Simon. They all believed that it was possible to separate the world of irrational, emotion- and interest-driven politics from the world of administration, which could be rational, at least at an instrumental level. It is difficult to control the objectives of policies that are established by voters in a democracy, but it is possible to achieve them with the best means available, which can be established by impartial professional officials armed with scientific methods of analysing reality. Once the objectives are chosen, political problems actually become technical problems that can be solved with expertise.

Figure 1: Public policy-making cycle



Source: Own study based on (Knill and Tosun 2008).

This tradition gave rise to the basic scheme of the public policy-making process, which (with many reservations) is still used today. In principle, it follows three stages: (1) initiating a policy, which consists primarily in examining the reality/environment and defining the problem; (2) formulating alternatives; and (3) implementing the adopted policy. Sometimes the first stage is divided into problem identification, the creation of an agenda, decision making, i.e. choosing one solution from a set of alternative solutions to the problem, and finally, assessing/evaluating the implemented policy. However, this is still, in fact, instrumentally rational decision-making that involves the identification of determinants (facts),

the selection of objectives (in the context of the identified facts and in the light of the decision makers' values), the adaptation of measures to objectives, and implementation. At first, this model was presented linearly as successive stages, then a cyclic pattern was adopted in which successive stages of endless policy improvement are based on feedback.

The various stages of the policy cycle form the basis of the majority of research programmes investigating public policy. The corpus of public policy science consists of papers devoted to the emergence of problems to be solved on the decision-makers' agenda, determinants of the decision-making process, implementation of adopted solutions, and assessment/evaluation of public intervention programmes. Public policy science remains a "discipline basically oriented towards practice and problems" (Angel, 2018, p. 31), in which the method of explanation through case studies dominates. The accumulation of research papers has provided the empirical basis for attempts to outline a more general picture of the process of public policy making.

## Bounded rationality in policy making

Most research on public policy that has been conducted since the 1960s results from reflection on the inadequacy of both the assumption of the rationality of public policy and the cyclical pattern of public policymaking that is based on this rationality. Researchers of this public policy trend have drawn on philosophical findings that clearly indicate the unrealistic assumption of the full rationality of human actions. People's preferences are not constant and can rarely be ranked. Furthermore, acting subjects do not have full knowledge and are not able to choose from the full range of alternatives available, and political decision-making is entangled in so many dependencies that it is not a simple process of translating preferences/values into political solutions.

On the other hand, empirical studies have suggested how to model the policy-making process more realistically. Public policy decision-making is so specific that – even leaving aside the cognitivist objections to the possibility of actors' full rationality – a pattern that differs from the classic early 20<sup>th</sup> century archetype is necessary in order to understand it. First

and foremost, time is a key resource in public policy decision-making. In politics, we most often act in a reactive manner and make many decisions, which means urgent decisions can push important ones into the background. In this context, the collection of information/facts is necessarily very limited; we are often unable to assess the quality of the data obtained, hence our knowledge is highly incomplete. In dealing with these limitations in terms of time, attention, and knowledge, we consciously (or not) rely on routine stereotypes and cognitive scripts, which accelerate and simplify decision-making. At the early stages of exploring the environment and defining the problem, we try to narrow the issue down, simplify it, and divide it into parts that are easier to solve. We use analogies and in this way, we reduce both the acquired knowledge and the possible solutions (Clemons and McBeth, 2001).

Thus, researchers of public policy agree that one can at most talk about the bounded rationality of actors in the policy-making process. They do not strive for the best solution, they do not consider all the possible alternatives, but they grasp the first satisfactory solution to a public problem (Simon, 1957).

Incrementalism draws from this model of rationality. This theory gained great popularity in the 1960s as it explained the decision-making process in public policy differently to the classic policy cycle (Lindblom, 1959). As is typical of all modern countries, incrementalism assumes a realistic picture of decision making in conflict situations; however, as with most models in public policy, the empirical material concerning incrementalism emanates mainly from the United States. The various stakeholders make demands that are both legitimised (e.g. through particular roles played by various stakeholders in society) and mutually contradictory. Decision making therefore consists of taking small steps and introducing partial (incremental) changes. What is more, real decision-making situations do not appear from nowhere. The *status quo* is always a reference point, and the real decision-making field is an incremental change of this state. In view of mutually contradictory and justified demands, a clear mandate for radical change is extremely rare (Migone and Howlett, 2015).

Incrementalism explained the everyday life of democratic politics adequately, but it could not explain the far-reaching changes in public policies that Western democracies first made after 1968 and then in the

1980s. This problem was addressed by the theory of punctuated equilibrium, which tries to explain why the periods of long-term stability of a public policy are interrupted by short periods of instability, with rapid, intensive changes followed by stabilisation again. The theory of punctuated equilibrium answers this question by referring to the bounded rationality of policy actors. Not being able to solve all the pressing problems at once, they ignore some of them and pay disproportionate attention to others. The lack of attention to one issue explains the lack of change in that area, and the intense focus on another issue suggests that it may be understood in a new light and it may be regulated again.

This process is not just cognitive but is above all political. In a conflict situation, some groups are able to maintain their privileged status by minimising the attention that is paid to solutions that are beneficial to them, while other groups try to fuel debate on the *status quo* in order to attract attention and force the problem to be addressed again. However, before a new solution can be adopted, cognitive frames must change, and these frames are the centre of debate. How the problem is defined and categorised largely determines the solutions that are available to decision makers. For example, solutions to the problem of mass migration differ depending on whether we see the emergence of migrants in Europe as a humanitarian disaster and define them as refugees, or whether we talk about destabilisation, a threat to national security, or even invasion by potential terrorists. Cognitive frames are very stable and explain the stability of politics and incremental changes well. On the other hand, changes in the cognitive frame explain rapid radical changes in politics (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993, 2005).

The key role played by cognitive frames in policymaking is stressed in studies devoted to public policy that have been conducted within the anti-positivist trend. Although this trend remains outside mainstream research, its characteristic method, which is based on political narratives, is widely applied. Since the bounded rationality of policymakers forces the use of cognitive shortcuts when gathering information and making decisions, it can be expected that policymakers will be more likely to accept stories that are simple rather than complex, and ones that confirm rather than question their beliefs. Such narratives, which are understood as stories that describe and justify the sources, objectives, and expected impact of political solutions, can be strategically used by

the groups involved in political conflict. They are a tool of persuasion that is used to create the cognitive frames for decision makers and the general public (Durnova, Fischer and Zittoun, 2016).

John Kingdon's (1984) multiple streams framework, which gained popularity at the same time as the theory of punctuated equilibrium, also begins with the assumption of bounded rationality and emphasizes the importance of cognitive frames or perceptions about a policy that influence the process of its creation. Kingdon, however, draws conclusions that are much more damaging to the classic scheme of the policy-making cycle. The fact that public concerns compete with each other for decision-makers' attention means that only a few reach the top of the agenda and are resolved, and the limited amount of time available forces politicians to make decisions before they have clearly defined their priorities. Moreover, the ambiguity of a problem means that there are many ways in which it can be defined and solved. As a result, the whole process of policymaking is far more chaotic than politicians and researchers are prepared to admit.

In fact, for a policy to change, three relatively independent processes (streams) must meet within a very limited time frame whilst the "policy window" is open, which is difficult to control. The first is the problem stream, where an issue must attract attention to be considered to be in need of resolution. There are no objective indicators as to which issue is considered a problem that needs to be solved, but the existence of a solution to the problem will help it to attract attention. A problem that is seen as difficult to solve or too costly to address will not be on the short list of problems to solve; however, it is different with a problem that is known to have a solution because the political solution stream flows independently of the process of identifying problems. Officials and researchers anticipate problems and create a range of solutions for every scenario. These are all discussed, questioned, and corrected. They bubble in a cauldron of political solutions, only for one to emerge after some time as the preferred solution to a burning problem because it is technically feasible and acceptable in terms of value and cost. For example, the (limited) privatisation of the health care system in the UK in the early 1980s was a solution to the problem of a bloated welfare state. Twenty years later under the Labour Government, privatization was supposed to be a solution to the inefficiency of the public health care

system and the long waiting queues to see specialists. However, the choice of a solution is only possible when the political stream provides decision-makers with an incentive and an opportunity to address the issue because, for example, the government has changed as a result of an election or a change in the party leadership (Cairney 2012).

In this vision of the political process, subsequent steps in rational decision-making are impossible, and coincidence plays a considerable role in making decisions, although “political entrepreneurs” (bureaucrats, lobbyists, representatives of advocacy organisations which create political solutions and seek their adoption) – attempt to limit the random nature of this process.

The multiple streams framework clearly demonstrates how a relatively simple policy-making scheme can become complicated. Initially, this scheme reflected optimistic ideas about the effectiveness of public authority intervention in social life, but it became increasingly complicated as a result of a growing belief in the complexity of public problems and the limited possibilities of controlling social processes.

The Advocacy Coalition Framework, proposed by Paul Sabatier and Hank Jenkins-Smith (1993, 1999), is the most comprehensive attempt to explain the process of policy making so far and takes into account previous criticisms of the rational approach to public policy.

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith observed that there is no single process of policymaking. Instead, there is a complicated environment of policymaking which involves many actors, many levels of governance, and different methods of policymaking. Sometimes political choices are made as a result of clearly political (in the sense of politics, rather than policy) discussions, and at other times they are made routinely by experts as if they were a technical matter. However, the key role is always played by advocacy coalitions, which include people with shared convictions who coordinate their activities in the political sphere. They can play different social roles (politicians, officials, leaders of special interest groups, scientists), but they cooperate in order to allow their beliefs to shape politics. Coalitions seek to dominate the “subsystems”, i.e. the networks that focus on public issues. This is possible because politicians normally place decision making in the hands of bureaucrats, who in turn consult with experts and special interest groups. All the participants in the subsystem are keen to make decisions, but the conflict between various

coalitions can make this difficult. That is why there is a “policy broker” (i.e. a “midwife” (mediator) who tries to take into account the positions of competing coalitions) and a “sovereign” who makes the final decision in each subsystem.

The subsystem is a space where routine policy-making processes take place, therefore minor changes in the *status quo* are possible. When coalitions analyse the implementation of a policy, they can discover its shortcomings, which sometimes leads to changes in their beliefs about this policy, although this does not necessarily alter their underlying beliefs. The underlying belief system creates a filter for interpreting the received information so that it does not cause dissonance within these coalitions’ spheres of beliefs. Thus, more radical changes only take place when confronted with events that have taken place outside of the subsystem, or when faced with the obvious failure of a policy conducted within it. If coalitions try to restore the stability of the disturbed subsystem, space for more profound policy changes can then be created (Cairney, 2015).

## The common sense of public policy science?

The above attempt to delineate the overall picture of the public policy-making process, which includes some examples of “middle-range theories”, does not form any valid paradigm within public policy science. However, based on this assessment, it seems possible to reconstruct a set of statements that are uncontested by most public policy researchers and thus create a common sense of public policy science. This set of statements is a common-sense, pragmatic certainty rather than hard scientific findings, so it can be understood in different ways, developed in different directions, or complemented, but it is not questioned within mainstream research.

Belief in the bounded rationality of the whole process of creating public policies builds on the foundations of this common-sense core of public policy science. Without great exaggeration, the whole discipline could be termed the science of the limitations of public policies and the limitations of the deliberate actions of public authority. Agency in public policies is therefore a subject for research, not an assumption. The conviction of bounded rationality is associated, above all, with distrust in

relation to policymakers' cognitive processes. Even if the anti-positivist approach in which all knowledge is treated as a social construct (with all its consequences) is not universally accepted, knowledge as a tool used in policy-making is no longer as privileged as was previously the case. The importance of ideas/values as key factors in the process of choosing a policy is also acknowledged. On the other hand, an enormous amount of empirical material also demonstrates that the creation of public policies within institutions, organisations, or bureaucracy greatly limits rationality.

As a result, the distinction between the two dimensions, *policy* and *politics*, is blurred. Both are characterised by bounded rationality; both are influenced by special interest groups; and both are subject to the logic of the institutions within which they take place. These two dimensions of politics are inseparably intertwined, and reliable analysis of the public policy-making process must take into account these aspects of politics.

Finally, empirical research has allowed the image of public policy-making processes to be disaggregated. In fact, all theoretical approaches are based on the conviction that a policy is created simultaneously on many levels or in many subsystems that do not necessarily follow the same logic. Therefore, there can be no linearity or consecutive stages to one process. Politics emerges from the thicket of many interactions, and it is the researcher who orders them.

Such a vision of public policy science is certainly not satisfying for researchers who believe that social sciences can, or at least should, apply the standards developed in the natural sciences. In the last decade, there has been an increase in the number of works in which authors have applied the findings of psychology or cognitive science to political problems. These behavioural sciences of public policy correspond to the trend of research-based policy and can boast some achievements in programming public policies, but to date they have not been part of mainstream reflection on public policies (Oliver, 2017).

## Public policy in Poland

The term 'public policy' entered Polish discourse two decades ago. Unlike much of the conceptual apparatus of the Anglo-Saxon social sciences, which have most often been painlessly assimilated in Poland

since the 1980s, 'public policy' and 'public policy science' are still not part of the everyday language of Polish political scientists, economists, or sociologists. The reason for this probably lies in the fact that Poles usually perceive politics and the state in terms of antagonism (also in relation to its citizens), violence, and a failure to solve public problems (Rau et al., 2018, pp. 171, 198–199; Marody et al., 2019, pp. 46–56). It certainly cannot be said that discourse concerning public policies has become the main form of contact between the electorate and politics in Poland (Clemons and McBeth, 2001). In countries where 'public policies' have been created, politicians are expected to provide credible solutions to significant public problems, whereas this is not the case in Poland. Polish voters usually develop their political affiliations based on identification with a particular political group, and solutions to public problems play a marginal role in their decisions. Therefore, a discourse built around the concept of public policy – with its tradition of rationality, professionalism, and opposition to politics as a power struggle – has an exotic taste in Poland as it is not matched to the local context.

In 2011, public policy science was introduced into the ministerial list of scientific disciplines in Poland, which provided an unexpected impulse for the development of this discipline (Woźnicki, 2012). This decision was contested by political scientists, but ten years after its official and bureaucratic establishment we can talk of its having taken root in Poland. This is particularly true of research conducted in the field of social policy, which was already being carried out but which now makes extensive use of the findings obtained within the public policy sciences, within the common interest areas of politics and economics, and within analyses of the process of creating public policies in Poland (Szarfenberg, 2018).

Public policy science certainly has not met the expectations of the generation of its creators. It has not created tools for rational decision making regarding optimal solutions to public problems. However, by exploring the limitations of the rationality of the process of creating public policies, it has nevertheless provided unique tools for understanding the world of politics. Thanks to this, the perspective offered by public policy has become a permanent dimension of reflection on social reality which will sometimes allow us to notice phenomena that are overlooked by other disciplines or research perspectives.

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Aleksander Surdej  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5653-4261>

# Rationality of public policies: fundamentals and constraints

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to discuss the determinants and limitations of rational public policy making, including the application of scientific knowledge in public policies.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The main issues in this regard are linked to the enormous complexity of social phenomena, their dependence on technological, cultural, and social contexts, and the axiological choices that people make. The article focuses on three limitations to rational public policy making: understanding the reality of the situation that is to be addressed, planning and implementing policy solutions, and using the appropriate tools to advance their aims.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article argues that research translates into effective public policies if the following conditions are met: the problem being addressed must have a clear-cut scientific explanation; its causes can be reliably identified; and an effective and not overly costly way of addressing the problem exists. The rationality of public policies can be increased if they are based on scientific results, but only when their creators are fully aware of the scientific uncertainties and the specificities of particular scientific disciplines and are able to combine their knowledge of universal principles with the ability to contextualise them.

**Keywords:** rationality, public good, evaluation of the outcome of regulations, public policy tools



The development of the social sciences has always been motivated by a desire to create an integrated and uniform framework that allows the delineation of state policy. Such a framework would make it possible to address the issues facing society, take notice of the relationships between them, separate technical aspects from valuations, and create the theoretical basis for effective action to be undertaken by public authorities. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this comprehensive framework was provided by the classical economist Adam Smith, who, when explaining economic phenomena and governmental choices, recognized the importance of both moral principles and material incentives (Smith, [1776] 1954). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this framework was provided by theories of the state which combined legal and economic reasoning, whereas today it is provided by the development of public policy theories.

## Facts, measuring, and creating public policies

Public policy theories aim to formulate a rational basis for the actions to be undertaken by public authorities. The most elementary requirement of rationality in creating public policies is the use of logical and fact-based justification. However, in order to be able to talk about facts, it is first necessary to explain what they are. It can be assumed that a fact is the result of observing or experiencing a given phenomenon or process; observation is a passive activity, while an experiment is an activity that interferes with the course of the phenomenon. Sometimes it is naively assumed that facts are independent of the observer's perception, his attitude, and the theories that he intends to verify. It might seem that this is what happens, at least in the exact sciences, but the development of physics demonstrates that this is not so. For example, progress in the field of quantum physics would not be possible without recognising the link between its theoretical foundations and the improvements in measurements that are necessary to verify these foundations. Moreover, without the hypotheses that are derived from mathematical formalizations it would be difficult to formulate the criteria for the cognitive progress, and without perfecting technology (e.g. the building of the cyclotron) measurement would not be possible.

Michał Heller observes that there are no naked facts in modern science, only theoreticised facts (Heller, 2016). In the social sciences, pure facts, although sometimes observed, hardly exist. Most often, the results of observation are a derivative of the application of the measurement tool, which is based on previously adopted assumptions. This can be illustrated by the use of two examples. First, in economics the effectiveness of market mechanisms is verified by the law of one price. If a set of transactions that are connected with goods or services within a group of specific entities is defined as a market, these transactions should be concluded at one price. If the same goods or services are sold at significantly different prices, the market fragments and disintegrates into numerous separate markets. With the use of the measurement of price spread, the hypothesis of a single market can be verified. When price uniformity is established, this confirms the validity of treating these transactions as a market. The second example concerns estimations of the unemployment rate. Without prior assumptions regarding a person's behaviour, the researcher is unable to measure unemployment. In definitions adopted by European Statistical Offices, an unemployed person is not someone who is not working but someone who is actively seeking employment but cannot find it. Thus, a person's behaviour should be observable (Is he looking for a job? How intensely is he looking? Where is he looking? Etc.). If this is not observable, a person should be asked if he is actively looking for a job. There are further criteria to be fulfilled and the definition of an unemployed person limits the scope of the job search to areas within his qualifications and experience. A highly qualified person looking for employment may be able to do jobs that do not require his level of qualifications, e.g. someone with medical qualifications may work as a nurse, but the reverse is highly unlikely and would be prohibited by public regulations. A jobseeker may refuse to accept work below his level of qualifications or could apply to public programmes for funding for his professional retraining, so in this scenario he would remain unemployed.

Where a fact does not result from direct observation or experimentation, the dependence of the results of the measurement on the method of measurement becomes profound and leads the researcher to create involuntary artefacts that depend on the method used, the categorisations adopted, and the questions asked. In the research on opinions,

attitudes, and values that is common in social studies, this is the most important risk that a reliable researcher should try to eliminate.

Because of the measurement procedure, the researcher obtains results that should take the form of numbers (which is also often recommended in social sciences). The physicist Lord Kelvin wrote to his students: "I often say that if you can measure what you are talking about and express it in numbers, you know what you are talking about; but if you can't measure it, if you can't express it in numbers, your knowledge is insufficient and sterile" (Piekara, 1961, p. 14). Kelvin's recommendation has reached management sciences and management practice and is now expressed in the famous motto: if you cannot measure it, you cannot manage it.

Nowadays, thanks to progress in computer science and the development of algorithms, we have at our disposal an increasing number of data (*big data*) and indicators. However, it is not always clear whether they are appropriate to the nature of the phenomenon being studied, what information they provide, what questions they allow the researcher to answer, and whether they diagnose or distort the phenomena in question. The world, as Olivier Rey (2016) put it, becomes a number. Qualitative phenomena disappear from the field of view, and the use of numbers guarantees (albeit often superficially) precision and scientific rigour. Economists who study feelings of happiness are rarely interested in moral reflection. They try to measure happiness by constructing "objective" correlates of the sense of happiness and leave subtle reflections on the nature of happiness to philosophers, theologians, and poets.

It cannot be denied that there are facts, methods of measurement, and their results that should not be challenged. They have become the basis for the decisions that are taken by public authorities that lead to the expected results within the given institutional (technological, demographic, social, and economic) determinants. The stability of the relationship between the activity and its effects creates the impression that there is a permanent structure to determine the relationship between the observed phenomena. This leads to the conclusion that generalizations about society and social mechanisms are similar to universal laws of physics, including those of classical mechanics. This illusion disappears when the institutional conditions that previously stabilized social

processes change. The conclusions and recommendations that had been derived from previous observations are no longer sufficient to conduct effective policies. One example is confusion about macroeconomic policy at a time when real interest rates are negative and a country's debt is high. The basic instrument of macroeconomic policy, i.e. changes in interest rates, is no longer effective; further reductions in interest rates are not possible, and their earlier reduction from already low levels does not stimulate investment or consumption strongly enough. The second classical instrument of macroeconomic policy, fiscal policy, cannot be used because of the high level of public debt, which is an accumulation of past policy effects.

A great deal of uncertainty regarding the rational foundations of public policy becomes apparent when we include natural determinants in models of economic growth. Resources and the environment are both assets and constraints in policies aimed at economic growth. The fact that many natural resources are non-renewable should be taken into account when considering the benefits and costs in any intertemporal (including intergenerational) dimension, which should lead to extending the time perspective and treating future generations as entities whose interests are to be taken into account when making public decisions.

In many situations, the complexity of the interaction between the political, social, and economic agents makes it difficult if not impossible to predict and accurately evaluate the impact of any action taken. This complexity is often dealt with by adopting simplifying assumptions. For example, economic phenomena and processes are explained using models based on the assumption of a single representative enterprise (neglecting the fact that enterprises vary greatly in terms of their size, the quality of human capital, and the managerial skills of their executives), or a single representative household. These simplifications make it possible to formulate theoretical predictions and to determine hypothetical states of optimal and stable equilibrium. Criticism of such simplified assumptions, and the results obtained on the basis of these assumptions, is refuted by the claim that although real processes are full of disturbances and do not automatically lead to optimal static states, they are ideally aimed at them.

The development of mathematical methods (mainly *agent-based modelling*) and the increase in the power of computers have enabled scientists to model the phenomena resulting from the interactions

between many different entities. However, one of the disadvantages of agent-based modelling, which breaks with simplified assumptions, is the fact that it rarely yields unambiguous results and instead indicates that social processes can lead to various states. These various paths may have some common ground, but at some point a choice must be made (e.g. bifurcation) which leads to one particular effect or set of effects rather than another. Agent-based modelling reveals that the state of the social world is not the optimal result of interactions between knowledgeable, rational agents who strive for optimization.

In view of the enormous amount of data and the complexity of phenomena, formalization and modelling appear to be methods that promise progress in explaining and predicting social phenomena. Formalization often brings seemingly precise formulations which, when written in the language of mathematical symbols, appear to be a model of scientific rigour. In fact, however, they are empty or tautological claims that gain the status of predictions only after being contextualised, i.e. after further data and information on specific agents and determinants are added. The growing popularity of modelling obscures the fact that the term *model* can have many different meanings: a miniature of a given phenomenon or process, an imaginary image, a computer simulation, or a formally defined structure of a given process. In the case of both formalisation and modelling, as well as in their combination in the form of formal modelling, scientists using this research method should remember not to treat models as exhaustive representations of the mechanisms that govern the functioning of reality.

Rational public policy should be based on the findings of scientific research. Progress in explaining social and economic processes is hampered by the enormous complexity of social phenomena, their dependence on institutional conditions (technological, cultural and social contexts), and people's axiological choices (Solow, 1985). The work of hundreds of thousands of researchers has resulted in various descriptions and explanations of diverse social phenomena and processes, but it is doubtful whether the social sciences will ever provide unambiguous answers to social problems. The results of their work are characterised by an irremovable ambiguity.

As mentioned above, the rationality of public policy requires that it be based on scientific foundations. However, the findings of the social

sciences lead to ambiguous conclusions caused by the specific nature of the examined facts, the complexity of the processes, the difficulties of measurement, and an irremovable dependence on the assumptions of theories that underlie particular studies. Bearing these in mind, it is now worth analysing the challenges faced by rational public policy making.

## The challenges faced by rational public policy making

Public policies are aimed at solving the problems that are faced by communities. What are these problems and who identifies them? In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, thanks to the work of Paul Samuelson (1954), basic communal common goods were analysed from the perspective of the theory of public goods. In Samuelson's view, public goods are identified by two specific criteria: they are non-rivalrous in consumption and are non-excludable. The former means that there is a lack of competition for consumption, while the latter allows unrestricted access to a given good. The first criterion narrows down the number of phenomena eligible for the category of public goods, as it postulates that the consumption of a given good by an individual should not reduce its availability to others. Knowledge and scientific discoveries meet this criterion to a high degree, whereas other goods meet this criterion to a much lesser degree or not at all. The second criterion requires that no one should be excluded from access to a good, as there are no technical means of such exclusion. It is difficult to identify many goods that meet this criterion, but the closest was the television signal during the terrestrial television period. The combined application of both criteria greatly limits the number of potential public goods, in particular pure public goods. However, the aim of the economic approach is not to prove that there are few public goods but to draw attention to the problem of financing their production and supply. Accessibility for all, without the possibility to impose charges for using them, means that the delivery of public goods often falls short of the optimum.

The application of the concept of the common good makes it possible to go beyond technical and financial criteria and to identify those goods which, although they do not fully meet the restrictive criteria of public

goods in economic terms, are considered to be important and needed by the community. History provides many examples of such goods, from shared pastures to drinking water resources.

It can be assumed that the less numerous, the more homogeneous, and the more strongly tied by an emotional bond or a common identity the community is, the easier it is to reach agreement on which goods are common goods and how they should be financed and delivered. The transition from small communities to large, internally diverse societies raises the problem of reaching agreement on the nature (and quantity) of common goods and public goods. Communities faced with the dilemma of choosing between goods may not be able to agree on preferences and/or stick to them for a sufficiently long period. This problem was identified as early as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the Marquis de Condorcet (the Condorcet paradox) and was formally generalized by the American economist Kenneth Arrow (Arrow, 1951; Kaminski, 1994). The idea conveyed by the Condorcet paradox is that a community may not be able to choose between three options in sequential majority voting, because even if the community prefers A to B and B over C, it may happen that it prefers C when faced with alternatives A or C.

Today, the instability of collective preferences is strengthened by the mechanisms through which social media functions, their power to influence people's opinions and preferences, and the tendency to create information tunnels. These tunnels consolidate initial opinion (position) without opening up debate or permitting a change of that position under the influence of persuasion (Agacinski, 2018).

In extremely complex systems, such as in modern societies and economies, many collective problems are technical, and it is hard to understand their nature without having a scientific background; moreover, the solutions are not intuitive, simple, or common sense. Furthermore, it can sometimes be the case that the solutions that are chosen offer something for something (*trade-offs*), and so achieve one goal at the expense of another (Colander and Kupers, 2014). A good example is the decision taken by the French government not to refund the cost of homeopathic remedies. For many decades, France led the way in supporting homeopathy. French companies successfully produced homeopathic remedies and medical universities awarded specializations in homeopathy. The market of homeopathic remedies developed with the full knowledge

that the active ingredients in them are present in trace amounts. These remedies were bought with or without a prescription, and the state health fund reimbursed 15% of their price. Between 2017 and 2018, the French Ministry of Health commissioned academic institutions to collect research results (i.e. to conduct meta-analysis) on the health effects of homeopathic remedies. The study found no evidence of their therapeutic effects, which were, if anything, negligible and indistinguishable from the placebo effect. The French Ministry of Health proposed the abolition of refunds for homeopathic remedies (as they were no longer considered medicines) and Parliament passed this law, despite the protests of companies and certain patient communities. These protests, in addition to the argument of job losses, mentioned the reduction of the number of antibiotics taken when homeopathic remedies are available. This effect is probably created by the use of homeopathy to reduce the pressure applied to doctors, who are usually expected to prescribe something effective, even if the disease would stop of its own accord after several days. Medical knowledge regarding the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies had not changed, so it was only the public authorities' decision to use this knowledge to change the habits of both doctors and patients which resulted in the decision of some French medical universities to discontinue homeopathy as a specialisation (Stromboni, 2019).

Scientific evidence translates into effective public policies when several conditions are met: first, the problem has a clear scientific explanation; second, its causes are identified in a definitive way; and third, there is an effective and not excessively costly way of solving it. These conditions were met by the problem of the ozone hole. The depletion of the ozone layer was a direct cause of a considerable increase in UV-B radiation, with one of the negative effects being skin cancer. Physicists discovered that the main cause of ozone depletion was the use of  $\text{CCl}_2\text{F}_2$  (called Freon 12) and other fluorocarbon methane and ethane derivatives (jointly called freons) in the production of aerosols, including those used in refrigerators. In 1987, 196 countries signed the Montreal Protocol, which committed them to introducing regulations to eliminate products containing freons. These commitments were implemented because aerosol substitutes were available. As a result, the emission of gases containing freons was reduced by 90%, and it is now estimated that by 2060 the ozone layer will recover and return to its stable, pre-industrial level.

Some public issues, including climate change, are of a different nature. Explaining climate change (especially its causes) requires complex reasoning supported by formal modelling, and the interpretation of the simulation results is not without ambiguity. Moreover, countries have an impact on only some of the alleged causes of climate change, including the way in which they produce energy. The scale of action that would be necessary to slow down the pace and magnitude of climate change would have to be huge and would lead to a total change in the consumption and lifestyle of developed western countries. It would also mean a halt in the demand of developing countries for material goods that have already determined the quality of life in highly developed countries. As a result, both individual countries and international communities have only declaratively changed their policies under the influence of climate change concerns.

There are numerous examples of problems that science has so far been unable to solve definitively, and perhaps never will. Uncertainty is a common phenomenon in science, and researchers deal with it by continuing their studies and proposing new theories and explanations. However, usually decision-makers will not wait for definitive scientific explanations to these issues, as they have to act under the strong influence of the media and its coverage of events.

The uncertainty of scientific results clashes with the expectations of the public, which include the expectation that public authorities should be active, and with a misunderstanding of the nature of stochastic relationships. In many cases, there are no certain solutions and the decisions taken by public authorities may be suboptimal or even just completely wrong. This is particularly the case when an action aimed at reducing one type of risk gives rise to or increases another type of risk, e.g. regulations requiring drivers and passengers to use seat belts. Drivers are convinced of the increase in safety and tend to drive faster, which can increase the probability of accidents and injuries to a greater extent than the reduction achieved by making seat belts usage mandatory (Viscusi and Gayer, 2015).

In many situations, a prerequisite for a public policy to be effective is that it gains public acceptance, or at least neutralises the social fears that are connected with a given phenomenon. For example, a rapid and drastic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining a relatively low electricity price is possible only if the closure of coal-fired

power plants is accompanied by the provision of nuclear power plants that can produce enough electricity, regardless of fluctuations in the weather. A difficult trade-off appears before the public: the maintenance of coal-fired power plants and a curtailment in the fight against climate change, or the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and concerns about the safety of nuclear power plants and the safe management of nuclear waste. Both solutions could be rejected by society.

## Rationality in the choice of policy implementation tools

In pursuing public objectives, authorities face the difficulty of choosing (or constructing) effective and efficient tools in order to achieve particular objectives. Public authorities choose from a set of tools that can be ordered as follows: from the least coercive tools (e.g. providing information that smoking is harmful to health or introducing increased private insurance premiums) to injunctions and prohibitions (e.g. making it mandatory for farmers to insure their crops or introducing a ban on the sale of human organs). The pursuit of efficiency may conflict with the effectiveness criterion. Effective enforcement of bans requires the development of a costly control system, which decreases cost efficiency. However, the cheap, soft, informational alternative that is weaker may not be sufficiently effective.

Economists, followed by researchers from other social science disciplines, emphasise the importance of creating incentives to encourage people to act in the public interest. Incentives are often narrowly understood as material incentives. This seems to be an oversimplification, as people also react to symbolic incentives (a good name or the self-gratification evoked by a sense of doing good deeds). Moreover, material incentives can weaken the effects of symbolic incentives. This happens, for example, when honorary blood donors begin to be paid for their donations; the number of donors does not increase, and sometimes even decreases when people are offered money for donating blood (Benabou and Tirole, 2006). Thus, the expected effectiveness and efficiency of the tools being used should be assessed, taking into account the many contextual factors that may be present.

Another fundamental problem in the implementation of public policies is that of coherence over time and hence of consistency in the implementation of a given policy. Many of the objectives of public policies cannot be achieved through a one-off action: in order to achieve the objective, they require sequential actions. For example, the government of a country announces that the share of electricity produced from coal will decrease from 70% to 20% in 20 years. Such an announcement is credible when it is accompanied by an investment plan that allows clean energy to be obtained from other sources. This plan should include a schedule for the phasing out of power plants and closing mines. However, the implementation of such a plan will repeatedly face resistance from groups losing out due to the changes being made. Resistance occurs whenever costs are concentrated and fall on a relatively small and cohesive group, and the benefits are substantial but dispersed among many poorly connected units (Olson, 1971). Governments are confronted with the temptation of opportunistic inaction when the temporary and negative effects of implementing a plan collide with electoral calculations.

Democratic governments are generally characterised by a short-term orientation that is determined by electoral rhythm. Multi-annual programmes can only be implemented if the government promoting the programme wins successive elections or if the programme enjoys widespread support, which means that it continues even if there is a change of government. The second solution is promoted by an increasingly popular recommendation to consult stakeholders in the policy design phase, to involve them in the implementation processes, and to consider their opinions when evaluating public policies. This slows down the development of programmes, but once they are created and implemented, they become difficult to challenge or reject. Therefore, from the point of view of the effectiveness of public policies, it is rational to use participatory procedures to strengthen the sustainability of actions oriented towards long-term goals. Gathering opinions and consulting and informing citizens can also prevent accusations of heartless technocracy and the alienation of those in power; it is also useful from the point of view of the need to obtain social legitimacy for a policy that is to be implemented.

Among the many types of public policies distinguished according to the level of governance (central, regional, local) or thematic areas

(education, health, transport, etc.), it is worth distinguishing policies whose aim is not to obtain direct results but to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of other policies. Examples of such policies implemented in Poland include the creation of independent regulatory offices and the introduction of the requirement for regulatory impact assessment.

Independent regulatory offices were created in response to the privatisation of industries with monopolistic tendencies when the existence of competition in one dimension (e.g. price and quality of services) required the rigorous enforcement of technical requirements in another dimension. For example, the privatisation of rail services does not change the fact that railway tracks are not built by each operator solely for its own use. Trains belonging to different operators must run on the same tracks. Competition is possible only if rail services are provided by companies that have equal access to railway infrastructure. This is possible only if the railway infrastructure is owned by a body independent of the operators and equal access to it (price and other contract elements) is controlled and enforced by a specialised regulatory body. Such an office is an element of public policy, but it is not directly subordinate to the government; thanks to its organisational, financial, and managerial (including personnel) independence, it is less susceptible to political pressure, which often makes it necessary to subordinate long-term objectives to the current interests of those in power.

The effectiveness of the regulatory offices depends on several factors: the existence of a market with monopolistic tendencies, the presence of dimensions that are important for other reasons (e.g. sanitary or safety), the domination of private property, the strong position of the office in relation to the government, and high-quality management practices. The basic question which requires empirical verification is whether regulators make the market more competitive and whether there are benefits to the consumer without compromising their health or safety. Evidence can be found of the positive effects of regulatory authorities. The best known is the development of the telecommunications market and the opening of this market to competition in Mexico, which significantly reduced the price of telecommunications services and widened access to them (OECD, 2017). There are, however, cases where regulators are an unofficial governmental 'organ' without a significant role of their own in the formulation and implementation of public policy.

Another solution that was introduced in order to discipline governments that tend towards the proliferation of regulations is the requirement – treated as a part of the legislative process – to carry out evaluation of the results that are achieved. For governments, over-regulation is a convenient way to demonstrate that they are active because regulations impose costs on those affected by them and generally have no direct budgetary impact. For example, health and safety regulations make specific workplace standards mandatory and usually lead to costly investments, renovations, or purchases of equipment in the companies and institutions concerned. For public authorities that introduce regulations, the basic cost is the enforcement of these regulations (the cost of inspections). In view of this stimuli structure, the multiplication of regulations seems almost natural. However, how can one evaluate the proposed regulations if only the costs of adapting to them can be expressed in monetary terms (expenses for necessary adjustments), while the expected benefits would relate to dimensions that are not easily quantifiable in monetary terms? The methodology that is used in evaluating the impact of any introduced regulations was developed in response to this dilemma. It is based on a full cost-benefit analysis methodology that takes into account monetary and non-monetary benefits and costs, which include the benefits of having a choice or a positive aesthetic perception. Complete cost-benefit analysis involves subtle analysis that is saturated with philosophical (in fact, utilitarian) assumptions and is the domain of academic researchers rather than of the ministry officials who prepare decisions (Adler and Posner, 2001). In practice, impact assessment may become a ritual reduced to the elementary compliance of the introduced regulations with higher-level regulations – a legalistic act. Therefore, in order to use the potential of impact assessment, it is necessary to have an advanced culture of creating public policies and to popularise methodologically advanced methods of analysis.

Rational public policy, based on the achievements of science and established facts, is perhaps an unattainable ideal, but there is no alternative. Public policy will always be more rational when it is based on the results of scientific studies and its creators are aware of the scientific uncertainties and specificities of scientific disciplines; when it seeks to widen the circle of beneficiaries and take into account the future impact; and when it uses direct and visible tools (e.g. financial resources) and

takes into account the possibility of indirect action through institutional, procedural, and informational changes. The complexity of the issues does not always call for complex solutions, but it always requires knowledge of universal regularities combined with the capacity to contextualise them.

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Rafał Matyja  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7170-4692>

# Decision making in public policies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The article presents the main theoretical and research approaches used in the analysis of public policies today and outlines the main challenges that are faced by researchers in this field.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article begins with an outline of the various theories regarding the decision-making process and its application in the analysis of public policies. The starting point is the classification of the basic theoretical approaches that are based on attitudes to power as a key aspect of decision-making. These approaches include the classical elitist approach, the pluralist approach, network analysis, neo-Marxist concepts, the institutionalist approach, and approaches that are related to rational choice theory and psychology.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The second part discusses the challenges faced by research into decision-making processes in public policies caused by changes in the activities undertaken by central governments and the populist tendencies that can be observed in many Western countries today.

**Keywords:** decision-making, elitism, pluralism, institutionalism, rational choice theory, populism



## Researching the decision-making process in a time of rapid changes in politics

Research into the process of public policy making (i.e. investigating the way decisions are made rather than assessing their content) has been carried out for far longer than research into public policies themselves. The term 'public policy' denotes something different to politics, which is usually defined as a struggle for power. The emergence of public policies is intrinsically linked to the political process, in the sense of a struggle for power to make binding public decisions and to decide how these decisions are made. These two issues have been the essence of political reflection since antiquity.

Some elements of the decision-making process remain relatively constant, as evidenced by the unflagging popularity of Niccolò Machiavelli's classic texts, but most change rapidly (the expansion of the functions of the state, changes in the form of policymaking, and technological revolutions). Many older approaches (which are nowadays considered classical) enabled the analysis of decision-making processes in public policies. These were strongly linked to the times and circumstances in which they were created and corresponded to successive phases of the development of the modern order.

The situation is more complicated now. First, the ways in which the political process is carried out are constantly changing. Social expectations of the public sector are also changing, and the spread of the internet, social media, and algorithms, which not only support the traditionally understood decision-making process but increasingly often act as substitutes for it, have led us to a point where we can expect new approaches that take these transformations into account. Second, an increase in the number of various schools of thought, variant analyses, and proposals that combine differing approaches is a fact. Paradoxically, this accumulation of theoretical approaches – like the avalanche of available data – does not increase our ability to understand or even systematise the situation.

This review of the theoretical approaches is complemented by reflection on the changing challenges that political science faces, in particular the new face of populism, which is understood not only as a strategy of political rivalry but also as a concept of governance and the way in which

public policies are shaped. It is worth searching for better perspectives on the changing political reality which take into account the tools developed in recent decades whilst being fully aware of their potential weaknesses. Thanks to such tools, which are employed in gaining knowledge of and conducting research into the decision-making process in public policies, we have been provided with theories and approaches whose great ambition of explaining all or at least a significant part of the social processes has remained unfulfilled. For example, Wayne Parsons (1995, pp. 247–248) lists four main approaches to decision analysis that focus on power, rationality in relation to public choice theory, institutions, and information and psychology.

## Power as a key aspect of decision making

The oldest approach to decision-making analysis treats power as a factor to explain both how decisions are made in public policies and the content of these decisions. The question of *who rules*, i.e. who makes these decisions and how this determines their shape, seems so basic a question that it is asked by all levels of society – from the upper echelons to the man in the street. Most people believe in the domination of a closed elite and the struggle for public policies that are most beneficial for all the interest groups involved, and which take place within the state structures. This belief has become part of our common thinking and has entered the language of the media and election campaigns. The way in which this belief is reflected in the social sciences is politically motivated and strongly embedded in the social context, which is easy for the public to understand. The statements formulated by outstanding theoreticians are frequently repeated in public discourse and are labelled as ‘facts’, ‘assertions’, or ‘scientific explanations’.

Several options can be found within the approaches that focus on power analysis. The first are elitist models that are based on the classical theories of political scientists such as Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, and Robert Michels. They treat the idea of democracy, or more broadly, the rule of the people, as unrealistic and idealistic (Parsons, 1995, p. 249). Hence, decisions are made within a narrow circle of privileged individuals and frequently lack democratic legitimacy.

The phase of democratic development that was characterised by the existence of strong and relatively integrated economic elites was important for the development of elitism. It was in the interest of the elites to limit governments' powers and control their economic and international policy agenda. The development of this theory was closely related to the experiences of the home countries of its main creators (Italy, Germany, and the USA). Italian researchers attached great importance to the role of the unwritten and informal rules that were used to select the elites, while political scientists from the USA, Great Britain, and France attached importance to the role that was played by the most important universities (Dogan, 2003, pp. 4–7). Today, many of these factors are less pertinent or even obsolete.

At the height of the popularity of these theories, membership in the elites was inherited, and with this membership, family wealth, public activity, and personal ties (social and family) reinforced its effectiveness. That is why C. Wright Mills could put forward his thesis of an elite whose core is made up of old, wealthy families, surrounded by those who have recently become rich (Mills, 1961, p. 61). Not all the observations made by the proponents of this approach have become obsolete, and, according to Joseph Schumpeter, the existence of a social elite which stays outside of the world of politics as a necessity for the proper functioning of democracy still holds value (Schumpeter, 1995, p. 363). The continuation of this approach can be seen in the approaches referred to by Parson as "professionalism" and "technocratism", which cover participation in power and policymaking by elites that have no democratic legitimacy.

The concept of professionalism assumes and at times advocates for an important role of the professional and clerical elites in shaping policies that require knowledge and experience. If we assume that the roots of scientific reflection, which is devoted to public policies, lie in late nineteenth-century studies on administration, then this whole period is based on the separation of politics from the administration introduced by Woodrow Wilson. Its aim was to protect the sphere of administration, which requires expertise in implementing legislative decisions, against political partisanship, corruption, and abuse.

Although this politics-administration dichotomy had been rejected by the 1940s, recurrent attempts have been made to treat the process

of policymaking as a game played by the professional elites. Until the end of the 1970s, American politics was commonly looked at through the prism of 'iron triangles', i.e. close cooperation, independent of party preferences, between the presidential bureaucracy, congressional committees that formally supervised this cooperation, and interest groups. Finally, the era of "Washington cronyism" ended and was replaced by "complicated relationships within a huge group of the population that were politically active" (Heclo 1978, pp. 94 and 97). In the 1980s, it became fashionable to analyse policy communities, which were relatively stable, loosely connected networks of bureaucrats, experts, and interest groups who all cooperated with one another. Despite their differences, they shared basic beliefs about a given policy, which had a decisive influence on determining the cognitive framework within which decisions were made.

Technocratism shifts the emphasis to the field of technical progress, technological changes, research, and implementation. These are all conducive to the rationalisation of public administration activities and to treating this administration (following a Weberian approach) as a depersonalized mechanism to be used for the implementation of 'obvious' (rationally justified) objectives. Activities undertaken by the RAND corporation (the American think tank), which was created in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, are an example of a technocratic approach to the issues of governance and policymaking. "RAND has brought together mathematicians, political scientists, system analysts, engineers, sociologists, and others, in developing models that analysed the possible course of the Cold War" (Parsons, 1995, p. 268). However, the Cuban crisis revealed the limitations of the logical and rational analyses of international relations.

Technocratic theories are rarely discussed in Polish scientific and journalistic discourse. The broadly understood elitist perspective played an important role in discussions that were devoted to the replacement of the elites after the fall of communism in Poland (Szelenyi, Treiman, and Wnuk-Lipiński, 1995), and hypotheses on the survival strategy of the former nomenklatura were of particular interest at that time (Łoś and Zybertowicz, 2000; Staniszkis, 2001). Two positions were taken into account in research on the process of replacing the elite. The first, called the "elite reproduction theory", states that "a change in the system

does not involve a replacement of elites; the same people who were privileged in the past remain privileged today". The second and more competitive approach, which is known as the "elite circulation theory", assumes that the revolutionary change that took place with the fall of communism led to a situation in which "new persons, chosen according to new rules, found themselves in power and at the top of the social hierarchies" (Shelhenyi and Shelhenyi, 1995, p. 7).

This version of the elitist approach draws on the work of Pierre Bourdieu and concerns the process of the transformation of political, social, and economic capital. Some researchers mention the prognostic texts written by Elemer Hankiss and Jadwiga Staniszkis, in which they discuss the prospect of the old nomenklatura becoming the new great bourgeoisie (Hankiss, 1989), and the emergence of political capitalism (Staniszkis, 1991). The post-communist context of creating new elites often provoked statements that questioned the true character of these changes and whether they really changed anything or were merely a façade; moreover, democracy itself was also perceived in the same way. Subject literature mentioned the division between the façade and backstage, in which "the front stage (façade) provides democratic legitimacy and, at the same time, a veil for the game of resources that is played behind the scenes (the back stage)" (Mokrzycki, Rychard, and Zybortowicz, 2002, p. 15).

The pluralistic approach, which stands in contrast to the elitist approach, assumes that conflicts of interest, values, and attitudes play a fundamental role in shaping the decisions that are made in the public sphere. According to Robert A. Dahl, who is the classic representative of this trend, Gaetano Mosca's concept means that "democracy is impossible" and can only function as a myth "masking real domination", so it will always remain merely a façade behind which minority governments hide. Dahl points to two ways of verifying this form of elitism: the first is the ability to identify a concrete ruling group; the second is the ability to verify the criterion of its power, i.e. the ability to make decisions on controversial matters (Dahl, 2012, p. 376; Sartori, 1994, pp. 186–187).

"The ruling class model" is also contested by Giovanni Sartori, who determined the following questions to be asked in order to identify this model: First, does the ruling group constitute unity or multiplicity? Second, does it have a common awareness and coherence, and does it defend

the *status quo* with conspiratorial methods? Third, is it always possible to identify the minorities in power? As the answers to these questions are negative in contemporary Western societies, their “democracies are characterized by such a level of the dispersion of power that the «ruling class model» does not describe their reality” (Sartori, 1994, pp. 187–188).

Pluralism, which for many years dominated the mainstream of Western political science, continues to inspire researchers of decision-making processes in public policies. The main asset of pluralism is the rejection of reductionism, a trend that is of interest to many researchers within the social sciences. Policymaking is a complex process with many actors present at all levels of governance. Without grasping this multifaceted world, any analysis of public policies is doomed to fail.

Pluralist belief in the relative openness of public policy-making processes is a common feature of network analysis in public policies, and the most popular theory within this approach is probably the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). Its key term, ‘advocacy coalition’, includes people in various positions (officials, politicians, journalists, experts, leaders of interest groups) who share common beliefs and engage in coordinated activity directed at a political issue (as a subsystem of public policy). The unique aspect of the ACF lies in its drawing attention to the role of beliefs that are treated as a binder of particular coalitions, to learning the mechanism of (long-term) policy change, and also to the existence of different roles within coalitions and the system itself. From the point of view of the policy-making process, the key roles are played by both a policy broker, whose aim is to make a decision that will be widely accepted (by mediating between different coalitions), and by a “sovereign”, who makes a decision in an authoritative manner. However, the decision remains within the framework created by the coalitions (Sabatier, 1988; Cairney, 2012).

In Polish subject literature, the pluralist approach (especially those perspectives within it that were inspired by analysis of the political networks) can be found in studies devoted to the political tactics of interest groups in particular sectors of the economy (Ruszkowski and Wójtowicz, 2009; Gadowska, 2002) and also in important reform projects of the 1990s (Emilewicz and Wołek, 2002).

Those engaged in researching the approaches that focus on power (of both the pluralist and elitist perspectives) have questioned the key

role that is played by the various entities. This role is considered negligible because the structural constraints created by the capitalist economy or dominant culture invalidate the actions undertaken by individuals and (often) groups. This approach has enriched the study of decision-making processes in public policies with the observation that the absence of a decision is also an important decision (a *non-decision*) as it maintains the *status quo*. From the point of view of those who do not want a decision to be made, this can be effectively achieved by simply preventing a given problem from appearing on the agenda (*agenda-setting*). This can be done by controlling citizens' perceptions of the essence of the problem. This ability to control the circulation of information, the process of socialization, and the language is the third dimension of power that has been identified by political scientists who are inspired by neo-Marxism (Bachrach and Baratz, 1963; Lukes, 1974). Some proponents of this approach express doubts regarding the important role played by the social sciences in the creation of "rational" public policies that are dominated by state-dependent technocrats and experts (Focault, 1980; Bourdieu, 2009).

## Rational decision-making

The school of rational choice is another option in thinking about political decision-making. In analyses of the political process, this school of thought uses models based on a simplified concept of the interests of particular actors and agents. Describing the essence of the rational choice approach, Klaus von Beyme points to the intention of making political science a discipline that is so exact that "it can methodologically equate itself with economics. The new political economy of the non-Marxist provenance has long sought to restore the former unity of economics and politics, which has been gradually disappearing since the 18<sup>th</sup> century" (Beyme, 2005, p. 120) The essence of this concept lies in modelling the rational interests and behaviours of individual actors that are based on economics, while the measure of its success is the ability to predict the results of political actions.

Both early and later research on the rationality of actions taken by administrations reveal numerous inconsistencies in public interventions,

mostly resulting from self-interested groups or individuals, the expectations of recipients and beneficiaries of a given policy, pressure from professional circles, etc. It can be said that the rational approach has become more useful for fundamental criticism of the existing system of policymaking rather than in investigating and searching for improvement strategies. This leads to a broader question about the limits of rational decision analysis in terms of both the economic sciences and the Weberian model of rational and personalized bureaucracy. Quoting the works of Douglas North (1990), von Beyme states that public actors “rarely make a clear and unambiguous list of their preferences”. This also applies to the sphere of more complex economic choices (Beyme, 2005, p. 120). The limitations in applying the idea of *homo oeconomicus* in planning public policies is determined not only by the difference between the sphere of commercial profit-oriented activities and the sphere of state activities, but also by arguments offered by the economic sciences, for example, by behavioural economics (Thaler, 2018), which accuses rational choice “of working with data describing not »real« behaviour but stylised facts that have been derived from actors’ arbitrary preferences” (Beyme, 2005, pp. 120-121).

The limitations of rationality, which include the possibilities of incomplete knowledge, distortions of perception due to prejudices, emotions, or problems with concentration, memory limitations, habits, or rationalization of previous behaviours, can all lead to differences between political and administrative practices and rationalized decision models. Making people aware of the limitations of rationality is the greatest contribution of rational choice theory to research on decision making in public policies. In real life, people are not able to maximise benefits, so they make decisions (that are not optimal but satisfactory) by means of reducing the number of available options, simplifying choice by rejecting parts of the available data, or dividing complicated problems into solvable ones. They also base their decisions on routine, tried-and-tested cognitive shortcuts (including superstition), and decision-making formulas. As a result, they make suboptimal decisions, some of which turn out to be wrong (Clemons and McBeth, 2001).

Knowledge of decision makers’ limitations allows researchers to analyse the decisions they make more effectively and supports them in the process of making these decisions. Incrementalism is a theory that

has been popular since the end of the 1950s. This theory is based on the concept of limited rationality and argues that to be effective, changes in public policy should be non-radical and introduced step by step. Incrementalism recommends actors' mutual adjustments as a strategy for building understanding in the sphere of public policies.

Numerous researchers of public policy are vitally interested in how to move away from the *status quo*, i.e. when, how, and why a long-term equilibrium (based on the *status quo* or incremental changes) is interrupted and a change occurs. In this regard, the theory of three streams gained particular popularity. This theory argues that only the combination of these three streams – the problem, the politics, and the policy – can trigger change (Kingdon, 1995). John W. Kingdon rejects the rationalist scheme that assumes that politicians notice a problem, enlist officials to develop solutions to fix it, and then choose the best of these solutions to implement. According to Kingdon, these three processes run relatively independently of each other. Solutions to public problems arise regardless of whether or not the problem has appeared on the agenda, because ideas are constantly born, questioned, modified, and adapted to problems as needed. There are no objective measures that indicate which problem deserves attention and needs to be resolved quickly. When policy makers have a motive and an opportunity to address a problem and a solution is within their reach, a window of opportunity for political change opens.

In Polish subject literature, interesting and convincing attempts to apply the theory of rational choice appear in the areas in which modelling reality is the least controversial, namely in analysis of the coalition games played in parliament and in other representative bodies (Golański and Kasprzyk, 1999) and in analysis of the electoral system (Kot, 2002; Flis, 2008; Raciborski and Ochremiak, 2008). Various models proposed by mathematicians were used in considerations devoted to the Polish foreign policy that was related to rejecting the voting system of the European Council, which had been agreed on at the Nice summit (Słomczyński and Życzkowski, 2004). Other interesting analyses based on mathematical modelling include a study on the validity of the strategy that was undertaken by the opposition and the authorities at the Round Table in 1989 (Kaminski, 1997).

Public choice theory, which analyses the circumstances under which policies are created (e.g. voting methods, aggregation of preferences,

interest groups' influence on regulating the economy, etc.), is similar to rational choice theory. The source of this similarity can be found in the economic concept of human activities oriented towards their well-calculated interests; the behavioural pattern followed in public policies is borrowed from a pattern of market behaviours. Political choices are guided by a particular interest, and ideas are merely an expression or sublimation of that interest. This also applies to politicians and bureaucrats whose aim is to gain power, maintain their position, or retain influence.

Some elements of the economic approach to the analysis of public policies (but with a broader, more flexible formula) can be found in the concept of New Public Management. This concept was crucial in the process of economising decisions and, more broadly, economising ways of thinking in the area of public policies in the 1980s. The basic context for making decisions was the cost-effectiveness of a given policy, an effectiveness that is measured by the ratio of results (measurable effects) to costs. However, discussion on this issue rarely concerned the decision-making mechanisms or the policy-making process but was more concerned with its content and the evaluation of results.

The issue of power as the main context for decision-making takes on a different meaning in the analyses of institutionalists, for whom the vital element is the existence of rules that indicate or even limit the field of choice for decision-makers and in extreme cases can even suggest an optimal solution. The classical institutionalism of Montesquieu or Tocqueville treated politics as actions whose framework was defined by the system and its institutional forms, and its greatest asset was based on the ability to take into account various possible solutions and to compare their outcomes. New institutionalism, often called 'neo-institutionalism', appears "as a reaction to the victorious march of behaviourism, which definitely marginalized the importance of the institution" (Beyme, 2005, pp. 194–195). New institutionalism emphasises the relative autonomy of institutions, which was denied by pluralists, who focused on interest groups, and their opponents, who adhered to Marxist state theories (March and Olsen, 2005).

Neo-institutionalists treat institutions as either a generally accepted framework for the activities of individuals and groups or as constraints on these activities, which may be formal or informal and can include

those that are not recognised by law but imposed by adherence to custom (North, 1990).

In the first decade of the transformations, Poland and other Central European countries were attracted to institutionalism. However, this attraction was based on the unrealistic assumption that formal rules significantly determine the quality of politics and thus will lead to the identification of cultural and social barriers that hinder the creation of a new order. Over time, it became evident that neither the belief in the possibility of a rational analysis of policies, nor the more sophisticated belief in the possibility of their being rationally formatted by systemic solutions, is a good starting point for analysing and designing public policies.

Artur Wołek (2004) discussed the dual nature of political institutions in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, a region that is crucial for capturing the specificity of democracy in this part of the world. This specificity is derived from the patterns of political rivalry (Antoszewski, 2004), understood as the shape of the party system, the electoral system, and elements of political culture. The second aspect is the model of administration and the public sector, i.e. the extent to which officials and experts participate in decision-making and the extent to which their voice is taken into account or, in extreme cases, is decisive.

Interesting examples of analyses related to renewed institutionalism in the field of policy making can be found in Agnieszka Dudzińska's (2015) work, which is devoted to the practice of Polish parliamentarism, and Kaja Gadowska's (2015) work on the civil service, as well as in certain classic papers whose authors analyse the functioning of the government (Rydlewski, 2002).

## Personality, cognition, and information

Reflection on public policies and the functioning of modern administration has always taken into account the role of emotions, personality, and group behaviour in decision-making processes. This is referred to in Herbert Simon's key articles, in which he indicated the limitations of rationality in the actions taken by administrations (Simon, 1976). This was also referenced by Harold Lasswell, who emphasised, among other

things, the role played by political decision makers' personalities in the process (Lasswell, 1966).

In the process of decision analysis, we must account for decision-makers' beliefs and values, their emotional and cognitive determinants (especially what they consider to be 'real' and 'relevant' to the image of the world), and for the mistakes that result from group thinking. The latter concept stems from the observation that decision-makers form coherent groups that are prone to making similar mistakes, taking the same perspective, and eliminating alternative approaches (Parsons, 1995, p. 246, 345).

Studies that question the rationality of individuals' behaviour and their ability to understand the structures in which they function may turn out to be a breakthrough in research on the psychological and cognitive aspects of political action. The works of Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman that point to problems related to cognitive barriers (Kahneman, 2012) create an important context for undertaking contemporary research on decision-making mechanisms in the area of public policymaking.

Similar conclusions are drawn from analyses of voters' behaviours and, more broadly, the framework of political debate and how it is viewed by citizens (Dalton and Klingemann, 2010; Lakoff, 2017). There is also much to suggest that, in time, broader approaches that indicate the psychological determinants of decisions, and even political attitudes (Haidt, 2014; Westen, 2014) will become an important context for understanding and interpreting the behaviour of both citizens and the politicians that represent them. This means, above all, an opportunity to develop political research that is based on the findings of studies conducted within psychology, linguistics, and cognitive science.

The latter perspective assumes that not only will theoretical approaches and research methods change but that politics itself will change too. On the one hand, rival agents and candidates will increasingly resort to methods of modelling their electorates that are based on profiling their identities and, more broadly, their online behaviour on social media. On the other hand, public policies must pay attention to this new perspective of knowledge regarding attitudes and needs. Changes in the research perspective will also be driven by the emergence of new political phenomena, such as changes in the political divisions of the Western world, as well as the new styles of politics that will arise because of this change.

## Can populism be instructive?

In this context, the emergence and spread of politics based on authoritarian and populist rhetoric should be looked at from a certain distance. This rhetoric employs figures and metaphors from the 1920s and 1930s but arranges them into different patterns and uses them for different political purposes.

Two positions prevail in the debate on the contemporary wave of populism flowing through Western democracies: the first puts the blame on politicians who have no inhibitions and use rhetoric that has been avoided for years, while the second blames their predecessors, complacent elites, advocates of neoliberalism, specialists in political correctness, etc. Laying the blame with one or the other is tempting but to some extent cognitively sterile (for someone to be able to seize the opportunity, someone else must have created it). However, we miss a more systemic question here: can a wave of populism repair the political model, including public policy making, or is it meaningless destruction, necessarily followed by a return to the *status quo ante*?

Many who attempt to grasp the phenomenon of populism assume that the shape of the political system is relatively unchanged, subject to changes in terms of political shifts or changes in the electoral system at most. The unshakeable stability of the party system is considered so obvious that the majority of texts dealing with Central and Eastern European countries analysed the evolution of the party system in terms of its consolidation, aimed at establishing stable competing models and creating party identification (Antoszewski, 2004).

Reducing the role of populism to merely changing the party system invalidates its significant influence on the decision-making process. Meanwhile, ruling politicians who represent this new trend claim that they do not intend to respect the existing model of decision-making and constantly infringe unwritten rules of decision-making and even, in some countries, the constitutional framework of governance. In countries such as Poland and Hungary, this politics is characterized by a focus on immediate, socially perceptible effects or by building the politics of fear as the foundation for legitimizing the ruling political camp (Magyar, 2018).

Populism, understood as both a distinct political trend and as a trend affecting numerous political rivals, primarily affects policies that are

important for public and social security (migration, employment, and social policies) and those policies that shape the sense of national identity (historical and cultural policies). Above all, however, populism is an attempt to construct a different model of legitimization that is based not on traditionally understood democratic representation and accountability but on treating those in power as the only advocates of national interest and excluding opponents from the political community (Müller, 2017).

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above considerations: (1) the practice of exercising power by populist governments contradicts practices that are shaped within the framework of governance as populism employs a hierarchical model in order to legitimise decision-making; (2) the decision-making processes do not take into account the reservations of social partners or the opposition but focus on ensuring that the decisions made by those at the centre of the decision-making process are implemented quickly and to the letter; (3) public policies are (more than in a liberal democracy) useful tools in a continuous election campaign and for the mobilisation of support.

It seems likely that a strong wave of populism would change political practice not only in countries where such parties came to power (e.g. Poland, Italy, and Hungary) but also in those where mainstream parties will make effective attempts to counteract this wave and anticipate the moves of populist parties. This may result in a retreat from the model of public policy-making that has become widespread in Europe in recent decades. After all, its present form is equated with neither democracy nor the liberal order; it has developed at a certain stage of the functioning of liberal democracies and seems to be very closely linked to the process of weakening class and ideological tensions and the search for objective reference points for individual policies. As Peter Sloterdijk (2011) states, ideologists were replaced by consultants after 1968. After the first period of expert self-confidence, a “newer wave of advice” appeared, which “starts with the correct premise that actors who can’t do much are best supported by consultants who know that they don’t know much. From now on, Socrates is back with us again”. This conclusion, however, is not optimistic, as it indicates that “outstanding carriers of incompetence would pay almost any sum [for experts’ incomplete knowledge], and it is not only the executives of great industry who pay a lot for the absolution

provided by consultants. In recent years, German federal ministries have bought large-scale advisory bluff under the guise of ‘special committees’ (*Enquete-Kommission*) for billions” (Sloterdijk, 2011, pp. 83-84).

A natural corrective measure that has been identified is the departure from the type of prescriptions that were inscribed in the New Public Management and governance, and even a partial shift towards the traditional model of shaping public policies, often referred to as neo-Weberism (Mazur, 2016). Of course, this could be seen to be the result of failing to create a theory that organizes our understanding of public policy making and its principles. However, it is also an outcome of the natural circulation of ideas between related academic and expert worlds, in which the latter has a natural tendency to exaggerate. In this sense, progress in academic reflection on the mechanisms of shaping public policies should be based on the skilful accumulation of experience and on avoiding falling into the extremes that are present in this period of scientific maturation. The choice of a paradigm should never mean that it becomes dominant and holds a privileged position in shaping our opinions on political practice.

## Conclusion

When politics changes rapidly, the greatest role in creating a new understanding of public policymaking processes will be played by those sciences and approaches that focus on the ways in which we discover and understand social reality. However, their conclusions will be insufficient in building new critical models and formulating expert advice on how to optimise public policy decision-making processes. Although they will make us more careful, better informed about our own entanglements, and more sensitive to even minor semantic changes in politics, they will not increase our chances for a better understanding of the increasingly complex model of shaping public policies by various state agendas. It would be naive to suppose that someone is still in control of this process or that governments are aware of how the public sector defines and achieves its goals. Moreover, events such as the 2008 crisis, the attack on the WTC, Brexit, and the immigration crisis in Europe after 2015 all demonstrate that governments have problems analysing the data

available to them, recognising grave threats to the normal functioning of states, and activating crisis management tools.

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Marcin Zawicki  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3724-2658>

# Public policy implementation

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The contemporary holistic approach to the process of public policy assumes that the outcome of implementing a given policy is not known at the decision-making stage of the process. Implementation is therefore defined as being the clarification of a public policy; the continuous formulation of a public policy with the use of other means; and the process of changing a policy that is shaped by various organisations, administrative practices, politics, and values.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article presents different approaches to the implementation of public policies and describes the main features of this process in Poland. It consists of three parts: a presentation of the main theoretical concepts of policy implementation, an attempt to identify the basic principles of policy implementation in Poland, and recommendations for improvements to the system of public policy implementation in Poland.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article argues that the process of policy implementation in Poland is dominated by features that are typical of a top-down implementation approach, as a result of which it is dysfunctional in a number of ways. The quality of the law-making process is of fundamental importance for the course and outcomes of policy implementation, and, despite many reforms in this area, lawmaking is still a challenge for Polish legislators. There are two identifiable areas of the law-making process where improvement is too slow. The first is the quality of formulating

the objectives of acts; the second is in the monitoring and reporting of the effects of policy implementation by the entities involved in the process. Overregulation of the principles of policy implementation, together with actions undertaken by audit institutions that are disproportionate to the identified risks, lead to permanent changes in the attitudes of the participants involved, who are thus encouraged not to take responsibility for the effects of policies.

**Keywords:** public policy implementation, theories of public policy implementation, implementation of public policies in Poland

## The subject matter and essence of public policy implementation

The definition of the term *public policy implementation* depends on an understanding of the process of its creation. According to the heuristic approach to the political process, which was typical of early research on public policies, the particular stages of this process are reached by a sequence of logical, consecutive, but separate steps. In this case, policy implementation can be taken to mean the following: everything that happens between approving a policy to be implemented and the specific effects of its implementation; translation of a policy into action; and the implementation of decisions in the public policy sphere.

In the holistic approach to the process of public policy, which is characteristic of the synthesising contemporary trend of research on policy implementation, it is assumed that the outcome of implementing a given policy is not known at the decision-making stage of the process. Public policy is considered a changeable process and can be subject to modification during the course of its implementation. The following definitions of implementation are characteristic in this approach:

1. clarification of a public policy;
2. continuous formulation of a public policy with the use of other means;
3. undertaking activities related to the implementation of a policy that will lead to its reformulation;
4. the process of changing a policy is shaped by various organisations, administrative practices, politics, and values;
5. while formulation of a policy is a transformation of inputs into a specific product (a public policy), its implementation is a conversion of an input (public policy) into a subsequent bundle of dispersed products of implementation.

The implementation of public policies is executed by entities which are primarily public administration organisations as well as private entities and non-governmental organisations that participate in the implementation of public tasks. The implementing entities bear the main responsibility for implementation, i.e. the translation of political intentions into concrete actions. As is true of all human activity, implementation activities may be intentional or unintentional, and the results of

the implementation of a policy may differ from those expected by policy makers. Contrary to the views that are traditionally held by lawyers and early researchers of public policies, it is no longer assumed that public policies are self-executing. This means that implementation is not a formality, and administration is not mere “machinery” that implements politicians’ intentions automatically.

Studies that are devoted to public policy implementation analyse and interpret this process with a view to developing pragmatic methods that support both policymakers and implementers. In 1975, this sub-discipline of the public policy sciences was hailed as the “missing link” within this field of the social sciences. It is assumed that the scientific roots of this sub-discipline date back to the first half of the 1970s, although issues of public policy implementation had been dealt with before this time. Research on policy implementation focuses on finding the answers to four key questions: what should be implemented, what is happening during implementation, what should be happening during implementation, and what has been done in order to implement a given policy (Smith and Larimer, 2009, p. 155).

There are three chronological theoretical approaches to research on policy implementation: 1) top-down, 2) bottom-up, and 3) synthesising and contemporary. The basic theoretical assumption of the studies conducted within the top-down approach was to base them on the rational model of the implementation of public policies that is characteristic of the positivist scientific paradigm. The premises of this model are as follows: public policies and their objectives are formulated by politicians; implementing entities are responsible for achieving the objectives of public policies; and the role of research on the implementation of public policies is to identify barriers to achieving the objectives of public policies (Hill and Hupe, 2002, p. 44).

The first analyses of policy implementation were conducted as case studies. Jeffrey Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky (1984) identified the constituent factors and evaluated the process of implementation of the federal economic development programme in Oakland, California. This development programme aimed to create three thousand jobs for members of ethnic minorities. Analysis of the programme was based on an assessment of the relationship between the effectiveness of the implementation and the nature of the relationship between the local

organizations that participated in its implementation. It allowed the researchers to identify why the programme failed and to formulate the following conclusions:

- if a policy is implemented through a dispersed and multi-stage decision-making process, the chances of its success (i.e. implementing everything that was agreed to be implemented) are low or very low;
- a policy that is implemented by many organizations of public administration is likely to succeed if they closely cooperate with one another, if the quality of this cooperation is high, and if they are able to develop a uniform vision of policy implementation;
- a policy that is implemented by many entities is likely to fail if just one link in the implementation process ceases to function properly; moreover, if this link is an entity involved in making a significant number of implementative measures, the probability of failure increases considerably.

From the perspective of the effectiveness of implementation that was developed by Donald Van Meter and Carl Van Horn (1975), the typology of public policy that is derived from the theory of organisation is based on two factors: the extent of change expected as a result of policy implementation, and the degree to which its objectives are accepted. The combination of these factors yields two types of policies. The first covers policies that are likely to succeed, and the greater their success is, the lower the expectations of changes and the higher the degree to which its objectives are accepted. The second covers policies at risk of failure, and the greater their failure is, the higher the expectations of changes and the lower the degree to which its objectives are accepted.

Eugene Bardach (1977) used the phrase “playing games” to describe the behaviours of those participants of policy implementation who want to satisfy their own interests. In his view, the course of policy implementation is conditioned by overlapping and interaction between policy objectives and ongoing implementation activities. The vagueness of a policy causes problems with its implementation, as this vagueness makes it vulnerable to the games that are played by different actors. This can be prevented by decision-makers (policy makers) if they ensure the creation of precise implementation scenarios that limit the space for spontaneous “games” and lead implementation directly towards

the desired results. Policymakers should therefore “fix the games” by actively steering the policy implementation process, e.g. by staying in touch with people directly responsible for implementation, by participating in review meetings, or by initiating legal changes that are aimed at removing the barriers to policy implementation.

The legislator plays a key role in policy implementation, which is understood as a top-down process. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the functioning of parliament and the quality of the legislation implemented. Acts or secondary regulations should always meet the following criteria: define clear and consistent policy objectives; include precise criteria for resolving conflicts concerning these objectives; consider cause-and-effect relationships; identify the impact of policy objectives on the problems solved; define the competence of implementing entities; and include measures for supporting the achievement of planned policy objectives. The responsibility for the implementation of policies should be assigned to policy-friendly agendas, whose employees should have the power to facilitate decision-making and possess the managerial, substantive, and political skills that are necessary for the process. It is also necessary to provide adequate financial resources for the implementation of policies and gain the support of the constituent bodies, the administration, the voters, and the beneficiaries of the policies (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1983, pp. 41–42).

The concept of scenarios of public policy implementation emphasises the impact public policy makers have on the quality of the implementation process. Policy makers should create conditions that are friendly for implementing entities by, for example, entrusting the implementation of policies to one entity whose actions do not depend on those of other implementing entities; by subordinating implementing entities to political superiors; by providing these entities with the time and resources that are required to implement a policy; by allowing them the freedom to act and configure resources; by precisely designing the sequence of implementation activities; by appropriate communication; and by coordination of the implemented activities (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984, pp. 200–206).

Theories within the bottom-up approach of policy implementation do not negate the hierarchy that exists in the policy process (from political decision-making to administrative implementation), but they emphasise the importance of the final links of this process, which are decisive for

the effects of implementation. These final links include the people who deliver policy products to recipients: the service buyers, entrepreneurs, local communities, social organisations, etc. In this approach, policy implementation is analysed from the last to the first link of the process, i.e. from the delivered policy product to the decision on the choice of implemented policy. The research that was centred on this approach was based on the post-positivist paradigm and qualitative methods and focused on intra-organizational relations, organizational culture, and interpersonal relations.

The best-known theory of the bottom-up implementation approach is the theory of street-level bureaucracy (Weatherley and Lipsky, 1977). This theory analyses the problems that are posed by controlling those public administration employees who implement policies. Street-level bureaucracy is made up of officials and other professionals who provide public services (teachers, social workers, policemen, etc.), interact directly with service buyers, and have the discretionary power to grant benefits or impose sanctions.

Street-level bureaucrats have a vague idea of public policy objectives. In their work, they are focused on performing their tasks rather than on participating in policy implementation. Since they do not see the relationship between policy objectives and the tasks they perform, being obliged to achieve policy objectives has the effect of being met with resistance and reducing the quality of their work, which ultimately leads to a deteriorating relationship with the clients whose needs they neglect (Lipsky, 2010, pp. 23–24). It is therefore recommended that ways are found to express the objectives of public policy in a language understood by street-level bureaucrats in order that they will understand both how and why they are supposed to perform their tasks. It is therefore necessary to create formal and substantive links between the routine tasks that are performed by street-level bureaucrats and the policy objectives, as well as to establish mechanisms of accountability for the tasks performed by the street-level bureaucracy (Lipsky, 2010, p. 230).

The concept of negotiated order assumes that action in public policy is dependent on compromises that are reached by employees working in different segments of the organisations that implement policies and in their related entities. Public policy is fluid and never remains inert; it is determined by the dynamics of the interactions between policy

objectives and implementation. Policy change is the result of the activity of many actors who constantly modify and reinterpret a policy, which occasionally leads to its abandonment. These actors treat a policy as property that they do not possess, but they declare its various purposes. Since actors have different expectations towards policies, it is not possible to meet the expectations of all of them (Barrett and Fudge, 1981, p. 251). The most important value in the concept of negotiated order is that agreement is reached between the actors at each stage of the public policy process, and especially agreement of the compromises that are related to the effects of the implemented policy.

Analyses of implementation structures in Swedish and German employment and training programmes and in projects examining the functioning of these programmes gave rise to theoretical considerations devoted to the mechanisms of their creation. These programmes were implemented with the participation of many organisations in networked cooperation systems. Implementation structures are not imposed by authorities but are created in the course of policy implementation as a result of individual or consensual decisions of the implementation participants. Implementation structures do not correspond to the formal boundaries of individual organisations but nest inside multi-organisational groups. They are created as a result of the professional ties that are formed between policy participants that are stronger than the boundaries of the organisation (Hjern and Porter, 1981, pp. 220–221). The implementation structures are thus non-hierarchical cooperation networks that extend over the organisational structures of the actors involved in policy implementation.

The synthesising and contemporary implementation approach is a broad one. The synthesisation of concepts consists in combining the arguments of supporters of the top-down approach to policy implementation and supporters of the bottom-up approach to policy implementation in such a way that they constitute coherent theoretical constructs. Contemporary implementation concepts broaden our understanding of the policy implementation process to include the horizontal relationship concept, interdependence between policy actors, and public policy implementation in the European Union. This approach is characterized by the integration of many research perspectives and methodological pluralism, which enables research in both paradigms: positivist and interpretative.

One method that is used in the analysis of policy implementation and which combines several approaches is the method that links forward mapping with Richard Elmore's backward mapping. Forward mapping is done through the sequential operationalisation of policy objectives, i.e. its translation into actions and effects. After policy objectives are defined, packages of implementation tools are developed which include the estimated costs and benefits of using the tools; the approximate scope of changes resulting from the increase in costs incurred by the tools used; and draft regulations that limit the risk of abandoning the tools. Backward mapping involves the design of implementation activities in the opposite direction. Firstly, the expected effects of the policy are determined, followed by its results, products, and the desired behaviour of the beneficiaries. These are then translated into the actions of the implementing entities, and the ability of potential implementing entities to produce the expected products and results is subsequently assessed. Finally, a public policy that is adjusted to the capabilities of the implementing entities is created (Elmore, 1980, p. 604).

Systematising public policy implementation models is another contribution that Elmore made to implementation theory (Elmore, 1978). Elmore distinguished four implementation models in which a policy is understood as systems management, bureaucratic process, organisational development, and conflict and bargain (Table 1).

Table 1. R. Elmore's models of public policy implementation

	Implementation as			
	Systems management	The bureaucratic process	Organisational development	Conflict and bargain
Overriding principle	rationality	discretionality routine	autonomy control executed by employees	exercise of power competition
Distribution of power	centralized	distributed fragmented	equal distribution of responsibilities	unstable and dispersed
Decision-making process	suboptimal	incremental	working groups based on strong interpersonal relations	negotiating in order to resolve conflicts
Process of implementation	monitoring complacency	change in estab- lished practices	building consensus	taking differing interests into account

Source: (Elmore 1978).

Richard Matland’s (1995) typology of public policy implementation differentiates between two criteria: the level of conflict around public policy and the level of ambiguity in a policy. Combinations of relationships between low and high values of both criteria form a matrix of four types of public policy implementation (Table 2).

Table 2. R. Matland’s typology of public policy implementation

		Conflict	
		Low	High
Ambiguity	Low	Administrative implementation	Political implementation
	High	Experimental implementation	Symbolic implementation

Source: (Matland 1995, p. 160).

Public policies that are unambiguous and non-conflicting with regard to their objectives and implementation should be implemented administratively, and the most important factor determining the effects of implementation is the resources that are allocated to policy implementation. Unambiguous policies with a high level of conflict with regard to their objectives and implementation should be implemented politically. This requires the active participation of political decision-makers who are responsible for conflict reduction using transactional and negotiation tools. Policies that are ambiguous but whose objectives and implementation strategies have been approved should be implemented experimentally. This requires the active involvement of policy actors in the implementation process. The results of implementation are difficult to predict as its success is determined by the skills of the organisational learning that is possessed by all the actors of a given policy. Policies that are ambiguous and controversial with regard to their objectives and implementation strategies should be implemented symbolically. Policies of this type are implemented inconsistently with the involvement of extra or limited resources.

Network theory has broadened the theoretical perspective of research on the implementation of public policies. This theory attempts to overcome the problem that is present in the top-down approach of policy implementation, which is connected with discontinuity between the formulation and implementation of a public policy, and it emphasises the role of the horizontal relationship in these processes.

Network theory is an inspiration to many implementation theorists who have creatively adapted it for the process of implementation. Fritz Scharpf (1978) outlined the general framework of a public policy network:

(...) it is very unlikely, if possible at all, that a public policy of any importance is the result of the choice of a single and homogenous actor. The formulation and implementation of public policy is undoubtedly the result of pluralistic interactions between many independent actors with differing interests, objectives, and strategies (Scharpf, 1978, p. 347).

The implementation of public policies in network systems requires strengthening the cooperation and coordination of the implemented actions. Networks are characterised not by their monocentricity but by the multicentricity of mutual relations. Public policy actors are not independent of one another. They are bound by links of multilateral interdependence that result from the mutual needs of the actors involved. To achieve their objectives, they need access to the resources that are owned by others. Network management is a method that is used for improving policy implementation in network systems; it focuses on improving cooperation between the actors that participate in the public policy process and on coordinating their activities. The aim of network management is to improve the interaction between the actors involved in policy implementation by more or less intensive reconfiguration of a policy's structure (Klijn and Koppenjan, 2000, pp. 139–140).

Network connections can also be the cause of failure in the implementation of public policies. The source of this failure lies primarily in lack of transparency or vagueness of interests, both of which may impede the implementation of public policies and negatively affect the effectiveness, efficiency, and democratic legitimacy of the public sector (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan, 1997, p. xvii).

Since the 1990s, theories of implementation have been influenced by studying the policies that have been implemented by institutions and countries within the European Union. The researching of European policies is based on a comparative approach that reveals the institutional and cultural specificities of the different countries involved.

One of the most important concepts explaining the mechanisms of implementing public policies in Europe is the theory of multi-level governance. Garry Marks (1993, p. 392) described it as a “system of

continuous negotiations among nested governments at several territorial tiers”. This concept was later extended to include the horizontal relationship between public and non-public actors. It assumes that power is not permanently ‘nested’ at a given territorial level but is the result of interactions and interdependences (of a vertical and horizontal nature) between public and non-public actors at several levels of governance.

The table below synthesises the research on the implementation of public policy by giving a list of constitutive features of implementation that are specific to the three approaches to policy implementation (Table 3).

Table 3. Constitutive features of public policy implementation

Analytical criterion	Top-down implementation	Bottom-up implementation	Synthesising and contemporary implementation
The dominant democratic model	elitism	participatory management	participatory democracy
Type of leadership	political leadership	organisational leadership	community leadership
Type of organisational structures	mechanistic	organic	polycentric
Agency of actors taking part in implementation	political actors – agents of implementation; administrative and non-public actors – objects of implementation	political and administrative actors – agents of implementation; non-public actors – objects of implementation	unlimited
Recognition of implementing entities	is dysfunctional and should be limited	is natural, but it should be limited	is natural and should be managed
Accountability mechanisms	politicians – voters; administration – policy; employees – managers	front-line administration; beneficiaries of public policies	differentiated accountability mechanisms; co-responsibility
Subject of evaluation	policy objectives	policy objectives; the scope for solving the problem	the extent to which the objectives have been achieved or the problems defined by a policy’s stakeholders have been solved; procedural values

Source: (Zawicki 2016, p. 152).

## Policy implementation in Poland

The implementation of public policies in Poland is determined by the following framework: the political system (the political system framework), the system of entities responsible for the implementation of public policies (the structural-organizational framework), and the tasks of public authorities and other entities, together with the methods of their implementation (the procedural-substantive framework).

The rules that govern the implementation of public policies in Poland derive from the institutional order created before 1989 and the numerous reforms that were undertaken in later years. Most were implemented in three waves: systemic (transformational), European (applicational), and strategic (performative) (Rydlewski, 2015, p. 61).

Poland is a homogeneous state, which means that the basic rules that govern policy implementation as defined in the acts are uniform for the whole country. After 1 May 2004, as a result of accession to the European Union, Poland's legal order acquired a dualistic dimension: the legislators are entities of both the legal system in Poland and in the European Union. Membership in the European Union obliges Poland to implement public policies in accordance with national and European law.

The main entities responsible for the implementation of policies in Poland comprise bodies and units of public administration at both the central government and local government levels. In particular, at the central government level they include the Council of Ministers, ministers, central offices (including regulatory bodies) and executive agencies. At the local levels of province (*województwo*) and county (*powiat*), they are comprised of both consolidated and non-consolidated bodies and units of government administration. The local government administration at the lowest level is made up of bodies and organisational units of the commune (*gmina*), county (*powiat*), and province (*województwo*).

Other significant entities that implement policies in Poland are the President of the Republic of Poland (foreign policy, national defence, historical policy, contacts with the Polish diaspora and Poles abroad); the National Health Fund; health care institutions (health care policy); the Social Insurance Institution and the Agricultural Social Insurance Fund (social security policy); cultural institutions (cultural policy); universities and other units of the system of science and higher education

(science and higher education policy); the National Bank of Poland (monetary policy); state special purpose funds and other state legal persons (a wide range of policies); commercial law companies, including municipal companies and private companies who provide a range of public services (water, electricity, heating, gas, etc.).

Another group of entities that, whilst not directly responsible for the implementation of policies, have an influence on the activities of implementing entities consists of audit bodies, special services, and the courts. Within audit bodies, a special role is played by the Supreme Audit Office, the Ombudsman, regional audit offices, the State Sanitary Inspectorate, and the State Labour Inspectorate. Due to the subject matter of its activity, the Central Anticorruption Bureau also has an indirect impact on the principles of implementing public policies.

The courts also play a much-underestimated role in the process of implementing policies in Poland, especially the administrative courts, the Constitutional Tribunal and, due to Poland's membership in the EU, the Court of Justice of the European Union. In cases related to the implementation of public tasks, rulings of the courts and tribunals may sometimes have quite a significant impact on the way specific policies are implemented and thus may modify previously adopted implementation rules and practices.

Regulatory bodies play a key role in the implementation of regulatory policies. They are largely independent of the Prime Minister or the ministers who supervise them and have competences that enable them to independently shape and enforce state policy in their area of competence. The first regulatory authority in Poland, the National Broadcasting Council (the NBC), was established in 1992. Apart from the NBC, other also recently created or transformed bodies include the President of the Public Procurement Office (1994), the President of the Energy Regulatory Office (1997), the President of the Civil Aviation Authority (2002), the President of the Office for the Registration of Medicinal Products, Medical Devices and Biocidal Products (2002), the President of the Office of Rail Transport (2003), the Polish Financial Supervision Authority (2006), the President of the Office of Electronic Communications (2006), and the President of the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection (2007).

Sectoral hierarchical structures, which are created by organizations specializing in the implementation of specific policies, play the dominant

role among structures implementing policies in Poland. Furthermore, as a result of the Prime Minister's 1997 Act related to government administration departments, this hierarchical structure gained increased flexibility and autonomy for shaping the structure of the Council of Ministers and the competences of ministers. Steps to weaken sectoral hierarchies by strengthening the horizontal ties between entities implementing policies had already been taken in the early 1990s. This was achieved primarily through decentralisation reforms, including the establishment of self-government by communities (*gmina*) (1990), counties (*powiat*), and provinces (*województwo*) (1999); however, numerous corrections to the system, new policy areas, and pro-efficiency reforms were also introduced, such as the inclusion of labour offices into the local government administration (2004), the policy of development of problematic and functional areas (2003), territorialisation of development policy (2010), and enabling the creation of local government shared services centres (2018), etc.

To date, the functioning of horizontal inter-organisational implementation structures in Poland has not been thoroughly studied. However, it is easy to see the growing role of various forms of cooperation between public and non-public entities that implement policies in the form of steering committees, consultative, advisory, and programme boards, expert teams, project teams, inter-ministerial teams, and task teams.

The tasks of public authorities and other entities, together with the methods of their implementation, which set the procedural and substantive frameworks for the implementation of policies, are defined by the provisions of generally applicable law, internal secondary legislation, and other implementation regulations.

The basic legal regulations that sanction policies are acts. Regardless of the type of policy (redistributive, distributive, regulatory, constitutive, substantive, procedural, or mixed), the basis for their implementation are, as a rule, the provisions of the acts. The legal regulations that define the procedures for the implementation of policies include, among others, the Code of Administrative Procedure, Public Procurement Law, and the Personal Data Protection Act, as well as numerous provisions of substantive administrative law, which include construction, environmental protection, social assistance, etc.

The political intentions that are specified in the acts are detailed in secondary legislation (e.g. regulations of the Council of Ministers or

ministers). Regulations and lower-order legislation clarify (thus change) a policy and set the framework for its implementation.

The source of guidelines for the implementation of policies can also be found in secondary legislation addressed to the units that are subordinate to the entities that issue particular regulations. These include the resolutions and ordinances that are enacted by authorized bodies of the state, the government, or local government administration.

The quality of the law-making procedure is of vital importance for policy implementation and its results. Despite many reforms in this respect, this quality needs improving in Poland. The process of implementing policies in Poland is often initiated alongside the process of law adjustment, which begins with various policy stakeholders or the media searching for contradictions or weaknesses in the regulations and thus limiting their chance for successful implementation. These actions are often effective and lead to prompt amendment of the new act (Zybała, 2012, p. 192). The obligation introduced in 2002 to prepare impact assessments as an indispensable element of the legislative process is a positive one. Unfortunately, the quality of these assessments is often not good enough, and they are usually ignored by the legislator, which makes this tool merely a facade. Studies on the quality of impact assessments also indicate that rather than being prepared beforehand, they are sometimes only prepared after the decision to proceed with a given act has been made, i.e. *de facto*, they are not a tool for *ex-ante* evaluation of a legislative proposal but a set of arguments justifying the necessity of its introduction. Studies on the quality of impact assessments are dominated by qualitative data, and they lack in-depth quantitative data that would reliably estimate the costs and benefits of a new law coming into force.

Improvements in the legislation, both in terms of the quality of the formulation of the objectives of the acts, and in monitoring and reporting the effects of policy implementation by the implementing entities, are progressing too slowly. These issues are also related to the lack of post-legislative procedures for the evaluation of legal regulations, as was observed as early as in 2005. Their introduction would offer the possibility to systematically review the adequacy and usefulness of the law and, on this basis, organise and simplify the legal system.

A negative phenomenon that disturbs the stability and transparency of the principles of implementing public policies in Poland is the

excessive, uncoordinated, and uncontrolled growth of “duplicate law” (*prawo powielaczowe*), which originated in communist Poland. “Duplicate law” includes various types of information, instructions, explanations, circulars, internal interpretations, and guidelines that are issued by the government administration and which are outside legislative control; they are officially unpublished and demand that the subordinate entities behave in a certain manner and abandon certain behaviours. This phenomenon is particularly burdensome with regards to tax, but it can also be found in development policies and other detailed policies that are regulated by the government administration and implemented with the participation of local government units and other public and non-public entities.

While the intention of duplicate law was to reduce budget losses and mismanagement, to make regulations more coherent, to improve implementation procedures, and to improve the quality of reporting and of the data that is obtained through monitoring, the results of these activities have not been entirely positive. State audit bodies and the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau, both of which are aimed at identifying illegal phenomena in the areas of legality, mismanagement, purposefulness, reliability and corruption, also exert a negative impact on the implementation of public policies

Over-regulation of policy implementation rules, which results in over-use of duplicate law, along with the activities of audit institutions that are disproportionate to the identified risks, sometimes lead to permanent changes in the attitudes of the participants of implementation activities. These attitudes might include the lack of responsibility for the effects of those policies which can be shaped by the implementing entities to the extent specified in regulations; the lack of motivation to search for new solutions from the bottom-up perspective (this perspective assumes the active participation of employees of public institutions or policy beneficiaries) or for the rationalization of applied procedures, organisational solutions and implementation tools; and increasing the orientation of administration and other cooperating entities towards procedures at the expense of orientation towards results, which is so important for the success of any public policy. Together this leads to the consolidation of a top-down model of policy implementation, the weakening of intra-organisational efforts to strengthen participation in management, and the

creation of barriers to the development of horizontal and network implementation structures. The over-strict control that is exercised by state bodies results in the institutionalisation of anti-modernisation behaviours. This manifests in routine requests, which are sent by policy implementers to the programming bodies, for interpretations of the existing regulations, and is motivated by the desire to minimise the legal risks that may result from possible future audits. When policies are implemented by decentralised entities, any new interpretation of the rules additionally increases the risk of a negative legal assessment of the policies. Although these policies might be successfully implemented by these entities, they could run contrary to the new interpretation of the rules.

The models of policy implementation in Poland are changing, and an important influence on this trend is the progressive Europeanization of the Polish administration, in particular Poland's participation in the implementation of the EU's cohesion policy. Europeanization of the administration leads to the popularisation of policy implementation in the form of programmes and projects, improvements in methods of designing implementation mechanisms at the stage of developing programmes, improvements in procedures for monitoring, auditing, and evaluating projects, as well as promoting participatory, partner, and consortium methods of project implementation. The EU's cohesion policy has also contributed to the development of the administration's analytical competences. Its programming and implementation have created a platform for improving skills in medium- and long-term development planning. Despite the fact that the Polish administration was, for many years, mainly concerned with spending the funds obtained from EU programmes within the deadlines set by them, a gradual reorientation towards paying greater attention to the products and results that are a priority in public policy has been observed recently.

In line with the idea of evidence-based policy, analytical activities, although varied in nature, are required at every stage of the policy process. In the Polish administration, they were developed in the sphere of policy formulation (diagnosing problems, strategic programming, the *ex-ante* evaluation of programmes, and the quality of legislation), as well as in the sphere of evaluation (the establishment of the National Evaluation Unit, the dissemination of evaluation practices, the development of the market of assessment studies); however, these analytical activities are

still not sufficient in the area of the implementation and monitoring of policies. This problem concerns both the government administration and self-government administrations. In the system of policy implementation in Poland there is a noticeable shortage of organisational units that deal with the analysis of implemented policies, and there is a deficit of official competences in this area. After the liquidation of the Government Centre for Strategic Studies (1997–2006), Poland is one of few European Union countries which lacks a professional research and analysis centre that is subordinated directly to the Prime Minister and remains at his disposal (Rydlewski, 2015, p. 78). Moreover, the organisational units that are responsible for analysing the implementation of policies either do not function in many ministries or were established relatively late. A typical example of this is the establishment of the Ministry of Health's Department of Analysis and Strategy, which was only set up in 2015. Taking into account the amount of public spending on health care and the huge demand for a health policy based on data, it is difficult to explain the lack of a specialized department which deals with, for example, mapping health needs and providing guaranteed health services. The best functioning units with responsibility for analysing the implemented policies operate within the structures of government and self-government administration offices and implement programmes that are co-financed with European Union funds.

In Poland, local government units have a wide range of possibilities for the implementation of public policies that are based on principles appropriate to the market paradigm (the ideas of new public management) and the network paradigm (embedded in public co-management). They shape contractual relationships and develop horizontal and intersectoral cooperation networks in the areas in which public policies are implemented. These activities are based on the constitutionally guaranteed freedom possessed by self-governments that allows them to select the methods and forms of implementation of their own tasks. It gives them the right to create the entities or bodies necessary for the implementation of tasks and to include both legal and natural persons, entrepreneurs, non-governmental organisations, and other public administration units in the implementation of their tasks.

On the basis of the detailed provisions of the acts that grant self-governments the right to decide on the methods and forms of realizing

public tasks, they may, for example, establish self-government budget companies and commercial law companies; conclude public procurement contracts for services, construction works, or the supply of goods; entrust public tasks; grant subsidies for public purposes; commission and contract tasks; entrust management; conclude agreements and public-private partnership agreements; establish special purpose companies; create municipal unions; and establish associations. Instruments that have been provided by the Act on Public Benefit and Voluntary Activity, which directly aims to utilise the potential of non-government organisations in the implementation of public tasks, also enable self-governments to conduct an active policy of local social development, strengthen civic attitudes, and shape the market of local public services.

The quality of policy implementation in Poland also results from the education of public administration staff and the employees of non-public entities that participate in policy implementation. Polish universities educate specialists in the fields of public administration and management, economics, public finance, organisation and management, law, and a wide spectrum of areas relevant for specific public policies. However, the areas of education that are poorly developed at post-graduate studies, workshops, and courses include public policy, public policy analysis, and the practical training that is offered to employees (including front-line clerks), all of which would be conducive to improving their professional competences in managing the implementation of specific policies.

This gap has not been filled by the increasingly widespread emergence of various communities of practitioners that serve as platforms for the exchange of knowledge on the policies being implemented. These platforms include a number of forums, conferences, and conventions that function at different levels of formalisation, whose members are managerial executives, mayors, commune heads, city presidents, treasurers, commune secretaries, directors of municipal companies, social workers, managers of human resources and payroll departments, employees of the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS), and rectors of higher education institutions, etc. Initiatives of this kind lack platforms for specialists working in front-line positions in administration, or for employees from public, private, or the civil sectors who are involved in the implementation of specific policies.

The outline of policy implementation in Poland that is presented in this article indicates that it is dominated by features that are typical of the top-down implementation approach. However, the weaknesses that have been identified demonstrate that the main sources of inspiration that are useful for administrative policy that is aimed at improving policy implementation should be sought for in the concepts of implementation within bottom-up, synthesising, and contemporary approaches.

In this context, the most important recommendations are the following: eliminating the avoidance of responsibility for public policies; strengthening the competences of public policy makers with regard to their holistic understanding of the policy process, the success of which depends on its diagnosis, programming, implementation and evaluation and their interrelationships; improving the competences of the policy makers that design the framework of implementation activities in order to prevent excessive procedural and organizational complexity of implementation processes; comprehensive improvement of the quality of the law and the process of law-making; allowing front-line clerks to voice their opinions on draft policies, especially on implementation mechanisms and strengthening their sense of responsibility for the results of policies; creating formal conditions for the active involvement of politicians in implementation activities; increasing the freedom of the entities that implement policies in choosing the methods of their implementation and popularizing the methods of result-orientation and monitoring policies; strengthening the competence of public administration staff in analysing implementation activities and their use in public management practices; improving methods of communication between policy implementing entities and ensuring the reliability of the content transmitted; improving the methods and competences of network management; developing training programmes for policy implementation participants and stimulating various forms of professional knowledge exchange.

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Seweryn Krupnik  
Jagiellonian University  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2486-0702>

# Evaluating public policies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Evaluation is a public management tool that aims to determine the value of public interventions.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article presents three complementary positions that are based on the premise that the objectives of evaluation are to discover the truth, to provide its recipients with useful knowledge, and to promote public interest. The evaluation of public policies should consider each of these objectives. The article gives examples of approaches to and principles for conducting research within each position; it also describes evaluation in Poland from the perspectives of these positions.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In Poland, the standard of methodological evaluation is good, but the challenge lies in applying the results and valuing the evaluated interventions. However, valuations do not depend solely on the quality of the evaluation itself but also on its institutional context, the quality of public management, and the degree to which a civil society is developed.

**Keywords:** research, utilisation of results, valuation



## Evaluation as a tool

Evaluation is a public management tool that aims to determine the value of public interventions. Polish has a word that has a similar meaning and is much more popular: assessment (*ocena*). For this reason, when evaluation practices were first introduced in Poland, these words were sometimes used interchangeably. However, there are several arguments for only using the first term: first, it is used by the people involved in these practices; second, evaluation is a more complex process and uses a number of techniques and methods; third, assessment itself is important but it is not the only element of evaluation. Using terms other than assessment also emphasises the institutionalisation of evaluation as a field of knowledge or as a discipline of science (Olejniczak, 2008).

In order to understand what evaluation is, it is best to review its various objectives. Three specific objectives can be distinguished which consider evaluation to be aimed at discovering the truth, providing useful knowledge to the recipient, and promoting public interest (Marvin and Christie, 2012). Each position has its own theoretical basis and relevant techniques. A proper evaluation of public policies should consider all of the above objectives, but theoreticians and practitioners often place particular emphasis on only one of them.

## Evaluation as research

The premise that the purpose of evaluation is to discover the truth is a characteristic feature of the scientific approach. Understood in this way, evaluation draws on the richness of theories and the methodologies of the social sciences, and it emphasises the validity (does the result of evaluation accurately reflect the actual state of affairs?) and the reliability (would evaluation carried out by other people bring about the same result?) of a study. Using a scientific approach also means being aware of the existence of disputes within science itself about the nature of reality (objective or intersubjective), what kind of logical reasoning can be used (deductive or inductive), and whether and how cause-and-effect relationships can be investigated within the research process. Largely, the most important discussions in this area differ with regard to qualitative

and quantitative approaches to evaluative studies. The former focuses primarily on investigating the meanings that individual stakeholders attribute to an intervention, while the latter focuses on the cause-and-effect relationships between an intervention and its effects (Table 1).

Table 1. Qualitative and quantitative approaches to evaluation

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>
<b>The nature of reality</b>	intersubjective	objective
<b>Scientific reasoning</b>	inductive	deductive
<b>Objective of the study</b>	descriptive (discovery of meaning – obtaining stakeholders' opinion)	descriptive and causal
<b>The most common research methods and techniques</b>	in-depth interview (IDI) focus group interview (FGI) case study	experiment quasi-experimental study survey
<b>Data</b>	text	numbers
<b>A modern, popular approach to evaluation</b>	theory-based evaluation	counterfactual evaluation

Source: own elaboration.

Evaluators who work within one of these approaches (for example, economists, especially econometricians) focus primarily on the quantitative approach. A large number of sociologists, on the other hand, believe that only the qualitative approach is a “real evaluation”. However, a professional evaluator is familiar with both approaches and combines them in mixed-methods research, thus taking advantage of each and minimising their limitations.

At present, counterfactual evaluation and theory-based evaluation are among the most popular approaches within the above trend. Counterfactual evaluation uses statistical tools to compare the state of affairs after an intervention and the counterfactual state of affairs that would result from not implementing an intervention. The comparison of these two situations is intended to confirm the extent to which the change that is observed among the beneficiaries has been caused by the analysed programme. For example, if 1,000 people participated in a training programme for the unemployed and 500 people were employed three months after the training, we cannot be sure that this effect (called the gross effect) was achieved through their participation in the training. After all, they could have found a job even without taking part in it. In

order to estimate the effects of an intervention (i.e. the net effect) more accurately, the counterfactual situation in which these people do not participate in the training is calculated by means of the relevant statistical procedures. This is achieved by finding an equivalent for each person participating in the training, a so-called statistical twin: this is a person who shares all his relevant characteristics but did not take part in the programme. If it turns out that 300 of 1,000 'twins' found a job in the same period, we estimate that the net effect of the intervention was 200 people (from the gross effect for the group covered by the training programme, we subtract the change for the group that did not take part in the training). This approach is based on a quasi-experimental scheme and is subject to a number of conditions; although this approach is often not possible at all, it provides very strong arguments in discussions on the effectiveness of public interventions.

Theory-based evaluation treats an intervention as a set of hypotheses that form a common rather than a scientific theory. The role of evaluation is to reproduce this theory, to articulate the hypotheses in detail, and to verify the most important of these hypotheses (Table 2). Let us assume that the training of 1,000 people was based on the hypothesis that if we pass on to the unemployed the knowledge of how to look for a job, we will increase their chances of finding employment. Therefore, the training was primarily aimed at raising the level of this knowledge. During the evaluation, the researchers considered this hypothesis (knowledge transfer as a key factor of intervention) to be a key component and decided to verify it. As a result of the evaluation, it was discovered that knowledge transfer is an important element. At the same time, it was pointed out that the participants' level of knowledge was not checked during selection for the training and those who already had the necessary knowledge were recruited. Moreover, other factors that were critical to the success of the intervention (e.g. improvement of skills and motivation of the participants, or integration of the training group) were highlighted. At the end of the study, the evaluators made recommendations to ensure that these conditions are met in future interventions in order to make the intervention even more effective. One of the greatest benefits of the theory-based evaluation of a programme is to allow those responsible for its creation and implementation to better understand how the intervention is supposed to deliver the desired results. Those who

understand evaluation in this way are less interested in the question of whether the programme works (Pawson & Tilley, 1997) and more interested in what particularly works within it (does it just increase knowledge or does it also increase motivation and skills?); for whom it works (is it worth recruiting people with a high level of knowledge of how to find a job?); under what conditions it works (what elements of the context are important for the effectiveness of training? e.g. the family situation of the participants, the socio-economic situation, the level of unemployment in the region where they live); what should be taught during the training (does the training increase the chances of being employed, does it reduce the time that they are unemployed, does it make it possible to find a better-paid job?).

Table 2. Key principles of theory-based evaluation

Principles	Description
Formulation of the programme theory of a given intervention	Based on existing research results and scientific theories, stakeholder theories, observations of the functioning of a programme.
Formulation and prioritisation of evaluation questions based on the programme theory	
Evaluation taking into account the determinants	Determinants linked to resources (time, budget) and the context of utilising the evaluation.
Measurement of the constructs described in the programme theory	Constructs may refer to the context, implementation process, or the effects of the programme. In practice, only part of the programme theory is analysed in the study.
Verification and refinement of the programme theory	By analysing the cause and effect relationship that exists between the programme and its outcomes, and by identifying the factors that lead to the failure of the programme and the unexpected effects.

Source: own elaboration based on (Coryn et al., 2011, p. 205).

Both approaches should be seen as complementary rather than competitive. Theory-based evaluation emphasises the existence of two components that are concerned with the articulation of the programme theory and its verification and refinement. In the first component, it is natural to use a qualitative approach. In the second, if we look for an answer to the question of what the real effects of the intervention are and we have the resources that enable this approach (including the relevant

data), counterfactual evaluation is recommended (Table 3). Otherwise, we should use different methods.

Table 3. Key principles of counterfactual evaluation

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Description</b>
Identification of the programme theory	According to the principles of theory-based evaluation.
Understanding the context of programme implementation	A programme implemented in two different contexts will lead to different effects. Therefore, it is necessary to identify the key contextual factors that influence the effects of the programme.
Taking into account the diversity of effects	The programme will lead to different effects for different beneficiaries; this differentiation should be taken into account by including the most relevant factors in the research plan.
Counterfactual analysis	The effects for beneficiaries are compared with the control group in order to estimate the actual effect of the intervention.
Analysis of actual effects	The actual effects should be analysed in terms of occurrence, differentiation, and the factors influencing them.
Using mixed methods	The research should aim at a combined use of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Source: own elaboration based on (White, 2009).

Treating evaluation simply as a scientific study is insufficient. In particular, two characteristic features of conducting research (that are deemed acceptable in the scientific world) may jeopardise the quality of the evaluation process: first, ignoring important decision-making processes that are related to the analysed research area and remain attached to a favourite research approach or method; second, treating evaluation as support for the decision-making process.

## Evaluation as a tool providing useful knowledge

Evaluation studies are conducted relatively infrequently. In order for evaluation to be useful for its recipients, evaluation theoreticians and practitioners need to ensure they pay attention to the conditions that must be met (both in the evaluation itself and in its institutional context). The best-known representative of this trend, Michael Patton (2011), has

developed a utilisation-focused evaluation approach which highlights the need to identify those who will utilise the results of the evaluation. This should be the evaluator's first task. Next, the involvement of those who will be using the results should be ensured at each stage of the evaluation process (within their capabilities, of course). Another important element of this approach is to ensure that the utilisation of the results is a key reference point in the whole evaluation (Table 4). Coming back to the example of training for the unemployed, the question is who, specifically, is the most important recipient of this evaluation? The politician who decides on the continuation of the programme, the employees of the public institution that is responsible for its implementation, or the trainers? Based on the conclusions and recommendations resulting from the evaluation, what decisions will they make? The evaluator should know the answers to these questions before planning the evaluation and bear them in mind while planning his research.

The utilisation of the results may take different forms: no utilisation, positive utilisation, or negative utilisation. The desired situation is when benefits are related to the process of evaluation itself (i.e. the involvement of the recipients in the process will change their perspective). Furthermore, the following outcomes are all positive: instrumental utilisation (introducing changes in the programme because of the evaluation), conceptual utilisation (a new, better understanding of the implemented programme), or summative utilisation (adding knowledge to a given field to enable its utilisation by a greater number of interested persons). A negative situation may occur in the case of symbolic utilisation (sending a signal to stakeholders concerning the utilisation of the evaluation without any actual change stemming from the study), or persuasive utilisation (influencing stakeholders by using arguments from the evaluation, although the relevant decisions have already been taken). Finally, there may be selective utilisation or even manipulation of research results, or a situation in which the conclusions and recommendations of research that has been improperly conducted are utilised (Fleischer and Christie, 2009).

Table 4. Key principles of utilisation-focused evaluation

<b>Principles</b>	<b>Description</b>
Assessing the readiness to conduct evaluation based on the utilisation of the results	Readiness concerns the programme, the organisation commissioning the evaluation, and the evaluator. If necessary, the evaluator should support the organisation in this regard.
Identification and involvement of key evaluation recipients	Analysing the programme together with the key recipients of the evaluation. As far as possible, planning the benefits that will result from their participation in the evaluation process.
Identification and prioritisation of the planned utilisation of the evaluation	Focusing on key evaluation questions. Ensuring that the evaluation covers the most important aspects of the programme (implementation, effects, relationship between the programme and its effects).
Establishing an intervention theory	According to the principles of the theory-based evaluation approach.
Selecting the best research methods (in consultation with key recipients)	Ensuring that key users understand the controversies that are linked to the methods chosen. Stimulating the utilisation of the results based on artificially created data.
Data collection	
Data analysis, presentation of results, conclusions, and recommendations to key recipients	
Preparation of the evaluation report	
Accompanying key recipients in utilising the results	
Evaluation of the utilisation of the results	

Source: own elaboration based on (Patton, 2011).

## Evaluation as care for the public interest

In order to provide useful knowledge that is based on research results, it is necessary to interpret them and to assess the value of the intervention. A distinguishing feature of evaluation is value judgement (Scriven, 1967). Evaluation treated as care for the public interest involves valuing the results obtained and taking stakeholders' priorities into account. Is the net effect of the training for the unemployed (in this case 200 people who have found a job) a lot or a little? If the programme incurs high costs, is it worth continuing or not? The answers to these questions

depend on many factors, including the goal that was set when planning the intervention and the effects achieved because of alternative programmes. The evaluator's task is not only to estimate the effects, but also to interpret them; such interpretation is necessary to provide knowledge that is useful for the recipients.

How is public interest to be identified? Certain approaches within evaluation assume that this is one of the evaluator's main tasks. The evaluator should formulate an opinion using his knowledge and experience. Some evaluation theoreticians argue that the evaluator's judgement should be the result of taking stakeholders' values into account. In some cases, the evaluator's most important task is to recognise diversity among stakeholders in this area and to facilitate the formulation of a middle ground (Guba and Lincoln, 1989), with particular emphasis being placed on those stakeholders whose interests have the least chances of being taken into account (e.g. the unemployed, who cannot be included in such a programme, or taxpayers).

Two types of evaluation that are proposed within this approach (goal-free evaluation and constructivist evaluation) may seem extreme when evaluation is commissioned by a public administration. Even if it is not possible to make full use of them, they may offer valuable inspirations. Goal-free evaluation assumes that the evaluator does not know the objectives of the intervention but focuses on its effects and on examining its usefulness in the context of a given social problem. In constructivist evaluation, the whole evaluation process is subordinated to working out a consensus regarding the assessment of the value of the programme (Table 5).

A transparent valuation of a given programme is essential if the best programmes are to continue being implemented and the worst are to be eliminated. What is meant by assessing a programme as better or worse? To ensure a more precise understanding of the expectations of the contracting authority, the criteria against which an intervention is to be assessed should be specified. The most commonly used criteria include relevance (linking the intervention to the needs it addresses), effectiveness (comparing objectives with the effects of the intervention), efficiency (comparing inputs with outputs), stability (of effects), and utility (linking the effects of the intervention to the needs it was supposed to address). Relevance and utility are similar criteria. They differ with

respect to the plans or effects that are actually achieved and the timing of the evaluation. The criterion of relevance is used in *ex-ante* evaluation (conducted before the intervention), while the criterion of utility is used in *ex-post* evaluation (conducted after the intervention). Evaluations conducted during the intervention (which are called on-going evaluations) use both criteria (Olejniczak, 2008).

Table 5. Key principles of constructivist evaluation

Principles	Description
Organising evaluation	Organising the team; taking care of the logistics; analysing the programme and the context of its implementation.
Identification of stakeholders	A map of the individuals and institutions involved. These include those that implement the programme, finance it, are beneficiaries, are 'victims' (those that may lose out because of the programme), and others.
Formation of groups consisting of representatives of all stakeholders	Analysing how stakeholders' representatives perceive the programme.
Adding the evaluator's perspective	The evaluator's perspective should be based on the data he has collected prior to evaluation.
Establishing a list of issues on which there is consensus	If necessary, identifying these issues in a report and excluding them from the agenda.
Jointly prioritising issues on which there is no consensus	Issues may cover all aspects relevant to the programme (e.g. perceptions of its operation, concerns).
Collecting additional data on issues from the previous phase	An in-depth study can be conducted if necessary.
Jointly planning a negotiation agenda	
Reaching consensus where possible	Putting aside issues for which no consensus could be reached.
Preparing the report of the previous stage	More than one report may be produced, depending on stakeholders' needs.
Returning to the issues set aside in the consensus-building phase	

Source: own elaboration based on (Guba and Lincoln, 1989, 2001).

Summing up, evaluation consists of gathering knowledge about an intervention, determining the value of this intervention, and ensuring the utilisation of the conclusions and recommendations of the intervention. In an ideal situation, which is almost never the case, evaluation would

be performed at some point after the end of the intervention (to be able to gather comprehensive information about the results), and its conclusions and recommendations would be used in the planning of similar interventions in the future. The tension that exists between the summative role of the intervention and the formative role (which supports the planning of the intervention) is inherent in most evaluations.

It is worth summarising this reflection on evaluation by providing a definition of the term:

Evaluation is a systematic study, conducted with the use of diverse methods, consisting of collecting, analysing, and assessing data and passing on information on the results obtained. Its aim is to estimate (in relation to clearly formulated criteria) the quality and value of the process and effects of implementing public interventions (Olejniczak, 2008, p. 22).

## Evaluation in Poland

Two factors exert the greatest influence on the current state of evaluation in Poland: the fact that it was introduced as late as in the 1990s, and the fact that it became widely used after Poland's accession to the European Union and the emergence of specific requirements related to EU funds. These requirements mean that a large number of evaluations<sup>1</sup> are carried out, that they are relatively highly structured, and that they are frequently perceived as an obligatory activity that is performed due to the requirements of EU funds. Thus, it is a relatively new category of activity, but thanks to extensive initiatives that have developed the competences of employees in public administration, it is characterised by a high level of knowledge of the evaluative approach.

Largely, the evaluation of public policies in Poland is related to the evaluation of cohesion policy (i.e. EU funds). The National Evaluation Unit, which is attached to the Ministry responsible for European funding, is responsible for the coordination of activities in this area. The evaluation units that are established for each operational programme at

1 The database of completed evaluation studies can be found at: <https://www.ewaluacja.gov.pl/strony/badania-i-analizy/wyniki-badan-ewaluacyjnych/> (accessed: 19.08.2019). 136 studies were completed between 2017 and 2018.

national and regional level are an important element of this evaluation system.

The development of evaluation in Poland is supported by the activities of non-governmental organisations (mainly the Polish Evaluation Society) and various scientific institutions. The Polish Evaluation Society is responsible for the development of evaluation culture through a range of initiatives (including conferences and the dissemination of evaluation standards). Scientific institutions try to combine their basic activity (research, teaching) with the universities' third mission by engaging in the development of evaluation methodology and broader reflection on it. Generally, evaluations commissioned by the public administration are conducted by a small group of Polish companies. Mostly they are small entities that specialise in this area, but some research is conducted by larger entities that deal with social research.

Comparing Poland to other countries reveals that evaluation practices and evaluation culture in Poland are adequate when compared to the level of its social, economic, and political development. A more detailed description of these will be presented in relation to the three positions outlined above.

In Poland, the standard of methodological evaluation is relatively high. The most advanced methods and approaches to research are increasingly applied, including theory-based evaluation and counterfactual evaluation (largely thanks to the European Commission, which recommended them). Representatives of public administration organise conferences on evaluation methodology; they also issue publications, intensively develop their competences in this field, and cooperate with the representatives of scientific institutions. Paradoxically, it is largely the public administration that stimulates discussion and development in this area by organising conferences/training and integrating the interested parties.

The most important competences for well-conducted evaluation are those related to social research, as this aspect of evaluation is emphasised by experts. It is common in social research, especially in the academic world, to specialise in a selected area of methodology (e.g. qualitative or quasi-experimental research). However, involvement in evaluative research requires that the method be adapted to the research questions and the recipients' needs.

When evaluation was first introduced in Poland, methodological issues were perceived as the greatest challenge, but this gap was gradually filled. More and more evaluations were conducted and questions about their effects were raised. Evaluation, which is conducted to comply with external requirements and consumes resources that are linked with time and competences, has to prove its usefulness. This process continues, and this encourages researchers to analyse the mechanisms of utilising research results. At the same time, the entities that are responsible for coordinating evaluation in Poland have introduced solutions that are intended to increase the usefulness of the studies (a unified pattern of conclusions and recommendations, monitoring the utilisation of the recommendations, increasing the popularity of the techniques that increase the usefulness of research, e.g. workshops on the recommendations).

According to the diagnosis of utilisation-focused evaluation of the results, one of the challenges for the usefulness of research is the possibility of the involvement of key recipients. When evaluation is ordered by a public administration, the representatives of the contracting authority that is in contact with the contractor are usually not the same ones who make the decisions that are based on the conclusions of the study. The quality of the cooperation between these three parties has a great impact on the final usefulness of the research results.

From the point of view of this approach to evaluation, one of the most important competencies needed for evaluation is cooperation with the contracting authority, which includes understanding his needs and how he makes decisions. For this reason, it is relatively easy to conduct evaluation understood in this way for those who have had experience of working in public administration.

So far, the experience of utilising evaluation in Poland demonstrates that it can be useful primarily for introducing incremental changes to the implemented programmes. At the same time, it is relatively rarely used as an argument for introducing changes of strategic importance as its recipients include officials at the middle level of public administration rather than persons who make decisions of a strategic nature.

At times, the perception of evaluation is that it is insufficiently integrated with other stages of public policies management. This is related to its perception by some stakeholders as a bureaucratic requirement that

has to be followed but does not necessarily lead to improving the quality of activities or the organisational learning of a public administration.

Good and bad evaluations are also distinguished by the evaluator's ability to draw conclusions from the collected data. Furthermore, in research conducted in Poland, sometimes the evaluator limits himself to collecting respondents' opinions and presenting them in a synthetic way. In order to be able to provide useful knowledge, it is still necessary to be able to answer the question of "what next?" For this to be possible, it is necessary to understand the strategic challenges and social, economic, and political mechanisms involved. With some evaluations, courage is needed in order to form independent opinions. Moreover, additional competences are needed in order to identify stakeholders' different values and to balance them accordingly in evaluation.

In practice, evaluations ordered by a public administration have a detailed structure in terms of research questions, methodology, and the form of presenting conclusions and recommendations. While weak evaluations lack the process of valuation, good ones – and in Poland most of them are good – do so in a quite predictable way, i.e. they present an unambiguously positive evaluation of the intervention and a list of suggestions for changes. Very good evaluations enter, where necessary, into an argument-based dialogue with the contracting authority in a manner that goes above and beyond that specified in the contract.

Almost all evaluations of public programmes are ordered by public administration and reflect its needs and values, which offers a much greater chance for the results of the evaluation to be utilised. Valuation itself is important as long as it serves this purpose. There have been studies financed by other sources which include scientific research or projects implemented by NGOs, but such sources often change the perspective of the valuation of interventions.

From the point of view of this approach to evaluation, the key challenge is to ensure that the evaluators are competent and the contracting authorities are sensitive to the needs of those involved, which translates into the possibility of conducting evaluations that take into account the values of different stakeholders.

Some evaluation theoreticians point to the potential of evaluation in the development of a democratic society by providing arguments in political discussions. The question remains open as to what extent such

a function can actually be performed in modern societies. It seems that the history of evaluation in Poland is too short to be conclusive in this respect. Although a number of measures have been taken to increase the accessibility of research results for journalists and ordinary citizens by simplifying the language used and providing appropriate visual prompts, only moderate interest in the results is shown by the media or political parties.

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Norbert Laurisz  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2079-1041>

# Social policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Social policy is most often defined as the activity of the state which is aimed at solving problems that are of particular importance to society. Equally often, social policy can have a positive dimension and is a state activity that is concerned with social welfare.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to characterise the various existing social policy models and the challenges that social policy faces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The article emphasises that socio-economic changes that are mainly the result of technological development and globalisation processes force countries to reorient their existing social policy initiatives and direct them towards these new concerns. The author begins with a discussion of the underlying principles of social policy that legitimise its implementation; this is followed by an outline of various social policy models and the challenges faced by European and Polish social policy.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The challenges facing European and Polish social policy can be divided into challenges that have always been of interest to social policy; evolutionary challenges, which are a consequence of technological changes and natural social and economic processes; and local challenges, which result from the local and geopolitical situation of Poland when viewed as a country, society, and economy.

**Keywords:** models of social policy, active social policy, European Social Model



## Objectives and principles of social policy implementation

Social policy is most often defined as the activity of the state, which is aimed at solving problems that are of particular importance to society. Equally often, social policy can have a positive dimension and is a state activity that is concerned with social welfare. The catalogue of social policy objectives is broad, but its main goals and areas of activity are not controversial. Thomas H. Marshall (1965) identified the objectives of social policy and distinguished its three main pillars: the elimination of poverty, the maximisation of welfare, and the attaining of equality. In later years, this catalogue expanded or narrowed because of the prevailing economic and political orientation. The scope of social policy has expanded in recent years as a result of the new challenges that are faced by societies. Work and employment, economic development, and economic and social stability have been added to the catalogue of social policy objectives (Firlit-Fesnak and Szytko-Skoczny, 2007; Morawski, 2001; Rysz-Kowalczyk, 2002).

In its simplest interpretation, the scope of social policy includes problems concerning health, social security, and housing. If the scope of the state's influence is broadened and the wider impact that social policy exerts on the social sphere is considered, social policy also includes such areas as work, education and upbringing, and culture.

Thus, social policy embraces a broad catalogue of changes that the state may choose to implement in part or in full, depending on their understanding of the policy and the model of implementation that is adopted/chosen. Ryszard Scharfenberg (2009, 2017) gives the following examples of key categories of social policy: social welfare, social needs, social security, social structure, social integration (cohesion), social issues, social human rights, social justice, social progress, and social development.

Scharfenberg believes that it is possible to clarify the objectives of social policy by demonstrating the bi-directional nature of the state's actions which are needed for its implementation. Scharfenberg identifies these objectives as stimulants and destimulants (Table 1). This is an interesting approach, as we most often perceive social problems as

one-dimensional, which is particularly visible in the context of political and journalistic decisions and debates.

Table 1. Social policy objectives

Social policy objectives	
What to increase (stimulants)	What to reduce (destimulants)
• Social justice	• Social injustice
• Material and non-material welfare	• Material and non-material poverty
• Social integration	• Social disintegration

Source: Szarfenberg, 2009.

The development and implementation of solutions within social policy is based on the same principles that create the policy and legitimise its implementation. In other words, they take into account both axiological (value judgements) and praxeological (practical activity) approaches. These are:

- the principle of social solidarity – social risk is borne by society and is transferred from an individual to society;
- the principle of the common good – public authorities take care of the interests of the whole of society;
- the principle of subsidiarity – a gradual increase in the scope of assistance that is provided by social and public institutions; at first, support is provided by the immediate environment (family), then by the local community, and then by the state;
- the principle of self-government – citizens have the right to participate in existing social institutions and create new ones;
- the precautionary principle – an individual should take care of his own social security by minimising threats and protecting himself, and the state may force him to do so;
- self-help – developing mutual assistance within formal or informal groups of people with similar problems – such activities are supported by society or the state;
- the multisectoral principle – social support offered to an individual can be a combination of support provided by entities from the public, social, or market sectors.

## The origin of and the model approach to social policy

The changes that have taken place in industrial societies since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century have led to the formation of strong groups that have been given the tools to influence the decisions of the public authorities and can therefore increasingly influence the decisions of other social groups. The first such group consisted of peasants/farmers, while the second group were workers. Historically, farmers and landowners were the key group of political influence, and the state's support for them was the first systematic state activity in the sphere of broadly understood social policy. Progressive industrialisation, which resulted in the modernisation and mechanisation of agriculture, resulted in a radical reduction in demand for labour on farms. Mass migration upset the existing social balance and consequently enforced the establishment of institutions whose aim was to shape and stabilise this new balance. By changing the scope and scale of social needs, migration led to the reconfiguration of social relations. As a result, it became necessary to find solutions to universal problems that were related to the survival of large social groups existing in completely new conditions.

The economic situation often forced workers to change their place of residence. Rapidly developing industry was able to absorb the surplus labour force, which is why the migration movement of farm workers intensified and villagers migrated to cities en masse. Consequently, the social fabric of rural areas was destroyed and the migrants' support ties, which had previously existed in family and neighbourly relationships, were broken. The social problems that followed as a result of these changes and which remained unsupported within the framework of formal and informal institutions existing in rural communities included work or a lack thereof (unemployment), care for children and the elderly, education, poverty, social alienation, the ghettoisation of urban areas, etc. The lack of institutional support for a population/subpopulation that is the result of endogenous or exogenous factors is called the social gap.

Growing social problems affected both rural areas (due to depopulation) and cities (due to rapid urbanisation). These phenomena are analysed by Harold L. Wilensky in his classic work *The Welfare State and Equality. Structural and Ideological Roots of Public Expenditures*

(1975). Wilensky outlines the process that occurred: the state, whose duty was to maintain social order and economic stability, was forced to intervene in the natural social and economic process. Social change began to exert a growing impact on the economy. Economic processes, in particular the rapid industrialisation and modernisation of economies, and the globalisation of production and trade, increasingly influenced society and directed social change (Golinowska, 2018).

By means of political action, both states and societies chose the principles and direction of the development of their policies, which were not yet labelled as 'social policies'. Harold L. Wilensky and Charles N. Lebeaux (1958), and later Richard Titmuss (1974), proposed a model approach that sought to capture the fundamental directions of development and the functions and modes of operation of the state (referred to as the welfare state since the 1940s). They described the first model as residual and the second as institutional. These approaches were characterised by different ways of treating citizens and the support offered to them. In the residual model, the state's support is only offered when the market mechanism and/or family support fails, but the state's intervention is limited to specific cases or social groups. In the institutional model, the state's support encompasses the entire population. It can be said that this support is of a universal or universalist nature, and its goal is to take care of the welfare of the entire population and to meet its important social needs (Golinowska, 2018; Książopolski, 2007; Szarfenberg, 2009). In both cases, however, we can speak of a caring state, also known as a welfare state, which "aims to protect citizens against the risks associated with the operation of a market economy, primarily the risk of losing a job or one's health, and the risks associated with old age" (*Encyklopedia Popularna PWN*, 2015).

The varying directions of social change in individual countries have triggered diverse social and political reactions, hence the diversity of welfare states. Decommodification, i.e. the extent to which the state's support is linked to market mechanisms, has become the key differentiating element. Societies have different responses to the question of whether market mechanisms can and should be the primary factor in solving social problems, or, more broadly, whether the state should be allowed to solve these problems without linking support to the market, to efficiency, or to status. In this context, it becomes essential to present

Thomas H. Marshall's concept of "social citizenship" and the understanding of citizenship as a right to a decent life and social security, of which the State has become the guarantor. Understood in this way, regardless of the social or professional situation, granting civic rights means breaking with the market valuation of the state's support that is provided within the framework of social policy, because receiving support is the right of every citizen, regardless of his status, income, the contributions he pays, or his profession. This state of affairs is called decommodification (Morawski, 2001).

Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990, 2010) proposed a systematic attempt to describe the various ways in which different countries solve social problems. He focused on social, cultural, and political factors, and he analysed their impact on the development of approaches to solving social problems and state policy. The resulting division was based on three factors: the scale and scope of decommodification, the impact of social policy on social stratification (i.e. the existing social divisions), and the relationship between the state and the market in the implementation of social services. This classification is based on reference points (ideal models), according to which the scope and type of public policies implemented in a given country can be determined. Esping-Andersen presented three regimes (models) (liberal, social-democratic, and conservative) that differentiate social policy models and the concepts of managing the state and society.

In the interpretation of the presented models, primary attention should be paid to the issue of the family, its place and role in society, and the scope and scale of protection that is provided to the family by public institutions. The family is seen as the first level of support in a crisis situation. This is a strong and valid argument because – in the first stages of any crisis in which a citizen and/or his family find themselves – the greater the support of the family and its immediate environment, the better and faster the support that is provided, and the fewer the external factors that are involved. In this respect, all three models agree in principle; they differ when the boundaries and scope of family support need to be defined and when they address what happens once these boundaries are crossed.

Table 2. G. Esping-Andersen's social policy models

	Liberal Model	Social-democratic Model	Conservative Model
The role of the family	Marginal	Marginal	Central
The role of the market	Central	Marginal	Marginal
The role of the state	Marginal	Central	Subsidiary
Welfare state			
The dominant mode of solidarity	Individual	Universal	Kinship Corporatism Etatism
The dominant locus of solidarity	Market	State	Family
The degree of decommodification	Minimal	Maximum	High (for the breadwinner)
The dominant mode of social risk management			
The welfare state	Residual	Universal	Social insurance
The labour market regulation	Little	Moderate	Strong
Social responsibilities of the family	Weak	Weak	Maximum
Examples	USA	Sweden	Germany, Italy

Source: Esping-Andersen, 1990.

Individuals and countries that adopt the conservative perspective assume that the family should be as committed as possible to supporting individuals in need of help (as this is the key role of the family). Therefore, the state should support the family, regardless of market and social factors, and the family should support its members as it best understands how, when, and who should be helped (the state's servant role).

Those who adhere to the liberal perspective recognise that the individual is the most important element of the system and that the market, which functions as a meeting place for rationally operating individuals,

should be the solution to an individual's problems (the key role of the individual). From this perspective, an important aspect is to broaden the scope of social problems to include those that cannot or should not be solved by the family (the key role of the market). This view places the greatest emphasis on freedom and responsibility for one's actions. Therefore, the question arises as to why family members should bear responsibility for particular decisions of rational individuals (members of this family), and further, why family members should be burdened with the need to bear the consequences of the particular choices of any one of them. This way of perceiving reality is complemented by an attempt to argue that insufficient income is the basic factor generating social problems; hence, work is the most important element in solving these problems, together with the social services that are provided within market mechanisms (i.e. rationally and objectively). The above explains the residual approach to the welfare state and the view that the labour market should not be excessively regulated.

The proponents of the social-democratic perspective assume that society and the public institutions it creates are responsible for supporting individuals (the key role of the state). The state, on the other hand, has the only objective tools to verify and effectively support individuals in crisis situations. An extremely broad catalogue of social problems is created within this model and the belief prevails that many of these problems cannot be solved through family support or market activities. In most situations, the support of objective public institutions that offer universal support for everyone in need is a necessity. Therefore, an important aspect is the separation of aid/support and merit, and the role performed by an individual in society. Flexibility and the fastest possible reaction to changing social needs are important elements of the model, which are required due to the constantly changing socio-economic reality.

It should be emphasised that the model approaches described above do not exist in reality. Each country applies hybrid solutions, but by analysing the public policies that are implemented in each, it is possible to determine which model is the dominant one. Each of these pure models has numerous disadvantages, which are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Imperfections of social policy models

Model	Imperfections
Conservative	A multitude of problems that the family is unable to solve or is seen as an obstacle to solving them. Failure to notice newly emerging problems resulting from socio-economic change.
Liberal	Failure to notice the complexity of social problems and to go beyond the income aspect, and the inability of free market activities to solve many social problems.
Social-democratic	Excessive multiplication of social problems that should be dealt with by the state or its institutions. Weakening the independence and responsibility of individuals for their actions and decisions.

Source: Esping-Andersen, 1990.

The traditional division presented above demonstrates a still valid view of social policy in the context of socio-economic views. However, at present the modernised and unified theory developed by Titmuss and Esping-Andersen is commonly used to describe reality. Within this classification, three main social policy models are distinguished: liberal (marginal), redistributive-institutional, and incentive. The specificity of each model approach is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. R. Titmuss's and G. Esping-Andersen's social policy models

<b>Contemporary liberal model</b>
the family is a fundamental agent of social policy
the system of social insurance and social services is market based
the marginal role of state social programmes
the state intervenes as a last resort; social policy is treated as restricting motivation to work and of individual freedom
social policy is based on selective actions; social benefits are optional and depend on a person's financial situation
the state stimulates private actors actively and passively
the growing activity of women in the labour market forces the development of institutions supporting the family
countries: USA, Great Britain
<b>Contemporary redistributive-institutional model</b>
the universal right to social security and a decent standard of living
access to benefits and services not dependent on employment, contributions, or income

social programmes cover all major social risks (universal health and education systems, social pensions for all elderly and disabled people, social services for the elderly, the disabled, and families with children)
the right to a high standard of living that is separated from market influences
the principle of social responsibility
countries: Scandinavian countries
Contemporary incentive model
insurance schemes predominate (insurance is compulsory)
the amount of benefits depends on the person's status in the labour market and his income
social programmes should not disturb the market
maintaining citizens' motivation to secure their own living and to take preventive measures against social risks; maintaining a balance between the responsibility of the state, the family, and the individual
the principle of solidarity and subsidiarity
countries: Germany, Austria

Source: Księżopolski, 2007.

## Public perception of social policy

Society needs a social policy that responds to its needs but at the same time is consistent with the vision of social justice. This means that the axionormative dimension determines the ways in which state institutions implement social actions. In this case we talk about using the institutional matrix (or the axiological model), i.e. the division of tools and instruments used in public policy is based on society's perception (and thus also the assessment) of people in need of support. Jolanta Supińska presented four distinct groups of such tools and instruments: liberal – directed at active and independent people who face temporary problems (the lack of tools to shape attitudes, an emphasis on temporary support in order to overcome difficulties, treating people as fully-fledged market participants); protective – directed at passive people who frequently exhibit helplessness syndrome and require permanent or long-term assistance and support (treating people as disabled); stimulating – directed at demoralised people who are unwilling to change their attitude without a clear reward (treating people as harmless idlers who require being paid for undertaking specific actions); and rigorous – directed at demoralised

people who are unwilling to change their attitude (the only way to force appropriate attitudes is with the threat of potential punishment, treating people as a deprived group who will not change their behaviour without being threatened with punishment) (Supińska, 2007).

The way in which beneficiaries of social policies are perceived has important consequences. The axiology that is expressed in them, which is generally accepted by society and defines the dominant model of social policy, consequently determines the tools and methods used to implement this policy. The use of a socially acceptable model is likely to result in the permanence of the implemented solution, while the use of an unaccepted model may have temporary benefit but is ultimately ineffective. In this context, the aspect of personal motivation in order to overcome a problem (e.g. poverty) is also important. This is because sometimes the so-called motivational prosthesis is implemented and consolidated; this happens when social policy does not create the internal stimuli that are needed in order to act and overcome the problem but becomes a stimulus itself, without which the activity of the beneficiary disappears. The dominance of the rigorous model, the stimulating model, or the protective model leads to the change in self-motivational attitudes. This means that an attitude that results from the internal motivation to act may change to an attitude that requires a stimulus from the outside in order for a certain behaviour or attitude to occur (Laurisz, 2018; Łyżwa, 2012).

As research results demonstrate, Polish society generally accepts the rigorous model in which beneficiaries who not change their attitude are punished with, for example, a loss of income support. However, researchers note that at the micro level (i.e. in specific cases) Poles tend to change their attitudes towards the permissive direction.

## Directions of changes in social policy in the context of socio-economic changes

Social and economic changes have forced the reorientation of social policy activities that are conducted by the states and, in turn, they have been directed towards new problems which are increasing in both number and seriousness. These changes are mainly the result of technological development and globalisation processes. When analysing the situation

amongst developed countries, Esping-Andersen stated that Western welfare states face a dilemma as to whether to maintain the quality and scope of care they provide while at the same time accepting the increase in poverty and unemployment, or to introduce changes that will reduce the state's involvement. In this context, he outlined three major challenges that welfare states will face in the near future: the need to remain competitive in a globalising market (which must lead to making work and employment more flexible); the loss of stability of the security and social care systems as a result of ageing populations; the increasing poverty in groups dependent on family support (the elderly and children). A catalogue of the challenges that are faced by contemporary social policy is presented in Table 5.

Most responses to these challenges assume the inevitability of change, which is exacerbated by negative external factors, and recommend turning to liberal tools such as retrenchment, workfare, or productive welfare. *Retrenchment* means a significant reduction in social policy spending. The concept of *workfare* proposes a shift from a welfare state to a state where work is a factor that builds and stabilises wealth (*workfare state*); hence the concept does not propose a reduction of expenditure but a reorientation from offering support (passive policy) to activating beneficiaries (active policy). *Productive welfare* advocates imposing productive goals that dominate the individual approach (the protection of beneficiaries); it involves economising and looking for opportunities to reduce expenditure by moving social services into more efficient sectors, introducing savings in order to increase their cost-effectiveness, etc. Other proposals include going beyond the previously known model approaches in order to create hybrid solutions (Kowalik, 2005; Morawski, 2001; Szarfenberg, 2017).

One interesting approach is a concept that, in a sense, leaves external factors aside and focuses on the inability to combine high employment and low inequality without eventually significantly indebting the state and the economy. This concept can be implemented with a markedly increased share of the state in GDP, as in the Scandinavian countries (although, in this approach, the Scandinavian countries have gone too far in engaging the state in redistribution). Within this approach, the countries of continental Europe should deregulate the labour market, eliminate universal benefits and link them to the beneficiary's contribution

to the economy or, for example, to the minimum wage; reduce the period of payment of certain benefits and allowances; reduce payment contributions, taxation on wages and consumption. Anglo-Saxon countries should increase taxation on wages and consumption and increase the minimum wage and other benefits. All countries are recommended to provide pre-school care for children, improve the quality of education, and strongly support social and professional activation.

Table 5. Social policy challenges

Area	New realities and challenges
society	growing demographic burden on societies
	increase in life expectancy
	decline in the number of births
	changes to the family model
	discrimination and inequality in terms of gender, age, ethnic origin
	social stratification (income, access to public services etc.)
	poverty among the elderly and children
	migration and integration of immigrants
economy	structural changes in the labour market
	stratification and segmentation of the labour market
	low quality of formal and continuing education
	poor age management in the labour market
lifestyle and the value system	atomisation of families and family life
	consumerism
	decline in confidence in the political class
	increase in the number and impact of socio-economic risks
	civilisational diseases and risks
	threats to civilisation - environmental protection
	new dimensions of social exclusion, including digital exclusion
bioethical challenges	

Source: Książopolski, 2007.

When analysing the changes and reforms in social policy, Silja Häusermann suggested changing the objectives and tools in order to move from traditional social policy to reformed social policy (Table 6).

Table 6. S. Häusermann's proposals for changes and reforms in social policy

Areas of social policy	Traditional social policy	Reformed social policy	
	Income and job protection policies	Social activation/ investment policies	Social protection policies
Family policy	Family and child allowances	Child and elderly care services, parental leave schemes	Subsidised childcare services for low-income earners
Labour market policy	Unemployment benefits, employment protection	Active labour market policies, investment in training and human capital formation	Income support for the long-term unemployed
Pension policy	Income replacement for those inside the labour market	Extension of pension insurance to those outside the labour market	Pension credits for child rearing and universal minimum pensions (depending on age)
Disability insurance	Income replacement for those inside the labour market	Integration policy	
Social assistance	Poverty relief	Activation and reintegration	Income supplement to working poor

Source: Häusermann, 2012.

## Active social policy

The effectiveness of a given public policy is not merely linked to its implementation but also to the permanence of the change brought about by this implementation. This permanence is conditioned by social consent to change and by taking into account social perceptions of this change. Countries with stable democracies introduce changes in public policies in a consistent, systematic, and often evolutionary way, knowing that such a procedure brings with it the effectiveness of implementation. From this perspective, active social policy – which is now a permanent feature of European public policies – is based on evolutionary changes. This type of social policy is created by a whole system of activation initiatives that are directed at those social groups whose material, educational, professional, etc. deficits do not allow them to be independent. These stimuli are aimed at discouraging inactivity, which includes living off social benefits, and at encouraging active social attitudes, which

include professional activity treated as a means to return to society and regain economic independence.

This reorientation in social policy resulted from new social problems, the most significant of which are unemployment, multidimensional social exclusion, the changing nature of poverty, and the growing inefficiency of the existing institutional solutions.

The complexity of the changing labour market, which has been caused by the globalisation of production and exchange and has made labour and earnings more flexible globally, has exerted strong pressure on local labour markets. This pressure has triggered adjustment processes, especially through increased flexibility of the local labour markets in terms of qualifications and occupational and territorial dimensions (raising qualifications, changes of occupation and place of residence). Poverty and unemployment are no longer simply the result of a lack of income. Increasingly often, poverty results from more complex factors and deficits. Globalisation has reduced the possibility of intervention by nation states, and traditional social policies lead to professional deactivation (the dependence on benefits, unemployment), social deactivation (social exclusion and stigmatisation), or the institutional inheritance of poverty.

The new approach to social policy can be described as a shift in emphasis from passive solutions that, so far, have been applied to initiatives that combine solving social problems with professional activation. Activation takes into account the economic stimuli that enforce such attitudes and behaviours and lead to beneficiaries gaining economic independence. As a result, work becomes a way of life which leads to participation in social life and gaining economic independence. This change of approach to the support that is offered shifts the emphasis from assistance “in spite of everything” to assistance through helping people to become independent. Thus, the state supports attitudes that result in activation and employment; additionally, it introduces a mechanism that counteracts dependence on social assistance, which is known as the benefit sanction. This solution grants and keeps up benefit payments on the condition that a beneficiary continues on the activation path.

Active social policy is characterised by distinct axiological change. There is a shift from social security to necessary activation. Thus, programmes are aimed at activating beneficiaries, even if this results in reducing their level of social protection. In terms of employment, the

effectiveness of the solutions being implemented becomes the priority. Employment is seen as the answer to many social problems; hence, it is assumed that activity in the labour market leads directly to social inclusion (by counteracting the risk of social exclusion). Redistribution is still an important element of social policy, but it is linked to professional activity and work. The institutional changes that are brought about by active social policy include, for example, an increase in the importance of actions that are undertaken by local governments (decentralisation); an increase in the importance of the third sector; an increase in the role of formal and lifelong education (through permanent investment in human capital); an increase in the role of the social economy sector, social employment, and subsidised employment; an increase in the role of support in taking up employment or participating in integration programmes as a means of counteracting the risk of social exclusion (Grewiński and Rymsza, 2011; Jasińska-Kania and Marody, 2002).

The effects of implementing active social policy include a change in the perception of the state as an aid institution, the substantial limitation of decommodification, and increasing the involvement of society in counteracting social problems (mainly through the use of the social and economic potential of the third sector and the social economic sector). Other outcomes of implementing active social policy include the occurrence of vague solutions and the duplication of activities by sectorally implemented public policy, e.g. through active labour market policy, traditional social assistance, and active social assistance.

## The European Social Model

The European Social Model (ESM) is a system of shared and accepted values such as democracy, equal opportunities, social dialogue, solidarity, and welfare. These values can be viewed as a signpost for the member states of the European Union in terms of social policy, assistance, and the social services.

The establishment of the ESM began with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 and the creation of the European Social Fund, which is the oldest EU structural fund and was originally intended to finance joint initiatives for labour migration, employment, and unemployment. The next step was the

signing of the European Social Charter within the Council of Europe. This international agreement, which was signed in 1965, concerns the rights and freedoms of citizens of the signatory countries. The Charter guarantees citizens equal political and social rights, without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex, religion, political opinions, or country of origin.

The next step was to extend these rights and social freedoms by means of a joint political declaration, the European Social Charter, which was signed by the leaders of the European countries. The Charter, signed in 1989, listed the minimum standards that should be taken into account by the governments of the Member States. It was introduced as part of the agreement on social policy within the Maastricht Treaty in 1992. The basic standards include freedom of movement, place of residence, employment and remuneration, improvement of living and working conditions, social protection, freedom of associating and negotiating collective agreements, vocational training, equal treatment for men and women, access to information, taking the views of employees into account, cooperation, health and safety at work, protection of children and young people, care of the elderly, care of the disabled.

Within the EU, the social policy sphere is characterised by a high degree of freedom of decision making by the Member States. This is particularly evident in the different social policy models within the EU, including Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, continental, or Mediterranean. Despite these differences, the EU countries are committed to achieving the objectives of the ESM, which are ensuring that citizens are protected against the various social risks and negative social and economic changes; ensuring a decent standard of living for citizens and their full participation in society; eliminating discrimination and creating equal opportunities for all; preventing social exclusion and integrating those who are excluded; reducing the financial disparities between citizens, regions, and social groups.

In 2010, the European Commission announced the *Europe 2020 Strategy – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, which, through a socio-economic development programme that would run from 2010–2020, was intended to lead to greater social inclusion. The objectives that define the direction of this strategy include employment (an employment rate of 75% of the population of those aged 18–64); innovation (a minimum of 3% of the EU's GDP to be spent on research and development); climate (a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 30%); education (reducing

the scale of incomplete education, increasing the number of university graduates); poverty (reducing poverty and social exclusion).

As part of the coordination of economic politics of the EU Member States, the European Pillar of Social Rights was announced in 2017. It includes principles and rights on which fair and well-functioning labour markets and social protection systems in EU countries are to be based: equal opportunities and access to employment (education, training and lifelong learning, gender equality, equal opportunities, active support for employment); fair working conditions (secure and flexible employment, pay, information on working conditions and protection in case of job loss, social dialogue and worker involvement, work-life balance, a healthy, secure and well adapted workplace); adequate and sustainable social protection (childcare and child support, social protection, unemployment benefits, minimum income, income for the elderly, pensions, health care, integration of the disabled, long-term care, housing and assistance for the homeless, access to basic services).

The social areas and problems that will be the greatest challenges for the EU in the near future and are an element of its greatest concern have been defined in the context of new and future socio-economic changes. These challenges include rising unemployment and professional inactivity affecting a large part of the population; polarisation of employment; full employment versus casual labour (called 'junk' labour in Polish); the growing social consequences of crises and economic downturns; the negative effects of population ageing, primarily its impact on the labour market and the social security system; the increasing level of internal and external migration and subsequent integration problems; internal and external political uncertainty (e.g. Brexit, two-speed Europe, the growing popularity of anti-EU attitudes and views).

## Future challenges in the social area

Poland, as a country and as a society, faces a wide range of challenges that, if the state does not take appropriate action, will become social problems in the future and will slow down the development of the state, society, and the economy. Some of these challenges relate to a more distant future, others are already negatively resonating with tangible

economic and social losses. These challenges can be divided into three groups: traditional challenges, which have always been a subject of concern in social policy; evolutionary challenges, which stem from technological changes and natural social and economic processes; local challenges, which are a result of the local and geopolitical situation of Poland as a country, society, and economy.

#### Traditional social policy challenges

1. Poverty – as a social problem of a certain scope (measured by poverty indicators, such as relative poverty or extreme poverty), but also poverty at the micro level, i.e. the level that affects individuals and families. From this perspective, poverty is the factor that hinders social development to the greatest extent and, at the same time, the factor that consolidates poverty and related phenomena, for example, by low participation in the labour market and in social activity, poor education, unemployment, etc.
2. Exclusion – a phenomenon that directly leads to social disintegration at a local or national level. From a purely economic point of view, throwing groups of people out of society significantly increases their cost of living, employment, and support. People who are excluded need more support to benefit from public services or social services. The number of exclusion factors is growing significantly today, the best example being digital exclusion, which affects older people the most.
3. Social inequalities – this phenomenon has intensified in recent decades. In itself, inequality is not an economic or social problem, but the extraordinary strength with which the concentrated coefficients that describe this phenomenon are growing allows us to assume that stratification will become one of the key social problems in the near future. The essence of the problem lies in its socio-economic impact, which includes job uncertainty, low quality work, decreasing real income, decreasing effectiveness of the state's social activities, growing disproportions in children's developmental opportunities, etc.

#### Evolutionary (civilisational) social policy challenges

1. Population ageing – a natural effect that accompanies increased life expectancy. The decreasing fertility rate in rich societies is

an additional factor that accelerates this process (in terms of the increasing number of older people in the total population). The growing share of the elderly in the total population introduces the problems of the elderly into public debate and is becoming a serious challenge for states and societies. Ageing already exerts a strong social and economic impact, and this is known as the silver economy in the sector dealing with services for the elderly. The silver economy sector will grow, while social policy will have to cope with new mass phenomena that have so far been marginal: an increased number of care, health, and rehabilitation services; the rising costs of health care; adaptation of infrastructure to the needs of the elderly; the re-modelling of social services, including the educational and cultural offerings available; social and professional activation for the older generations, and counteracting loneliness and exclusion due to age.

2. Modern work – this phenomenon radically reduces the stability of employment in many sectors of the economy. The growing demand for new and changing competences will cause rapid changes to the supply chain of the labour market. The need for continuous improvement of competences and changing professions will become a common phenomenon. This will result in strong competition for existing jobs and increased exclusion to the labour market as well as in society. Additionally, these phenomena will be accompanied by wage instability. In the future, many workplaces will be unstable and low-paid, which will exacerbate the problem of the precariat.
3. Civilisational diseases – social and economic changes generate an increase in civilisational threats. The most noticeable among them is an upward trend in the dynamics of diseases caused by the lack of exercise and an unhealthy diet (e.g. diabetes, arthritis, postural degeneration, heart and circulatory diseases). The increasing scale of this phenomenon has led to noticeable jumps in socio-economic costs. It becomes apparent, for example, that there is a significant increase in expenditure on health care and rehabilitation, which is accompanied by a decrease in income resulting from, among other things, a decline in professional activity.

### Local social policy challenges

1. Low fertility rate – this is the greatest challenge faced by the Polish state and society in general. Estimates of the Central Statistical Office reveal that by 2050 the population of Poland will have decreased to 33.9 million people. This process will largely be the result of a dramatic drop in the birth rate, accompanied by an increase in life expectancy. A change in this unfavourable trend will require extensive measures, especially in the area of the institutional environment and stabilisation of maternal employment. Income support is not as important as better education or the possibility of reconciling the challenges of motherhood with having a professional career.
2. The pension system – the replacement rate for pensions may reach 25%. This means that, in the future, a pension will only constitute a quarter of a person's final salary. This income will not allow the elderly to meet their basic needs. The need for changes in this area includes both expanding the number of contributors as well as reducing the flow of older people into the system, which therefore means the need to extend the period of economic activity.
3. Migration – the emigration of Polish citizens and the simultaneous growing influx of citizens from other countries to Poland results in changes to the social structure. The resultant challenges for social policy will include the effective assimilation of foreigners coming to Poland and encouraging the return of Poles who have emigrated. This mass migration process is a source of many socially negative phenomena such as families that are broken up due to emigration.
4. Regional stratification – this phenomenon is particularly visible in the striking inequality in access to public services. The most important areas of inequality include transport, communication, education, culture, and health and care services. This situation reinforces the depopulation trends in Polish rural areas and smaller towns, pauperises local communities, and deepens the division into so-called Poland "A" and Poland "B".
5. Social capital – social capital is a key factor for social and economic development in post-industrial economies and societies. A low level of social capital pushes countries into the medium-development trap, while a high level allows for better use of the

resources available, thus moving towards a more highly developed economy. Poland is characterised by a very low level of social capital, which results, for example, in high transactional costs of social and economic activities, and, in a broader perspective, radically hinders development. In this context, it is necessary to take measures to bind society together and increase confidence in the state and society.

6. Mental and institutional lags – these lags concern the sphere of approval and the implementation of social policy. Above all, the Polish system of support is directed at social assistance, and it is precisely this perception of social problems that is socially accepted. The state's social activities in Poland focus on the protective and interventional spheres and marginalise the activating and socialising spheres. However, research indicates that the former activities perpetuate negative phenomena (e.g. remaining in poverty or unemployment) and make people dependent on state support, while the latter is conducive to making beneficiaries of support more independent.

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Maciej Frączek  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0601-3585>

# Labour market policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Although market policy is defined very broadly as the actions of public authorities that influence the labour market, it is focused on solving structural problems of the labour market and improving its effectiveness. As such, it is both an autonomous public policy and an important component of employment policy.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The first part of this article describes the key components of this policy, beginning with the definition and objectives of labour market policy, continuing with a discussion of its various classifications and the instruments used in it, and ending with an outline of the different labour market policy models. The second part describes the specifics of the labour market policy that has been implemented in Poland, taking into account its institutional and legal structure, instruments, financing, and results. The third part includes an evaluation and discussion of the most important challenges of labour market policy in Poland.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The most important challenges of the labour market policy in Poland include the poor coordination of activities undertaken by governmental and self-governmental institutions and a lack of control over the system as a whole; the dominating role of public entities that neglect the existing opportunity to include actors from both the private and social spheres in the programming and implementation of labour market policy; and a strong dependence on EU funds, which has led to changes in the legal regulations related to the functioning of labour

market policy in Poland. Post 2015, the very favourable situation of the Polish labour market should be seen as a starting point for instigating changes in the functioning of the Labour Fund, which would allow more flexible responses to changes in the economic situation.

**Keywords:** active labour market policy, passive labour market policy, labour market policy instruments, labour market policy in Poland

## Labour market policy and its components

Labour market policy is often defined very broadly as the “actions of public authorities that influence the labour market” (Brinkmann, 1999, p. 207). This approach may lead to equating labour market policy with employment policy; therefore, it is worth pointing out the elements that differentiate these two public policies. For example, according to Eurostat, labour market policy includes “public interventions in the labour market that are designed to ensure its smooth functioning and correct imbalances, which can be distinguished from other interventions in general employment policy because they work selectively for specific groups in the labour market” (Eurostat, 2018, p. 7). Its main addressees are the unemployed, those at risk of unemployment, and those not working. Another distinguishing feature is the impact of labour market policy on employment, since, as a rule, these policies do not create new jobs of a long-term or capital-intensive nature (Wiśniewski, Zawadzki, 2010, p. 16).

When describing the state’s activity in the labour market, it is necessary to clearly emphasise the differences between employment policy and labour market policy. Labour market policy cannot be equated with employment policy because of the different objectives, tools, and issues that constitute their scope of influence. Labour market policy is frequently treated as an autonomous policy but is also an important component of employment policy. The aim of employment policy is to influence the overall level of employment in the economy (i.e. maintaining existing jobs and creating new ones through actions that are aimed at boosting economic growth), with particular emphasis on reaching full employment. Labour market policy focuses on addressing the structural problems of the labour market and improving its efficiency.

## Objectives of labour market policy

The four main labour market policy objectives are:

- employment promotion – reducing the level of unemployment;
- structural – reducing the level of structural mismatches on the labour market;

- productive – raising the level of workforce productivity;
- social – providing financial security to the unemployed and professional retraining for those unemployed who have experienced particular difficulties on the labour market (as cited in Wiśniewski, 1999, p. 20).

There are two basic types of labour market policy: active and passive. The main objective of active labour market policy is to improve the functioning of the labour market by increasing mobility and retraining to make it easier for employees to change their place of work (Boeri, Ours, 2011, p. 320). Active policy has four main functions: to increase production and prosperity by increasing employment of the unemployed or investing in their human capital; to maintain a healthy supply of an effective labour force by fostering competition for available jobs; to help reallocate labour resources between different parts of the labour market; and to mitigate the risk of unemployment insurance fraud (Calmfors, 1995).

Passive policy does not usually contribute directly to reducing the level of unemployment but aims at mitigating its negative effects and provides social security to the unemployed (Nagel, Smandek, 2010, p. 49). Its main objective is to support financially the unemployed and those looking for employment, with the complementary objective of reducing the level of unemployment by lowering the retirement age (Kryńska, 2000, p. 3).

## Classifications of labour market policy

A review of the subject literature reveals that labour market policy is classified according to different criteria. For example, activities within labour policy can be classified as universal (general) or specific and as defensive or offensive.

The most frequently used criterion applied to differentiate the nature of labour market policy is the aforementioned division into active and passive policies. Active labour market policy is understood as, for example, a set of instruments to be used by the state that are intended to get the unemployed back into the labour market (Golinowska, 2001, p. 16). In the OECD's view, active labour market policy includes all social

expenditure (except that allocated to education) which aims to increase the chances of the beneficiaries to find paid employment or increase their earning capacity. Active labour market policy includes, for example, demand-side policy that covers various means of subsidising employment, and supply-side policy, that covers instruments for investing in the labour force (Sztandar-Sztanderska, 2017, p. 130).

According to Matti Sihto (2001), the main objective of active policy is to improve the functioning of the labour market, i.e. to improve the balance between supply and demand in both the short and the long term. The basic functions of this policy include economic activation of the unemployed; reduction of structural mismatches in the labour market; increasing the productivity of the labour force; influencing the size of employment and unemployment; and verification of the readiness of the unemployed to work (Kryńska, Kwiatkowski, Zarychta, 1998, p. 74).

Passive labour market policy includes state activities that are aimed at limiting the effects of unemployment through policies other than job creation (or supporting this process). These activities include a flexible approach to retirement age; extending the period of education; dividing existing jobs to include a larger number of employees; flexible working time; and social protection for the unemployed (Lichniak, 1994, p. 96).

## Labour market policy interventions

There are many criteria and classifications that categorise the tools and interventions used in labour market policy, for example supply and demand, direct and indirect, long-term, medium-term, and current.

The most common classification is based on OECD and Eurostat methodology and includes three categories of intervention: labour market services (covering labour market interventions, where the main activity of recipients is directed towards looking for a job, which will not usually result in a change of their status on the labour market, as well as the costs of administering public employment services (PES)); active labour market policy interventions (covering labour market interventions, where the main activity of recipients is directed towards looking for a job, which will usually result in a change of their status on the labour market); and passive labour market policy interventions (covering direct

or indirect financial support for individuals, depending on the demands of the labour market) (Eurostat, 2018, pp. 7–8). Table 1 presents the instruments employed in these three categories.

Table 1. Classification of labour market policy instruments in EU and OECD countries

1. Labour market policy services (information services, individual case management, and the costs of administering PES)
2. Training <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1. Institutional training</li> <li>2.2. Workplace training</li> <li>2.3. Alternate training</li> <li>2.4. Special support for apprenticeship</li> </ul>
3. Job rotation and job sharing (moved to category 4)*
4. Employment incentives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. Recruitment incentives (allows employment of the unemployed)</li> <li>4.2. Employment maintenance incentives (e.g. in the case of restructuring)</li> <li>4.3. Job rotation and job sharing</li> </ul>
5. Sheltered and supported employment and rehabilitation of people with reduced working capacity
6. Direct job creation
7. Start-up incentives
8. Out-of-work income maintenance and support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1. Full unemployment benefits           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8.1.1. Unemployment insurance</li> <li>8.1.2. Unemployment assistance</li> </ul> </li> <li>8.2. Partial unemployment benefits</li> <li>8.3. Part-time unemployment benefits</li> <li>8.4. Redundancy compensation</li> <li>8.5. Bankruptcy compensation</li> </ul>
9. Early retirement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9.1. Conditional</li> <li>9.2. Unconditional</li> </ul>

\* The table retains the original category numbering used by OECD and Eurostat to classify individual labour market policy expenditure.

Source: Own elaboration based on Eurostat, 2018, p. 63.

## Labour market policy models

The subject literature offers many different models of labour market policy. Mieczysław Kabaj divided the policy models that address unemployment into the substitution model (based on active labour market measures and programmes) and the complementary model (based on an integrated pro-employment-oriented socio-economic policy, in which

active policy is important but is not the only element) (Kabaj, 2004, pp. 84–95).

A dual approach to labour market policy can also be found in Marek Jarociński's (1999, pp. 32–33) classification. The free market model is characterised by weak trade union power, low-level protection against job loss, wage negotiations conducted individually or at the lower level of decision-making, high labour market flexibility, and a poorly financed labour market policy that is limited to providing minimal unemployment benefits. The second model, which is based on social consensus, depends on strong trade unions, levelling income disparities, high spending on labour market policy (mainly active), and combining labour market flexibility with social security.

In 2002, Gøsta Esping-Andersen developed a category of labour market policy that is linked to social policy and welfare state models. This was expanded on by André Sapir in 2006 and is now being championed by Alberto Behar (2009) with his division into Nordic (Scandinavian), continental (corporatist), Mediterranean, Anglo-Saxon (liberal) and Central and Eastern European models.

Mark Considine and Jenny M. Lewis (2003) put forward a labour market policy that is based on various types of public management, and they also analysed procedural (bureaucratic), corporate, market, and network models.

The author of this article divided labour market policy into categories, which are implemented in the following models of public management: 1) bureaucratic, 2) new public management, 3) public co-governance, and 4) neo-Weberian. Table 2 presents the most important features of labour market policy related to these categories of public management.

Table 2. Characteristics of labour market policies based on public management models

bureaucratic	new public management
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a high degree of centralisation of the policy programming process (most often created by planners working for the central government administration)</li> <li>• hierarchical governance mechanisms (central government administration offices supervise local offices that are formally subordinate to them and that are responsible for local labour markets)</li> <li>• relatively simple rules for enforcing the accountability of policy-implementing offices</li> <li>• an extensive system of offices and public organisations that undertake interventions in the labour market (a small role in this system is played by non-public organisations)</li> <li>• domination of passive interventions in the labour market</li> <li>• orientation towards procedural correctness, with little interest in measuring the effects of interventions implemented in the labour market</li> <li>• low potential for systemic and organisational learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• structural decentralisation (transforming the local offices of central government administration into local self-government offices) and competency decentralisation (extending the scope of competence of regional and local authorities) of the system of labour market policies</li> <li>• setting measurable objectives and defining indicators to measure achievement</li> <li>• highlighting the role of market mechanisms in solving labour market problems</li> <li>• wide application of active labour market interventions</li> <li>• activity-based budgeting that enables the integration of objectives, activities, outcomes, and costs</li> <li>• managerial flexibility (equipping public managers with the autonomy to manage both human and financial resources relatively flexibly in the context of achieving the objectives set for their organisation)</li> <li>• contracting out policy tasks from the public sector to external entities and partial privatisation of these tasks (e.g. private employment agencies)</li> <li>• regular monitoring and evaluation of policy effectiveness and efficiency that is used in systemic and organisational learning</li> <li>• intensive application of strategic and operational management mechanisms based on the public policy cycle</li> </ul>

Source: Own study based on Mazur, 2015, pp. 22, 25, 28; Frączek, 2015, pp. 173–174; Frączek, 2016, pp. 205–206; Frączek, 2018, p. 96.

public co-governance	neo-Weberian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• emphasising the networked system of programming and implementing policy (the distinguishing feature being the involvement of many public and non-public entities in this process)</li> <li>• promoting non-hierarchical ways of agreeing on and coordinating labour market activities (intensive application of consultation, negotiation, mediation, and the open method of coordination)</li> <li>• basing coordination and control mechanisms on networks or partnerships between stakeholders</li> <li>• highly decentralised and very flexible policy management due to the multiplicity of actors and the multidimensionality of policies</li> <li>• building coalitions of public, independent, and private organisations in order to achieve consensus-based policy goals (e.g. widespread labour market pacts)</li> <li>• treating policy as an experiment founded on an evidence-based approach to create extensive mechanisms of collecting information from entities that influence labour market phenomena and processes</li> <li>• developing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating policies in order to improve them</li> <li>• building the systemic and organisational potential of learning in politics</li> <li>• government assuming an intermediary role in the process of negotiating interests and shared values between policy actors</li> <li>• allowing the government a limited and precisely accountable discretionary role in managing policies</li> <li>• moving away from the dominance of the PES towards the public employment system (including the participation of other actors)</li> <li>• seeking systemic rationality in trust and reciprocity</li> <li>• moving beyond the domination of active policies towards integrated social policy based on an activating approach (especially at the local level)</li> <li>• enhancing policy effectiveness through partnership, coordination, and integration</li> <li>• the use of multi-level, multi-dimensional and multi-actor governance mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a relatively high level of centralisation of the policy programming process (EU solutions transposed to national, then regional and, ultimately, the local level)</li> <li>• extensive system of offices and public organisations implementing activities within the framework of the policy (whilst cooperating with private and social entities)</li> <li>• using networked and market-based mechanisms of policy programming and implementation, while maintaining the key position of public actors</li> <li>• decentralisation of competences from the central level to the regional and local levels, while retaining the possibility of the central level to have an impact</li> <li>• relatively high level of policy financing and the predominance of passive expenditure</li> <li>• using purpose and efficiency measures to determine the quality of implemented activities</li> <li>• taking into account the <i>DoingState</i> concept through strong interaction between the PES employees and service recipients (clients) – activating not only the client but also employees responsible for direct contact with clients</li> <li>• treating the professional staff of the PES as one of the most important factors of policy success</li> <li>• using evidence-based policy mechanisms through extensive public analytical institutions (e.g. labour market observatories) and improved communication between experts, decision-makers and line officers</li> </ul>

## Labour market policy in Poland

The Act of 20<sup>th</sup> April 2004 on the promotion of employment and on labour market institutions provided the formal and legal framework for the promotion of employment and labour market institutions today. From the point of view of the pragmatic implementation of this policy, it is worth mentioning the key strategic and operational documents related to it. The National Action Plan for Employment is the most important operational document to be adopted by the Council of Ministers and constitutes the basis for the implementation of the states' obligations in relation to employment support, reducing the effects of unemployment, and professional activation. It takes into account the provisions of the Human Capital Development Strategy and the National Reform Programme for the implementation of the "EU 2020 strategy"; the latter is also a reference point for self-governments at the voivodeship level when preparing their regional action plans for employment. At the county (*powiat*) level, the crucial programmes are those implemented by self-governments to promote employment and activation of the local labour market, which are part of the county strategy for solving social problems.

The institutions that are responsible for the implementation of labour market policy in Poland are diverse in nature and represent all three sectors of the market: public, private, and social. Public labour market institutions include the public employment services and the Voluntary Labour Corps (*OHP*). The PES includes employment agents (the minister for labour, voivode, voivodeship marshals, and starosts), but the actual implementation of their activities is carried out by institutions subordinate to the employment bodies mentioned above, namely the office of the minister in charge of labour (currently the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy), voivodeship offices, voivodeship job centres (*WUP*) and county (*powiat*) job centres (*PUP*), which are part of this system. Therefore, the current PES model is of a mixed nature and is distributed between government and self-government administration bodies.

WUPs and PUPs are of key importance for the implementation of labour market policy in terms of offering specific measures for the unemployed and jobseekers. The Centres for Information and Career Planning play a vital role within WUPs, while activities undertaken by Vocational Activation Centres, which provide services and instruments within the

labour market, are crucial at the PUPs level. Thanks to decentralisation of competences from the central level to the regional level, especially county (*powiat*) centres, units of local self-government are equipped with instruments that allow them to undertake actions that take into account the specific challenges of their local labour markets. It should be observed that, in Poland, PUPs are responsible for the direct assistance that is offered to the unemployed and jobseekers and is the main public institutional actor that influences the situation in local labour markets. Potentially, they have at their disposal the appropriate instruments and programmes to effectively reduce the existing mismatches between labour demand and supply (Kukulak-Dolata, Pichla 2007, pp. 80–81).

The Voluntary Labour Corps (*OHP*) is another key public labour market institution. This is a state unit that specialises in activities addressed to young people, especially those at risk of social exclusion (career counselling, job placement, support in the process of finishing education, assistance in obtaining qualifications that are useful in the labour market) (Culepa, Rotkiewicz, Wołoszyn-Kądziołka, 2015, p. 53).

Public labour market institutions cooperate with private entities. The latter include employment agencies offering job placement services (including abroad), career counselling, personal counselling, or temporary employment. They also cooperate with labour market institutions, which are of a mixed nature because they are in different sectors. These include training institutions, which may be of a public or a non-public nature. Their task is to provide out-of-school (continuing) education, including training for the unemployed and jobseekers.

Local partnership institutions have a similar multi-sectoral character. They form a group of institutions that implement programmes and projects for the labour market on the basis of contracts. Partnerships are most often created by local self-government units together with trade unions and employers' organisations; in practice, these partnerships take the form of agreements, programmes, or legal entities.

Social dialogue institutions are the last of the labour market institutions listed in the Act; these include entities from the social sector, such as trade unions, employers' organisations, organisations for the unemployed and non-governmental organisations. The cooperation between public labour market institutions and social dialogue institutions consists primarily in their participation on labour market councils that function on

national, voivodeship, and county (*powiat*) levels. These councils offer consultation and give advice on matters of labour market policy to the minister in charge of labour (at the national level), the marshal of voivodeship (at the voivodeship level), and the starost (at the county level).

## Instruments and funding

There are three categories of active policy instruments listed in the Act: 1. basic labour market services: job placement, career counselling, training; 2. labour market instruments, for example apprenticeships, intervention works, public works, refunding the costs of equipping or upgrading workplaces, one-off funds to finance start-ups; 3. instruments for the development of human resources: the National Training Fund (intended for financing activities for the benefit of continuous learning programmes for employees and employers), a monitored dismissal programme, and training benefits for dismissed employees who undertake training.

In 2017, the instruments that are most frequently used by the basic forms of employment support programmes (in terms of the number of participants) included apprenticeships (196.1 thousand people), training (56.4 thousand people), intervention works (54.4 thousand people), co-financing start-ups (41.9 thousand people), public works (34.2 thousand people), equipping or upgrading workplaces (21.5 thousand people). In terms of the money allocated to the implementation of particular forms of employment support, the spending order was as follows: apprenticeships (PLN 1.1 billion), co-financing start-ups (PLN 859.7 million), equipping or upgrading workplaces (PLN 451.2 million), public works (PLN 327.1 million), intervention works (PLN 227.6 million), and training (PLN 147 million) (MRPiPS, 2018).

In the case of passive policy, unemployment benefits and pre-retirement benefits and allowances play the most important role: in 2018, PLN 1.7 billion from the Labour Fund was allocated to unemployment benefits; in 2017, PLN 2.1 billion was allocated to pre-retirement benefits (MRPiPS, 2019).

In Poland, a significant number of labour market policy initiatives are financed from the resources of the Labour Fund, which is a special

purpose fund allocated by the Labour minister. The Fund's basic revenues are received from obligatory contributions (since 2019 this is 2.3% of the gross base pay contributed by employers, and the sums that constitute the basis for the calculation of pension and disability insurance contributions). The funds from the European Union budget for co-financing projects, which are financed from the Labour Fund and intended for co-financing public employment services, are also significant.

The main objective of the Labour Fund is to mitigate the effects of unemployment (by paying allowances and benefits to the unemployed) and to finance programmes for the promotion of employment, mitigating the effects of unemployment, and employment support programmes (Nagel & Smandek, 2010, p. 130).

The years 2006–2018 saw a steady rise in the revenue of the Labour Fund (in all but three years during this period). In 2006 and 2018, these revenues amounted to PLN 7.5 billion and PLN 14.1 billion, respectively. This was mainly due not only to a steady increase in funds from the European Social Fund, but the economic situation also improved, which led to an increase in salaries (in a period of economic acceleration, more obligatory employment contributions are paid by employees, and these decrease during a slowdown).

Labour Fund spending was subject to greater fluctuations. Although total expenditure in the first and last year of the analysed period did not differ much (PLN 5.5 billion in 2006 and PLN 7.8 billion in 2018), there were years when it clearly exceeded PLN 10 billion (with record high expenditure in 2012 of PLN 12.4 billion). Thus, in the period in question, the financial situation of the Fund was good, with only five out of 13 years in which expenses exceeded revenues (2009–2010, 2013–2015). During the analysed period, a relative balance of expenditure on passive and active policy was observed, although the period was also characterised by strong fluctuations. In 2006 and in the period 2011–2014, passive expenditure prevailed, while in 2007–2010 and 2015–2018 active expenditure took priority. With regards to expenditure on active forms of labour market policy, the largest allocations of funds were for activating the youngest unemployed (e.g. apprenticeships and reimbursement of salaries for people under 30 years of age) and to start-ups. Since 2009, substantial funds have been allocated to post-graduate apprenticeships for doctors, nurses, and midwives.

In comparison to other EU countries, Poland's expenditure on labour market policy in the period 2005–2017, calculated as a percentage of GDP, was low (unweighted averages; the calculations were made by the author on the basis of DG Employment databases). In the years 2005–2017, the average share of total expenditure on labour market policy in Poland was equal to 0.88% of GDP. The highest expenditures were recorded in Denmark (3.15%) and Spain (2.89%), whilst the lowest were in Romania (0.32%) and Malta (0.48%). The average value of expenditure on active policy instruments in Poland in this period amounted to 0.41% of GDP, whilst the highest were recorded in Denmark (1.27%) and Sweden (0.90%), and the lowest in Romania and Great Britain (0.05%). Expenditure on passive policy instruments in Poland amounted to 0.39% of GDP; the countries with the highest level of expenditure were Spain (2.22%) and Belgium (1.97%), whilst the lowest levels were recorded in the United Kingdom and Romania (0.22%). It should be mentioned here that in the analysed period a significant decrease in the level of expenditure on labour market policy was noted in Poland. In 2005, total expenditure was equal to 1.27% of GDP, while in 2017 this value dropped to 0.62% of GDP. The structure of this expenditure also changed significantly. In 2005, 0.35% of GDP was allocated to active instruments and 0.85% to passive instruments in Poland, while in 2017 these values were equal to 0.34% of GDP and 0.2% of GDP, respectively. These changes resulted from a favourable economic situation and the good situation of the Polish labour market.

## The effectiveness of Polish labour market policy

To assess the effectiveness of their activities, the Public Employment Services in Poland uses two gross effectiveness measures: employment effectiveness and cost effectiveness. Employment effectiveness is defined as a percentage share of the number of people who – during or after participating in basic forms of employment support programmes – were registered as employed, relative to the number of people who participated in these programmes. Cost effectiveness is calculated as the ratio of Labour Fund expenditure that is incurred by county (*powiat*) self-governments for the financing of basic forms of employment support

programmes to the number of persons who are registered as employed during or after participating in these programmes (MRPiPS, 2018, p. 5).

Between the years 2006–2017, the greatest number of people that participated in active forms of combating unemployment was recorded in 2010 (nearly 790 thousand of those who were unemployed), and the smallest number that participated in programmes was in 2011 (slightly over 300 thousand people). In this period, the highest level of employment effectiveness was achieved in 2017, when it amounted to nearly 82% (which means that 8 out of 10 people who participated in the programmes found employment). In previous years, this level was lower: prior to 2011, the figure was lower than 60%; in 2012–2013, it was lower than 70%; and in 2014–2016, it was lower than 80%. The highest costs of re-employment (and thus the lowest cost effectiveness) were recorded in 2015 and 2010, when obtaining employment as a result of participating in the programme cost nearly PLN 13 thousand, and the lowest costs of employment success were recorded in 2006, when they amounted to PLN 6.5 thousand (in 2017, this figure was PLN 11.5 thousand).

Analysing the situation in 2017, it can be concluded that in terms of employment effectiveness, the best results were achieved by granting funds to finance start-ups (the indicator equalled 94.6%) and intervention works (89.5%). In this respect, training was the least effective means (60.7%). The best results in cost effectiveness (the lowest costs of re-employment) were obtained by training and intervention works (PLN 5.0 thousand and 6.9 thousand respectively), while the most costly forms of creating new jobs were financing start-ups (PLN 19.7 thousand), and financing equipment purchases or upgrading workplaces (PLN 17.8 thousand).

## Evaluation of labour market policy in Poland

When evaluating labour market policy in Poland, it is worth noting the significant challenges in the context of effectiveness and the efficiency of its implementation.

Public institutions at the central level determine the general direction of labour market policy in Poland, but they have no direct impact on

autonomous policies implemented in the regions and at the local level. This results in the coordination of activities of government institutions being weakened and a lack of control over the system as a whole.

In Poland, it is mostly public entities that play a dominant role in determining the shape and scope of activities within labour market policy, although the very real possibility of including actors from the private and social spheres in the programming and implementation of particular initiatives exists.

The strong reliance on EU funds is evident. Many of the implemented measures within labour market policy are financed from the ESF. Central government and region- or county-level (*powiat*) authorities willingly resort to external financing (forgetting that this may be significantly limited at any time) rather than securing long-term financial support for the implementation of policies responding to the needs of the country, voivodeships, or counties (*powiat*).

The need to change legal regulations related to the functioning of labour market policy in Poland (the 2004 Act on the promotion of employment) and the labour market itself (the Labour Code) is commonly acknowledged. These are legal acts that require internal systematisation as repeated amendments introduced over time have weakened their power. They also need to encompass a wider range of instruments that are adequate to the challenges of the contemporary labour market in Poland (e.g. with regard to emerging new forms of work or the employment of non-Polish labour). The draft bills that went through the parliamentary process (the Labour Market Act, the Labour Code, and the Collective Labour Law Code) contained many reasonable proposals, but there was insufficient determination and political will to successfully adopt solutions that would be acceptable to all participants of the social dialogue.

The very favourable situation of the Polish labour market should be used to make the Labour Fund more flexible, more able to respond to changes in the economic situation, and to strengthen its focus on the needs of all stakeholders.

Poland lacks a centre of strategic thought that would deal with broadly understood labour market issues (including policy) and which could provide decision-makers with knowledge about the nature of long-term forecasts and development scenarios and would support them (by providing reliable evidence) in making ad hoc political decisions.

The growing complexity of social and economic problems related to the world of work (caused, for example, by rapid technological changes) makes it necessary to search for new functions and ways of implementing this public policy which would be adequate to the challenges of the fourth industrial revolution. These changes cannot be limited to narrowly understood labour market policy but should also include other specific public policies in which a new approach of the state (related to the new division of labour) should be developed. This should be directed at, among other things, the provision of public goods and services in relation to the changing demands of the labour market, e.g. pension benefits and other work-related social transfers, the taxation of labour (human and machines), unemployment insurance, and an unconditional basic income. The changes and interactions that are explicitly or implicitly linked to work and labour market policy, such as economic, social, educational, family, migration and health policies, should be programmed and implemented.

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Maciej Jakubowski  
Evidence Institute Science Foundation  
University of Warsaw  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2512-3133>

# Educational policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Educational policy refers to the activities, objectives, strategies, and regulations created by public authorities that are related to education.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to review the key dimensions of and the problems faced by educational policy. The key task within educational policy is to define the role that the state will play in it. Is this role restricted to planning and organizing educational services, or does the state also play a role in providing educational policy? Other important tasks of any education system include establishing the degree of decentralization and the autonomy of the educational institutions, defining the systems to be used for qualifications and their verification, and determining the length of the period of universal education, within which students follow a standardized core curriculum. Educational policy also shapes the supply of secondary school graduates, the supply of places available at universities, and the supply of graduates to the labour market. Another significant dimension of educational policy is regulation of the teaching profession (open versus rigid models of professional advancement). Other aspects of educational policy discussed in the article include the format for measuring educational results and an evaluation of the educational systems and institutions of specific countries, with particular focus on the international assessment of students' knowledge and skills.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Formally, the education system in Poland is highly decentralised, but in practice the decisions of local governments and school principals are limited by central regulations concerning the employment

and remuneration of teachers. Schools have a great deal of freedom in selecting teaching methods, but the content of teaching is defined by the core curriculum introduced in 2015, which significantly limits the autonomy of schools, and learning outcomes are assessed by central external examinations.

**Keywords:** education, educational policy in Poland, teachers, evaluation of qualifications, evidence-based policy

Educational policy refers to activities, objectives, strategies, and regulations that are related to education, and which have been created by the government and its subordinate institutions or (in decentralised systems) by local governments or other entities (e.g. school districts or university associations). Educational policy focuses primarily on formal education, i.e. organised education that leads to specific, state-recognised qualifications, and defines the conditions and support granted to non-formal education. In practice, educational policy focuses on the period from pre-school to higher education, adult education, and vocational training. Due to significant differences in organisation and funding and different objectives and challenges, distinctions are made between educational policy that covers the school system and early education, educational policy that covers higher education, and educational policy that covers adult education. In recent years, educational policy that covers vocational training has been added that is more concerned with the relationship between formal education and the continuous development of competences in the workplace.

## Public, private, and other forms of education

The key task in educational policy is to define the role that is played in it by the state. There are education systems in which the state not only plans and organises educational services but also provides them. There are also systems in which the state defines the general principles of how the system operates and plays a part in deciding how it is financed, while the provision of services is primarily handled by private entities. In the vast majority of countries, access to primary education is universal and it is guaranteed by the state. This involves both state funding and regulations concerning the core curriculum, qualifications, and teachers' employment, as well as the requirements for completing each stage of education. In most developed countries, schools are run by state entities which are managed by central or local units. In the European Union in 2017, 86% of primary school pupils attended state schools, and only 14% attended schools run by non-state entities<sup>1</sup>. The exception is

1 Eurostat data calculated in October 2019 based on educ\_uoe\_enrp04 indicator.

countries such as the Netherlands, where for historical reasons local governments and NGOs (usually with religious affiliations) have an equal right to run schools, but their activities are usually financed by the state. Typically, private entities are more important in vocational and higher education. In the EU in 2016, 27% of all students attended private higher education institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Given the fact that state entities predominate in most education systems, but non-state (i.e. private or independent) entities also operate in these systems, it is vital to know how these entities are financed and how to choose between them. Debates on school voucher systems and choice of school touch on the basic issue of the role of the state in the provision of public services. Usually, the distinguishing feature of non-state schools is the fact that they are fee-paying institutions and can follow their own regulations regarding the employment of teachers. However, issues such as the core curriculum, examination standards, or the need for evaluation/inspection by external entities are usually regulated by the state. The exception is the Netherlands, whose constitution guarantees considerable freedom in the establishing and functioning of schools; for this reason, there is no national document that defines the core curriculum in this country. Countries where state education was built alongside non-state institutions or was even based on them, e.g. the USA or the UK, impose far fewer requirements on non-state schools.

A simple division between state and private education is misleading, as most systems combine state support with obligations that are imposed by the state and allow different degrees of responsibility to be shared between state, independent, and private entities. American charter schools are a good example here. US regulations differ between the states, but they are largely state funded, and they play a similar role to that of state schools as they cannot select students or charge parents. The latter two characteristics set them apart from private schools, but they have the freedom to manage the school (or the school network) and define the curriculum and employment conditions of their teachers. Similarly, there are many independent schools in Poland (*szkoły społeczne*) that are run by NGOs, individuals, or religious associations. These schools may operate as state institutions and they may receive

2 Source as above, educ\_uoe\_enrt01 indicator.

financial support from the state for their expenses, including teachers' salaries, but they cannot select students or charge parents. They may also operate as non-state schools and be subject to similar rules as private schools. In many countries, such indirect arrangements are popular, and the private and non-state school sector is usually small. In most countries, (Germany is an exception), home schooling is also possible, but this only applies to a fraction of schoolchildren.

The same division is found at the level of higher education, where state and private entities differ primarily in terms of the possibility of charging students and obtaining the state's financial support; however, both compete for the same resources, e.g. for research. Polish universities – both state and private – are a good example here. State universities charge fees to students who enlist in programmes that are outside of their general full-time courses, while private universities can receive some financial support from the state, and they compete for the same resources for research as state universities. In Poland, money for education 'follows' the pupil, and – to a certain extent – the university student, although in higher education financing correlates with the academic staff, research, and other tasks. In education, money is allocated to the common budget of local government units by means of an educational algorithm and educational subsidy; in higher education, money is allocated to the university budget. Only independent and private schools receive funds that are dependent on the number of students that attend a given school. More radical solutions that were tested in, for example, several US and Chilean states, allowed students to choose their schools, even schools that were outside of their area of residence, and the money for their education was allocated directly to those schools. This is highly controversial, as market mechanisms may lead to the underfunding of local schools and a further deterioration of the quality of education available to less mobile families.

## Organisation and finances

A key characteristic of any education system is the degree of its decentralisation and the autonomy of the educational institutions. Decentralisation is understood as the delegation of powers to local state units

or local government units. In some countries, education is managed by special state institutions, e.g. by school boards in the USA or the Netherlands. In the USA, these constitute a separate administration with its own finances and elections; in the Netherlands, school boards only manage schools that are financed primarily from central funds. In the Nordic countries in recent decades, the management of education was almost entirely delegated to local governments. In Poland, the vast majority of educational establishments are under the responsibility of communes (*gmina*) and counties (*powiat*). In other countries, education can be managed centrally (as in France), through the federal states (as in Germany), or through an independent but centralised system.

The administrative decentralisation of education is only a partial indicator for assessing the real level of independence of schools or the units that are formally responsible for them. In the USA, the role of school districts and their authorities varies greatly between states. In recent decades, the role of the federal government has grown, and nowadays it attempts to influence local and state education by increasing the role of federal funding with initiatives such as the Common Core (optional common core curriculum) and laws such as “No Child Left Behind” (which imposes standards of and accountability for student performance). In the US, however, school districts and state governments still play a key role.

In many respects, Poland has one of the most decentralised education systems. Schools are owned by local governments, which have a significant influence on the choice of headmasters and are responsible for allocating funds between schools. However, teachers’ salaries and employment rules are regulated centrally, and since these salaries constitute the vast majority of educational expenditure, in practice local government freedom is very limited.

The autonomy of educational institutions is a related aspect. In most countries, the core curriculum is defined centrally, and it specifies teaching content, requirements for students’ performance, and even the teaching methods to be used. Over the past 30 years, many countries have limited the scope of the topics in the core curriculum and instead have indicated the general requirements or learning outcomes to be achieved, whilst delegating partial responsibility for the curriculum to schools. This trend reinforces the autonomy of teachers and schools,

which is becoming the standard practice for most modern education systems. In the European Union, most countries leave it to schools to decide on the teaching methods, assessment, and textbooks (Eurydice, 2008).

Autonomy at the university level mainly concerns research, whereas educational decisions are often centrally regulated. Countries regulate university governance, funding, employment, faculties, curriculum, recruitment, and final qualifications in different ways. The dominant model at this level is similar to the model adopted in primary and secondary education: high autonomy in terms of teaching, with limited power to make decisions regarding remuneration or employment procedures. In comparison to primary and secondary education, higher education institutions have much greater freedom in defining and organising teaching content. Independent institutions, such as those that accredit and evaluate universities and their faculties, play a vital role in the higher education sector. In practice, the differences between the solutions that are adopted in individual countries, even in European countries, are very large (Estermann et al., 2011).

An important task within educational policy is to define a qualification system. Most countries have national examination systems that define the rules for awarding secondary school diplomas (the equivalent of the Polish school-leaving exams (*egzamin maturalny*) or vocational exams). These may be decentralised systems with assessment conducted at either local or school level, or standardised examination systems that are administered throughout the country. This roughly corresponds to the difference between the old and the new forms of school-leaving exams in Poland. Often the results of secondary school final exams form part of the recruitment criteria for universities, but in the USA, for example, recruitment is based on universities' own criteria, which are frequently based on tests organised by private entities (e.g. SAT exams). The requirements for exams leading to a university degree are usually determined by the universities. An interesting element introduced in some countries as a result of the introduction of the Qualifications Framework is being open to the recognition and validation of qualifications obtained by attending online training or courses. In Poland and several European and Anglo-Saxon countries, this has been legally introduced as part of states' educational policies, which has encouraged the recognition

of such qualifications. However, in practice, these are still marginal solutions.

Another key factor in educational policy is the structure of the system and, more specifically, the decisions that are made concerning, for example, the length of universal education and the same compulsory curriculum for all students; the age of beginning and ending compulsory education; the paths of general and vocational education; and the possibility of continuing education at a higher level. These decisions affect both the level of formal education of the population and the age at which they enter the labour market.

In most developed countries, compulsory schooling starts at the age of 6, but in many countries education starts earlier at the age of 3, 4, or 5. In Poland and Finland, school education starts relatively late at the age of 7, although most children attend one year of preparatory school education at the age of 6. In many countries, pre-school education starts at the age of 3, and in France, for example, this figure is almost 100% of the population. In Northern Ireland, compulsory schooling starts at the age of 4, while in the Netherlands it begins at the age of 5 and the curriculum is similar to that of pre-school in Poland; the difference lies mainly in the name given to it (school or pre-school) and in whether it is compulsory or not. In Poland, approximately 85% of four-year-old children attend kindergarten, while in the UK this figure is 100%; in most EU countries, almost all children of that age are in education. In the case of 3-year-old children, the difference is much greater. In Poland, about 2/3 of children attend kindergarten at that age, compared to about 90% on average in the EU as a whole (Eurostat data for 2017).

The key decision in educational policy is to determine the length of universal education within which students will follow the same core curriculum. Universal education covers children aged 6–7 to 10–11 years in all countries. In Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and Hungary, after a period of primary education, pupils are streamed into different types of schools that are either oriented towards traditional subjects and academic disciplines or towards vocational preparation. Thanks to the reforms implemented in the 1960s and 1970s in the Nordic countries and the United Kingdom, the period of compulsory education in which all schools follow the same curriculum is longer. In Poland, after the introduction of junior high schools in 1999, this period was extended

from 8 to 9 years. International comparisons reveal that a longer period of general education and later streaming have a positive impact on the performance of weaker students and on the reduction of educational inequalities (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2006; Brunello and Checchi, 2007). For this reason, in recent years some German states have delayed the age at which schoolchildren are streamed and similar reforms are being considered in the Netherlands, where, to date, only changing the type of school attended during education has been allowed. Compulsory school-leaving age and the frequency of grade repetition are related issues. In Eastern European countries (including Poland), compulsory education lasts until the age of 18, and grade repetition is very rare. As a result, the vast majority of students finish their education at the secondary level. In Southern European countries, grade repetition is relatively common and – as compulsory education ends at the age of 15–16 years – this means that many weaker students finish their education at the primary level. In Portugal, this led to the problem of there being far more young people on the labour market during the recent economic crisis, which contributed to the decision to limit grade repetition and prolong compulsory schooling.

The number of students in comprehensive secondary education is usually linked to the availability of higher education. Educational policy shapes the supply of secondary school graduates, the supply of places available at university, and the supply of graduates to the labour market. In recent years, there has been a dynamic increase in the number of people studying at tertiary level, which corresponds to the social expectations and needs of the labour market, where the benefits of higher education remain high and those with a university degree have better opportunities than those without (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2018). On the other hand, a significant increase in the number of people obtaining higher education is related to a mismatch between the competences acquired in education and the needs of the labour market (cf. Kocór, 2019). Besides, the term tertiary education covers differing educational paths. Countries such as the Netherlands, Germany, and Switzerland offer significantly broader tertiary vocational training opportunities, including short-cycle studies that last for two years (for example) and are tailored to the labour market. In Poland, the academic education system dominates, which means that the majority of students will attain

a master's, and vocational studies are not as popular. In this respect, educational policy may influence any or all of the following: the range of courses offered, the length of education, the moment of entering the labour market, the links between education and the needs of the labour market, and attitudes towards academic knowledge.

## Teachers

Teachers are a key element of any education system. In developed countries, university graduates (not necessarily those with a master's degree) with the appropriate pedagogical qualifications are allowed to teach in primary and secondary schools. In some countries, the requirements for pre-school teachers and even for the first stage of primary school education are lower, and it is only necessary for teachers to hold a master's degree in secondary schools. Academic teachers tend to follow the scientific path, although in some countries there are separate paths for those focusing on teaching and those focusing on research.

A vital decision to be made in educational policy is whether to make access to the teaching profession open or closed (OECD, 2005). Historically, in many countries this has been a closed, lifelong choice, accessed through specific training and examinations similar in nature to the civil service. The teaching profession still enjoys this status in Germany and France. In other countries, it is possible to become a teacher through various paths, even at the age of 40 or 50. The decision to open up the teaching profession is linked to teacher education, entry requirements, career progression stages, remuneration, and requirements regarding teachers' employment. Closed systems are built around the necessity to pass difficult entrance exams in order to be admitted to university faculties that specifically train teachers (e.g. Finland), or specific exams must be passed before entering the teaching profession after graduation (e.g. Singapore). These systems usually have a specific career progression path, with the commensurate salary increases for teachers. In these countries, teaching is usually a lifelong profession, which guarantees the stability of the system at the expense of flexibility. Open systems cannot be based on a central qualification system, and the employment of teachers is often left to schools or local governments. The price that

is paid for flexibility and the openness of the profession includes a shortage of teaching staff, such as those willing to teach science, which is what happened during the economic boom (for example, in Great Britain in recent years and in big Polish cities after 2014).

In practice, each system is based on unique solutions that combine elements of opening up the system with a rigid model of professional advancement (as in Poland), which has been shaped both by historical conditions and differences in employment in the public sector. The teaching profession usually has specific legal regulations, which is because working hours and requirements for teachers are not easy to define. Most countries define compulsory as “in front of the blackboard” work time, which ranges from 18 to 25 hours per week across European countries. Apart from the hours spent in the classroom, approximately half of European countries also list other duties that teachers are obliged to fulfil, while the remaining countries (including Poland) do not define these duties precisely. Earnings, teaching hours, and class sizes are the three main factors that shape the costs of education and are among the most important organisational decisions in any education system.

## Measuring educational outcomes and evaluating educational institutions

In most education systems, national examinations that validate the successive stages of schooling provide data that directly assesses learning outcomes and indirectly assesses the quality of teaching, for example, through the educational value-added method (Dolata, 2007). It is important that educational policy determines how content is assessed in examinations and whether examinations are to be standardised and reviewed externally, so that they can be used to assess learning outcomes throughout the system. This is not possible when standards and methods are left to individual educational institutions (schools, universities) or independent organisations. It is often the case that examinations do not meet the psychometric standards necessary to monitor learning outcomes over time or are organised at local levels (thus they differ across one country), which is why many countries have special

procedures to monitor the learning outcomes of random samples of students (e.g. NAEP in the USA, NAPLAN in Australia, or annual studies of random samples of students in Finland and Germany). Nowadays, international studies that assess learning outcomes increasingly play this role (see below).

The assessment of learning outcomes is a continuous requirement of any education system, as is the evaluation of educational institutions. However, in most countries the latter focuses on administrative and procedural issues rather than on the quality of education. This quality is difficult to evaluate objectively and, depending on the country, is based on observing lessons, analysing documentation, or evaluating student performance. Regional educational inspectorates (called *kuratorium* in Poland) can have a significant impact on how a school functions, and they even have the right to order staff changes or close an institution down. In the UK, the independent regulatory body, Ofsted, has a very strong influence on the functioning of schools. In some countries, schools are self-evaluating (e.g. in Finland), and any control exerted by external bodies is ad hoc.

In higher education, standardised examinations for students are less common, mainly due to variations in the programmes that are taught, which are a result of the autonomous nature of universities. For this reason, universities are generally evaluated through an accreditation system, which allows experts to assess commonly agreed or ministry-imposed teaching standards and are often focused on research activities. In recent years, the monitoring of data that tracks graduates' functioning on the labour market has been gaining in popularity; in Poland, this data has been monitored for the last few years as a result of the ELA system (the National System for Monitoring the Economic Situation of Graduates).

An important issue in teaching is the recognition of skills that are difficult to measure through standardised tests and other forms of assessment. The aim of each education system is to build an appropriate system of values and broadly defined 'upbringing'. Today, the importance of soft skills that are related, for example, to cooperation, but also to the development of appropriate attitudes, is also emphasised. This dimension of education is difficult to quantify and assess but is equally important and requires adequate support through educational policy.

The education system should be a skilful balance between requirements that can be objectively assessed through tests and exams, and requirements that cannot be objectively assessed through any form of standardised testing or measurement: both should be implemented on a daily basis at schools and universities. In the latter case, it is vital to emphasise the importance of shaping appropriate values, attitudes, and cooperation skills during the teaching process as well as in teacher training. Educational policy should create a system that, on the one hand, requires measurable effects that are related to the assessment of knowledge and skills; on the other hand, it should balance the requirements and incentives for schools that are necessary in order to develop positive values and attitudes. Those elements of teaching that cannot be assessed by tests and exams must find their appropriate place in the core curricula, in the system of evaluation of entire educational units, in the curricula of teacher training, and in other instruments of educational policy that focus on the process rather than on educational outcomes.

## Evaluation of the system and the role of international organisations

Although there are a few countries in which ministries or specially established institutions perform evaluation of their entire education system on a regular basis, this is not a common occurrence. In fact, before the 1990s no data was available that would enable reliable comparisons of the learning outcomes between countries. In this respect, any comparison between countries was mainly in terms of the number of people completing particular stages of education or government spending on education. These indicators obviously do not reflect the quality of the education provided and offer limited grounds for comparison, since at present most developed countries guarantee universal access to secondary education and widespread access to tertiary education.

The first plans for an international study to compare student performance were made in the 1960s. Only 12 countries participated in the First International Maths Study (FIMS), organised by the IEA. The methodology of the study left much to be desired, and curricula differences were cited as a factor used to undermine comparisons between

countries. It was not until the 1990s that the first large-scale comparative studies in this area were conducted. The IALS project was the first study of adult competences. This study involved many OECD countries and the results were representative of more than 10% of the world's population. The TIMSS study, which was organised by the IEA in 1995 and is repeated every four years, provides the basis for comparing student performance in the mathematical and natural sciences. This is based on representative student samples and standardised tests that are conducted in several dozen countries worldwide. The PISA study, which was organised for the first time in 2000, is the first study in which all OECD countries participated from the beginning. It is currently the largest study of its kind, with about 60–80 countries participating in it every three years, and it covers all developed countries.

By providing a reference point for comparing educational outcomes between countries, the results of international studies of student performance have revolutionised educational policy theory. In Germany, the TIMSS and PISA studies initiated a public debate on the quality of teaching. Germans ignored their first poor results in the first TIMSS study of 1995, arguing that it measured themes that are not included in the core curriculum. Further underperformance in the PISA study of 2000 caused the 'PISA shock', which was the persuasive factor for the moderate reforms that have been introduced in the German states over the past two decades (reforms that include streaming and greater support being offered to immigrant students). The PISA studies 'discovered' the education systems of countries such as Finland and Singapore, which had not previously been of general interest. As they consistently perform best in various international studies, their education systems and the specific solutions that have been implemented by them became the focus of numerous analyses. These analyses led many countries (with less developed education systems and of different historical and social contexts) to copy their solutions. Obviously, this raises questions about the sensibility of such a way of building educational policy and utilising the results of international studies (Volante, 2018).

International studies that assess student and adult knowledge and skills reveal that the differences between education systems remain relatively stable over time and do not really change, regardless of how tests are constructed, what their exact content is, and who administers

them (Brown et al., 2007). One of the revelations of the PISA study is that the countries that consistently achieve the best results are often also those that experience little variation in their results over time. However, the explicit link between these results and the quality of teaching or the way in which these systems are organised is questionable. We do not know the extent to which culture (society's appreciation of education) and family (investing in education and supporting children) influence student performance, and to what extent it is the school itself and the quality of the teaching. The relationships between performance and cultural, social, material, and educational resources are very complex and vary across countries (Borgonovi, Pokropek, and Jakubowski, 2015).

In many countries, the current level of educational outcomes may be the result of past educational policies rather than current solutions. A good example is Finland, which in the 1970s created an educational system using a significantly different plan to other countries at the time (Oates, 2015). Other countries' total disregard for the results of international studies and lessons learned from the best-performing countries can only be explained by their reluctance to introduce reforms. It is generally acknowledged that the best-performing countries combine educational policy solutions that are transferrable and can be adapted to fit their needs (Schleicher, 2019).

## Reforms and research-based educational policy

Educational policy is not only influenced by the increasing availability of international studies that compare learning outcomes and the factors that have influenced them (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2011), but also by the increasing amount of reliable educational research that is available as a result. Over the last two decades, hundreds of experimental and quasi-experimental studies have been conducted. These studies provide an opportunity to assess the practices that are applied in various schools and systemic solutions. Several countries have established knowledge-broker institutions, which support experimental research, conduct meta-analyses, and prepare systematic reviews. By 2013, only two experimental studies had been conducted in the UK, whereas today, mainly thanks to the work of the Education Endowment Foundation,

there are over a hundred studies. Similar institutions, although operating on a smaller scale, have been established in the USA, Scandinavian countries, and the Netherlands, with more countries currently in the process of introducing them. Their work is supported by international organisations such as the World Bank, UNESCO, and OECD.

Teaching is a complex social process, therefore it is impossible to identify solutions that will work successfully in each scenario. The education system is based on culture, values, and social relations, not to mention the political situation, all of which create a unique context for reform in each individual country. In most countries, teachers are the largest professional group and have a key influence on the implementation of reforms, which means that educational change requires very broad consultation and consensus seeking. The numerous examples of unsuccessful reforms from around the world that were based on research or successful solutions from other countries demonstrate how difficult it is to reform education.

While appreciating the uniqueness of education systems and the importance of context in educational reform, including changes in teaching practices, it should be emphasised that our understanding of what successfully works in education is growing. This knowledge is provided not only by the experimental research that is conducted in classes and the quasi-experimental assessment of systemic changes, but also by research conducted by cognitive psychologists and brain researchers. These studies have led to the rejection of views that, although widespread in education, have no basis in research (Holmes, 2019). It is apparent that the use of research to create educational policy and to change teaching practices will grow in the coming years.

## Educational policy in Poland

Educational policy in Poland is shaped primarily by two ministries: the Ministry of National Education, which is responsible for education covering the pre-school, primary, and secondary level, and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, which is responsible for higher education. Formally, no ministry is responsible for adult education and lifelong learning; here responsibility depends on who provides the services

and who finances them. For example, supplementary or adult education that results in taking the secondary level school-leaving exam is the responsibility of the Ministry of National Education; adult education courses are provided by universities, and training for the unemployed is supervised by job centres, which are dependent on the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy and local governments. The participation of social partners in shaping educational policy is very limited. The ministries establish boards and consultative bodies, and the relevant acts undergo the usual consultation processes, which are only of advisory importance despite the fact that in the case of educational acts they involve a significant number of organisations. The various government educational agencies (such as the Central Examination Commission or the Centre for Education Development) are either directly or indirectly subordinate to the Ministry of Education, which appoints their heads; the same applies to the agencies that are subordinate to the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. This situation aligns Poland with those countries that have a centralised management system, but it distances Poland from countries that have decentralised their educational policy decision-making process, e.g. Finland or the Anglo-Saxon countries (Jakubowski, Gajderowicz, and Wiśniewski, 2019). In higher education, partially independent institutions (including the Polish Accreditation Commission) have been established which represent the broad interests of universities and act autonomously, even though they are regulated by the ministry. The adult education market is also autonomous in nature, but in recent years it has been influenced by the resources on offer from European funds, with criteria imposed by the ministries distributing these resources.

In terms of school financing, the education system in Poland is one of the most decentralised. Formally, local governments finance education and make decisions concerning the school network or the appointment of headmasters. In practice, these decisions are limited by central regulations, and education is mostly financed by an education subsidy; the freedom to spend this subsidy is greatly limited by central regulations that define teachers' employment conditions and remuneration. Universities have considerable autonomy in their management of resources and organisation of work, but again they are financed by centrally regulated funds, and employment and remuneration are determined by

the Ministry. In the Polish education system, schools have a great deal of freedom in selecting teaching methods, but the content of teaching is defined by the core curriculum. The current version of the core curriculum, which was introduced in 2015, significantly limits the autonomy of schools, and learning outcomes are assessed by central external examinations. Universities enjoy considerable autonomy in this respect, and in principle they decide on teaching content and its evaluation autonomously.

Poland is also known for its support for private education, which is largely financed using state funds. Public funding is provided for all schoolchildren from kindergarten to secondary school. Students of non-state higher education institutions can also benefit from public funds. For example, they can apply for state financial aid, although non-state higher education institutions themselves do not receive education subsidies from the state. However, the private education sector is subject to quite strong regulations, e.g. private schools have to follow the same core curriculum and requirements that are applicable to state schools. The key difference here is that the teaching profession is deregulated, and employment rules come from the Labour Code and not from the Teacher's Charter. The number of students in private schools in Poland is steadily increasing, although it is still significantly lower than the average in European countries. According to Eurostat data, the percentage of students attending private primary schools in Poland increased from 4.2% in 2013 to 6.1% in 2017, which can be compared with the EU average of 14.1% in 2017 (this indicator covers all entities run by private organisations, including independent schools)<sup>3</sup>. In the case of universities, a similar percentage of students attend private universities: in Poland this is about 25%; in the EU it is about 27% on average<sup>4</sup>.

In 1999, Poland implemented reforms that extended the period of universal education from 8 to 9 years, thus strengthening the development of general competences of all students. This was reinforced by later reforms that introduced compulsory education at the age of 5 and guaranteed a place in pre-school education for children aged 3 and 4. This extension of general education increased the performance of the

<sup>3</sup> Eurostat, educ\_uae\_enrp04 indicator (accessed 14.10.2019).

<sup>4</sup> Eurostat, educ\_uae\_enrt01 indicator, data for 2016 (accessed 14.10.2019).

weakest students in Poland (Jakubowski et al., 2016) and improved their situation on the labour market (Drucker and Horn, 2016). Reversing these reforms through the liquidation of junior high schools and the abolition of compulsory education at the age of 5 has shortened the period of compulsory general education. However, it is a fact that in Poland this is still longer than in Germany or Hungary, for example.

Poland is distinguished by high formal qualification requirements for teachers, and almost all (including pre-school education teachers) have a master's degree. On the other hand, university admission requirements for teacher training are lower than those of faculties offering other courses (Burski et al., 2013). Entry into the profession is open and does not require passing any special or selective exams. The system of professional advancement encourages teachers to improve their qualifications and document their work, but it is not selective. Almost 100% of teachers pass their professional examinations, and currently more than half of the teaching staff in Poland have attained the highest degree of a certified teacher.

The Polish core curriculum has undergone three significant changes related to changes in the curricula, textbooks, and other educational materials, as well as in the assessment of learning outcomes. The 1999 reform introduced a new basis for the core curriculum which allowed teachers to follow one of several curricula and to select from among several textbooks, or even to create proprietary curricula. The reform also introduced a system of standardised external exams for the completion of each stage of education. The first of these exams took place in 2002. In terms of the selection of teaching methods and content, the independence of the school and the teacher was increased as a result of these reforms. However, a system of evaluating schools by means of examinations and measurement of teaching outcomes was introduced. Another important reform of the core curriculum that was introduced in 2007–2008 strengthened the autonomy of schools and teachers, giving them greater freedom in organising the content of teaching and the selection of educational materials. In a way, the changes introduced with the liquidation of junior high schools after 2015 were a retrograde step that reduced the number of examinations (by eliminating the junior high school examination) and increased the emphasis on covering the content described in the core curriculum. At the same time, the division

of the natural sciences into its separate subjects at the second stage of primary school education was re-introduced.

Opinions regarding the quality of teaching in Polish schools are very diverse and are largely based on personal experience or subjective evaluation of curricula and learning outcomes. External examinations in Poland do not provide a useful tool for comparing learning outcomes over time, as they are not based on comparable standards and are not constructed in a way that enables comparison. Moreover, there is no institution in place that can conduct a comprehensive assessment of the education system. In this situation, international studies seem to be the only appropriate tool to assess the quality of teaching in Polish schools. The most important among these is the PISA study conducted by the OECD. This is the largest study of its kind in the world and the only study that Poland has participated in for several years. In 2000, the study concentrated on 15-year-old secondary school students, and the results placed our country far below the average for OECD countries. Approximately 80% of vocational school students achieved results in the reading comprehension section that were below the basic threshold of understanding simple texts. Following this, Poland significantly improved this dramatically low score and at one point was the only OECD country to obtain a score above the OECD average. In recent years, Polish students have confirmed their high scores in primary school studies (PIRLS and TIMSS) and in the PIAAC Survey of Adult Skills, in which the youngest generations scored above the OECD average. When comparing the learning outcomes of Polish students with those of other countries, Poles are close to or above the average for OECD countries and the European Union (Jakubowski et al., 2017).

Polish higher education was reformed with a view to increasing the autonomy of universities, which can determine both what they teach and the standard of assessment of learning outcomes that they apply today. Universities are evaluated on the basis of an accreditation system for which the Polish Accreditation Committee is responsible. There are no studies that have compared learning outcomes at the level of higher education. In recent years, the ELA system (the National System for Monitoring the Economic Situation of Graduates) was introduced, which monitors the financial situation of graduates on the labour market, based on data obtained from universities and ZUS (the Social Insurance

Institution). The only study comparing learning outcomes in higher education is the international adult survey PIAAC, which was implemented in Poland in 2011–2012 and covered a large sample of young people, including university students. The study revealed significant differences in the level of students' competences, with relatively smaller variances in the competences of people under 30 than occurs in other countries (Burski et al., 2013). This was a cross-sectional study, not a longitudinal one; its results suggest that, unlike other countries, the key competences are not developed during university studies in Poland. However, this conclusion does not apply to all fields of study as comparisons of, for example, engineering students suggest that during the time they spend at university their key competences are well developed.

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Jacek Klich  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1860-9178>

# Health policy: key determinants and challenges

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Health policy does not have a single, commonly accepted and widely used definition. The definition adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) describes health policy as the decisions, plans, and actions that are taken in order to achieve specific health goals in society.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to present the key challenges that are faced by health policy on three levels: global (the WHO), regional (the European Union) and national (Poland). The article begins by defining what 'health policy' means and presenting the different models that are available. This is followed by analysing the challenges that are faced by health policy on the three different levels and describing the characteristic features of health policy in Poland. The summary evaluates Polish health policy in terms of its compatibility with the approaches and practices utilised in other countries.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The main thesis of the article is that the objectives and tools of health policy in Poland differ from the solutions that have been adopted in the health care systems of other countries. Additionally, the article argues that Poland still lacks a properly prepared health policy that is adequately able to respond to contemporary challenges.

**Keywords:** health policy, health care system, health policy models, Polish health policy, health policy institutions



## Definitions and models of health policy

Health policy does not have a single, commonly accepted and widely used definition. The definition adopted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) describes health policy as the decisions, plans, and actions that are taken in order to achieve specific health goals in society. Explicit health policy defines a vision for the future which helps to set the goals and benchmarks for short and medium time frames; it indicates priorities and determines the expected behaviour of different groups; it is informative and builds consensus. According to the WHO, what is significant is that health policy is superior to health strategies and health plans (the sequence is as follows: health policy → health strategies → health plans), but this differs from the approach that is adopted in classical management and quality sciences, where priority is given to strategies. The WHO also indicates the far-reaching diversity of national health policies, strategies, and plans that are the result of the different political, historical, and socio-economic determinants of the countries where they are implemented.

Presenting an overview of research on health policy and health care systems, Lucy Gilson (2012) defines health policies as “purposeful and deliberate actions through which efforts are made to strengthen health systems to promote the health of the population” (Gilson, 2012, p. 22). In this respect, health policy is intended to serve the health system directly and patients only indirectly.

Kent Buse et al. (2005) see health policy as “a set of actions (or lack thereof) that affect the numerous institutions, organisations, services, and funding arrangements of the health sector. This includes both public sector policies (government policies) and private sector policies. Since health is affected by many factors other than the health system, health policy analysts are also interested in those activities and intended actions of organisations outside of the health system that have an impact on health (for example, the producers of food, tobacco, or pharmaceuticals)” (Buse et al., 2005, p. 6). It is worth noting that according to this perspective, inaction (not taking any action) is also a health policy.

It is also interesting that while in the past only the public sector was included in the health policy remit, nowadays there is an emphasis on the need to look at health policy actors from a broader perspective and to include the private sector in health policy decisions.

In this article, health policy is considered from a normative point of view and is understood as the deliberate, structured actions that are taken by public authorities and other actors (including private ones) that are directed towards strengthening the health system and aimed at maintaining, improving, and restoring health.

The encyclopaedic classification of health policies divides them into categories, including global health policy, public health policy, mental health policy, health services policy, health insurance policy, pharmaceutical policy, and a range of specific policies related to public health, such as vaccination policy, tobacco-control policy, or breastfeeding promotion policy.

Using a traditional division of policies, we can distinguish between the following types of health policy: regulatory, allocative, and constituent.

Regulatory health policy is used by the government to standardise and control the functioning of specific groups in relation to both the public and private sectors. An example of a public regulatory health policy is the requirement to possess officially recognised qualifications in order to work as a doctor or a nurse (in the public and private sectors). An example of private regulatory health policy is the accreditation process that is conducted by hospital associations or especially established organisations to ensure compliance of regulatory standards.

Allocative health policy deals with income from the sale of services or goods within the health system. There are two types of allocative health policies: distributive and redistributive. A distributive health policy applies to the whole of society (for example, government funding of laboratory tests to improve health services). A redistributive policy takes money or powers from one group and transfers them to another group. This is mostly done through taxation (for example, an excise duty on alcohol or cigarettes is levied on the consumers of these products, which can then be redistributed to finance prevention strategies).

Constituent health policies comprise executive units in the health system or define the rules of their functioning. They are also concerned with establishing the basic principles of fiscal and financial policy that are applied to the health care system.

According to public perception, health policies are understood as documents, principles, and guidelines that are used to present the opinions of decision makers and are intended to strengthen health care

systems and improve health. These official documents and principles lead to a complex process of health system stakeholders (managers, health professionals, patients, and citizens) formulating and making decisions in the daily operation of the system (e.g. management, provision of health services, or interaction with others). As a result of these everyday activities, a health policy that is actually implemented may differ from the intentions that were stated in the formal documents. This is, of course, often the case with any public policy, but health policy is more difficult to analyse than other public policies due to the importance of health in individual and societal value systems, the large number of stakeholders within the health system, their considerable influence and (often) conflicting interests, as well as the complexity of health systems.

## The health care system

The WHO defines a health care system as all organisations, institutions, and resources whose main aim is to improve, maintain, or restore health (WHO, 2005, p. 2).

A health care system has six main goals: service delivery, health workforce, information, medical products, vaccines and technologies, financing, and leadership/governance (de Savigny et al., 2009).

However, not all six goals of a health care system are given equal weight. In comparative analysis of European health systems, the goals of primary importance are the financing of a given health system, the provision of health services, and the regulatory systems (Crimson, 2008, p. 96).

Health care systems are highly diverse in terms of how they attempt to achieve these six goals. The latest classification of health care systems moves away from the traditional division and instead utilises Beveridge's model, Bismarck's model, the national health insurance model, the out-of-pocket model, or a mix of them all. This classification applies two criteria: how health care systems are financed, and the degree of integration between purchasers and providers.

Classification according to the financing criterion leads to five systems being distinguished: the voluntary health insurance system, social health insurance, the residual system (e.g. the Veterans Health

Administration and Medicaid in the USA), mandatory health insurance, and the universal system.

The second criterion distinguishes integrated systems, where the functions of the purchaser and the provider are performed by a single institution, and separate systems, where the purchaser and the provider are two separate institutions (a purchaser-provider split). Both of these systems are found in each of the five systems mentioned above, resulting in a matrix representing ten types of healthcare systems (Toth, 2016, p. 10). The advantage of this classification over the traditional division is that it solves the issue that is inherent in the “mixed model”, namely an overly capacious category that does not reflect the essential features of the models assigned to it.

## Health policy models

Due to the multidimensional nature of the term “health” and the complexity of health care systems (which are directly driven by health policy), classifying health policy models is a difficult task and *ipso facto* leads to simplification. If we add to this the fact that health care systems are characterised by high internal dynamics (Włodarczyk, 2014), and the many varied interests of the people and institutions involved may be partly irrelevant or even contradictory (e.g. the interests of doctors and nurses, medical staff and management, purchasers and providers, purchasers and patients, etc.), we can better understand the difficulties with classifying health policy models.

The health policy models discussed in the literature are still based on Michael Reich’s classification and include the political will model, the faction model, and the survival model (Włodarczyk, 2014, pp. 264–265).

The political will model assumes that it is the authorities’ will that leads to decisions being made and changes being introduced. These decisions are not determined by the particular interested parties and can be combined with elements of social planning (for example, utilising the findings of scientific research). In this model, the actions undertaken in the area of health policy are excluded from political dispute, and decision-makers do not act in their own narrow interests (which is what happens in the faction model).

The faction model assumes that politicians and other stakeholders of the health care system strive to improve the situation of the groups they represent or promote. In this model, the divergent interests of the interested actors (e.g. prestige, power, the ability to make decisions, material benefits) gain an institutional dimension.

In the survival model, the decisions taken by the authorities are determined by their desire to maintain power. In practice, this means making decisions that do not necessarily have any real justification but satisfy the needs of those in power. This model allows non-action in order to keep social peace and maintain power, even in situations in which health policy should respond to changes in the environment.

## Health policy research

Research on health policies can be divided into three main fields: the health policy-making process, health policy implementation, and health policy evaluation.

Within the health policy-making process, the necessity of carrying out cost-effective responses has been emphasized in recent decades. Although the economic consequences of introducing new regulations are always estimated when preparing regulations within any sector of public policy, this is of particular importance in relation to the legal acts that affect health policy. Studies that investigate the length of time and the support that is needed for the positive effects of the implementation of new solutions to become visible are of particular value. Research on the health policymaking process emphasizes the leading role of a systemic approach (Gilson, 2012, p. 45).

Researchers investigating the implementation of health policies analyse what happens after the introduction of new health policy principles/solutions (and their interpretation), including the adequacy of the response of organizations and entities that operate within the health system to new solutions and the permanence of these responses.

The key issues that are analysed in the assessment of health policies include the following criteria: Have the objectives of a given health policy been achieved? What are the unexpected outcomes? Has the reason for implementing a specific health policy changed with time?

Has a health policy been effectively implemented? (Gilson, 2012, p. 45).

While emphasizing the multidisciplinary nature of research on health policy and health care systems, Gilson also points to the more practical nature of this research and to its links with real-world situations and issues (Gilson, 2012, p. 21). This is an important observation, because to some extent it may explain the relatively slow progress that is being made in theoretical health policy research.

## The challenges faced by health policies

According to Gilson's approach, the challenges that are faced by health policies and health care systems can be found at all levels of the health system.

In its list of the greatest challenges that health systems face in 2019, the WHO included air pollution and climate change, non-communicable diseases, global influenza pandemics, fragile and vulnerable settings (resulting from natural disasters or warfare; according to the WHO, about 1.6 billion people, i.e. about 22% of the world's population, live in at-risk areas), increasing antimicrobial resistance, Ebola and other high-threat pathogens, weak primary health care, vaccine hesitancy, dengue, and HIV.

Other researchers put the following among the key challenges for global health policy in 2019: problems resulting from malnutrition and living in areas affected by armed conflict and natural disasters (and the associated spread of Ebola); the spread of HIV; antibiotic-resistant microorganisms (e.g. gonorrhoea); family planning (including modern contraception methods); providing nursing care now and in the near future; and a number of problems affecting health, such as the relationship between health and artificial intelligence, dynamic changes in the natural world and their impact on humans, problems with the use of large amounts of data (at the end of 2017, about 40% of Americans used mobile devices to monitor their physical activity; the information obtained this way can be used in diagnosis and prevention, but there are problems associated with this practice in terms of improving health) (Nathe, 2019).

The key challenges for health care systems in Europe are ageing populations, the increasing incidence of chronic diseases, inequalities in access to health services, and the need to use digital databases (including medical records and personal data). Francesca Scassellati-Sforzolini (2018), who compiled a list of the five major challenges that European health care systems face, emphasises the need for innovation, the effective promotion of vaccination, and making the patient a central and agentive element of the system.

In Poland, the list of key challenges that face the health care system was formulated in August 2019 as a result of the Ministry of Health's initiative "Together for Health". In debates in which the most significant stakeholders of the Polish health care system participated, it was established that "...the main challenges facing the Polish health care system are:

1. Insufficient access to health services, in particular to medical specialists, including health inequalities resulting from socio-economic status and place of residence.
2. Poor management of the system at all levels, with no coordination between the primary care, outpatient specialist care, hospitals, rehabilitation, long-term care, and social care sectors.
3. Shortage of medical personnel, inadequate competences of medical and health-care professionals, and uneven distribution of medical staff.
4. Insufficient activities in the field of public health, disease prevention, and an insufficient engagement of Poles in their own health care.
5. Underfunding of the health care system.
6. Insufficient availability of innovations in health care, including modern therapies.
7. Lack of a long-term coherent and evolutionary vision for the reconstruction of the health care system" (Czauderna et al., 2019, p. 5).

Strategic health goals have also been set for 2030:

1. Healthy citizens: the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, health promotion, disease prevention, and responsibility for one's own health. This goal will be measured by life expectancy, the incidence of diseases of civilization, the percentage of smokers, and the percentage of obese people.

2. Efficiency of treatment: reduction of the incidence of key diseases of civilization and their morbidity and related complications; reduction of dependence and disability; prevention of premature mortality; and reduction of infectious diseases. The measures are the rate of professional activity, mortality rate from chronic diseases, and self-care.
3. Reducing health inequalities in terms of income, access to information, place of residence. The measures are key health indicators among people with the lowest income, differences in access to health services with a legally defined maximum wait time, waiting times for health services, the number of health services provided, and their financing per capita.
4. Integrated care: increased access to out-patient health care that is supported by the family and the local environment, and adequate in-patient health care. The measures are the number of admissions to hospital emergency departments, the number and length of unscheduled hospital admissions, the number of patients seen in outpatient specialist care and in primary care, the frequency of reviews of medicines taken by the elderly, the number of emergency admissions, length of time waiting for treatment, the ratio of the number of specialists and visits to primary care and outpatient specialist care, the number of home care patients, and the indirect costs of diseases and their impact on GDP.
5. Effective care: the monitoring of patient safety, monitoring treatment outcomes, databased management, development of staff and their competences, sustainable financial mechanisms, development of innovative treatment and management processes and tools. The measures are waiting time for diagnosis, the number of accredited entities, the number of *Pay for Performance* (P4P) programmes, total costs of diseases, frequency of implementation of shared patient records, percentage of individual care plans, and the assessment of the quality of service delivery compared to plans at the population level.

The above list of challenges leads to the conclusion that they only partly coincide with the challenges identified by the WHO and the European Union (with regard to non-communicable diseases, inequalities in access to health services, and weak primary health care). They totally

ignore the ageing of the population (increasing life expectancy at birth and the proportion of people over 80 in the total population) and the digitalisation of the health sector, including the need to increase patients' access to limited data regarding their health and to create opportunities for the digital analysis of this data and access to reliable online medical advice.

This underestimation of new technologies means there is a need to pay attention to the fourth industrial revolution that is taking place before our eyes and to assess its impact on health care systems. The fourth industrial revolution is a phenomenon that has initiated a new stage in human evolution and will lead to a redefinition of the place of *homo sapiens* on earth. The *differentia specifica* of the fourth industrial revolution is the gradual disappearance of the border between man and machine. This process has a dual nature: machines are equipped with functions that are typical of humans (for example, artificial intelligence), and mechanical devices are implanted into the human body (including ones based on nanotechnology) that are supported by computer applications (artificial organs or devices and applications that fully compensate for or alleviate the loss of certain life functions, e.g. hearing, sight, memory).

It seems that the fourth industrial revolution, and particularly the development of information technologies, will increasingly affect the delivery of health services. Information technologies are already used in telemedicine, i.e. the delivery of health services over a distance (synchronous telemedicine, e.g. tele-surgery, provides health services in real time, while asynchronous telemedicine, e.g. teleradiology, is based on the "store-and-forward" technique), in monitoring cardiac patients (including seniors), or in home care for seniors. Technological development, large databases, and the development of biotechnology will enable personalized treatment, which will set new directions in medicine and the pharmaceutical industry.

## Institutional determinants of health policy in Poland

In Poland, the list of stakeholders in the health care system is long (the preparation of a representative stakeholders' map goes beyond the framework of this study). This list covers public administration bodies at all levels, the purchaser (the National Health Fund), public providers (e.g.

the County Hospitals Association), private providers (e.g. the National Association of Private Hospitals, the Polish Association of Pharmaceutical Industry Employers), as well as professional corporations (including the Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists, the Supreme Pharmaceutical Council, the Supreme Council of Nurses and Midwives), trade union organisations, institutions and organisations representing patients (the Patient Ombudsman, organisations acting on behalf of all patients, such as the Patients' Association *Primum Non Nocere*, or of specific groups of patients, such as the Polish Diabetes Association).

A large number of stakeholders have an interest in the health care system, but this can result in significant difficulties when combined with the division of competences between the various institutions (which is often unclear). This is evident not only at the level of coordinating activities, but even at the level of the simple exchange of information (e.g. the existing regulations do not clearly determine whether monitoring the costs of health care services is solely the responsibility of the Agency for Health Technology Assessment and Tariff System, or whether the National Health Fund, as a purchaser, can also fulfil this role).

From a formal point of view, i.e. that of preparing documents, health policy in Poland is created at both the central and the provincial (also called voivodeship, in Polish *województki*) levels. At the central level, health policy is created by the Sejm (the Parliamentary Health Committee) and by the Ministry of Health. A legislative initiative with regard to various health policies may also be proposed by the President of the Republic of Poland, who appoints the National Development Council, which has a section that deals with health. Practical experience demonstrates that health policy can be effectively shaped by stakeholders of the health care system, such as the Supreme Audit Office, the Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists, and the Supreme Pharmaceutical Council. While the recommendations of the Supreme Audit Office are oriented towards common interest and the public good, the proposals of the other two organisations are marked by concern for protecting the interests of doctors and pharmacists (the Supreme Chamber of Physicians and Dentists and the Supreme Pharmaceutical Council represent corporate interests).

The Patient Ombudsman and organisations that represent patients have a relatively weak influence on health policy, which may suggest

that, contrary to the solutions adopted in other systems and the challenges faced by health care systems, the patient is not a central point of reference in the Polish system.

The Ministry of Health implements programmes that are the manifestation of various health policies, such as the National Health Programme (a supra-ministerial, strategic document of public health, which aims, at least in principle, to extend the lives of Poles, to improve the quality of their health, and to reduce social inequalities in health); the National Mental Health Care Programme; the POLKARD Cardiovascular Disease Prevention and Treatment Programme, which was operational from 2017–2020; the Antiretroviral Treatment for People Living with HIV in Poland Programme, which was operational from 2017–2021; the Neonatal Screening Programme in Poland, which was operational from 2019–2022; the National Programme for Combating Cancer Diseases, which was operational from 2016–2024, and the National Programme for the Development of Transplantation Medicine.

It is worth to note that the National Health Programme, which is a relatively new tool in Polish health policy, was created in its present supra-ministerial formula as a result of the Public Health Act of 11 September 2015. In the long run, the measures implemented under this Act are intended to contribute to a further increase in the average life expectancy of men (up to 78 years) and women (up to 84 years) and to a reduction in the number of deaths due to lifestyle-dependent diseases.

At the voivodeship level, health policy is implemented by government administration bodies known as voivodeship offices (the Voivodeship Pharmaceutical Inspectorate, the Voivodeship Veterinary Inspectorate, and the Voivodeship Sanitary and Epidemiological Station) and local governments. The Voivodeship Health Plans are the most common formal expressions of health policy at the level of voivodeship self-government. Primarily, they are operational, as they put forward ways of providing health services (specifically supply and demand) and present programmes in the field of health prevention and promotion. The Voivodeship Health Plans do not refer to health policy *expressis verbis*, but they may be helpful in discovering the intentions of the authorities in terms of health policy. Unlike the health care systems of other countries, Polish health policy is insufficiently represented by the very documents that are solely devoted to it.

## Summary

Bearing in mind the analyses from the first part of this article, it can be concluded that health policy in Poland is based on the survival model, which is expressed primarily by inactivity. Examples of this can be seen in the lack of political will to initiate discussions (and then to take appropriate decisions) on such fundamental issues as the position of the private sector in the health care system (including additional health insurance and patient cost-sharing for services), the scope of application of market mechanisms, or the liquidation of the statutory monopsonistic position of the National Health Fund. Another example of inaction is the problem of the constantly growing indebtedness of independent public health care institutions; according to estimates, in September 2019 the level of liabilities of the Independent Community Health Care Centres (SPOZ) exceeded PLN 13 billion. In the survival model, inactivity is accompanied by the postponement of decisions (here the definition of the guaranteed services basket can serve as an example) and actions are undertaken with a view to maintaining social order and/or gaining the support of certain social groups. The best example here is the Act of 22 December 2000, called the “PLN 203 Act (the full name of the Act is: Act on the amendment of the Act on the Negotiating System of Entrepreneurs’ Average Salary Growth and on the amendment of certain acts and the Act on Health Care Institutions).

According to this Act, all employees of Independent Community Health Care Centres that had over 50 employees were granted a pay rise of PLN 203 in 2001 and of PLN 171 in 2002. However, the Act did not indicate the sources of financing for these pay rises. Such a flawed formulation triggered disputes between employees and the directors of the Independent Community Health Care Centres, which led to a large negative public backlash and resulted in court proceedings. The payment of these pay rises became the main reason for the rapid increase in hospital debts.

In reality, the Polish health care system does not use a systemic approach to health policy. This is expressed by, for example, the lack of coordination of activities at the level of the Council of Ministers. The Ministry of Finance and other ministries frequently reject the Ministry of Health’s proposals.

The Polish health care system shows weaknesses in each of the three areas of health policy research. Weaknesses in the process of health policymaking result from the lack of appropriate institutional support for this process. The social debate instigated by the aforementioned “Together for Health” initiative that was coordinated by the Ministry of Health is a classic example of a (positive) *ad hoc* initiative. Although this initiative of the Ministry of Health can be seen as an increase in the participation of health system stakeholders in the development of health policies (the Social Council that was established for this project alone consisted of 66 people representing a wide range of institutions and organizations operating within and for the health sector) and can be assessed positively, there are still doubts about ensuring the sustainability and continuation of such an undertaking. Past experience has highlighted that the health care system is painfully affected by the lack of continuation in the solutions that are adopted and the short-term (*ad hoc*) perspectives of action.

Moreover, economic analysis of the law is not practiced in Poland (the aforementioned case of the “PLN 203 Act” is an example of the devastating economic and social consequences of such an omission), therefore, the analysis of any cost-effective response remains a challenge.

In the process of introducing health policy, the lack of mechanisms for the effective monitoring and correcting of initiated actions is apparent. Within the framework of the evaluation of health policies, such actions are undertaken (e.g. the Supreme Audit Office has carried out many audits of the restructuring process of the health care system, including the evaluation of accessibility to health services), but such evaluations are usually not multi-criteria, in-depth, multidisciplinary analyses. A significant weakness of Polish health policy (mentioned at the end of the article, but of significance) is that it underestimates the consequences for the Polish health care system of the dynamic development of modern technologies and the challenges that result from demographic changes and the fourth industrial revolution. One may risk stating that the character of Polish health policy is, *par excellence*, responsive to the phenomena in its environment, but it lacks forward thinking and anticipatory action.

Based on the above observations, it may be argued that the Polish health care system in general, and the currently implemented health policy in particular, do not adequately respond to the present challenges and, in its current form, will fail to respond to future challenges.

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Paweł Musiałek  
Jagiellonian Club  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9765-6230>

# Energy policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Energy policy should be understood as an active influence of the state on the energy system, i.e. in a narrow sense, generation, processing, and consumption of electricity (the electric power system), while in a broad sense it also includes the fuel sector (gas, mining, oil, nuclear power), the renewable energy sector, and the heating sector.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to describe the various approaches to the need to ensure energy security and to the need to reconcile maximising the efficiency of the energy system with minimising costs for the consumer, including the cost of energy prices. The article provides varied historical answers to the question of how to obtain the right balance between the free market and state regulations that stem from various dysfunctions in the energy sector. The second part of the article outlines the development of the Polish energy sector and Polish energy policy and focuses on the problems that needed to be addressed after 1989.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Since 1989, the energy intensity of Polish industry has decreased; the negative impact of the energy sector on the environment has been reduced; an institutional framework for the energy market has been created; an independent regulatory body has been established; energy companies have been commercialised and restructured; and new electricity generation capacities have been added. However, energy sources have not been diversified; energy prices have not been fully

marketised; real competition within the market has not been developed; market forces within the mining industry have not been fostered; supervision over energy companies has not been professionalised; and the modernisation of power grids has not been completed. In recent years, a tendency to reduce market mechanisms in order to maintain the dominance of state-owned energy companies has been observed.

**Keywords:** energy policy in Poland, public services, privatisation, unbundling, energy mix

## The most important dilemmas of energy development

Energy policy should be understood as an active influence of the state on the energy system, which is a subsystem of the economy. In a narrow sense, the energy system generates, processes, and consumes electricity (the electric power system); in a broader sense, it also includes the fuel sector (gas, mining, oil, nuclear power), the renewable energy sector, and the heating sector. The functional structure of the electric power system consists of the following basic subsystems: generation, transmission, distribution, and supply. The supply subsystem was created as a separate subsystem in the 1990s, having previously been part of the distribution subsystem (Paska, 2010). State energy policy specifically defines the state balance between fuel and energy; generation capacities of domestic fuel and energy sources; transmission capacities, including cross-border connections; the energy market architecture; the energy efficiency of the economy; environmental protection measures; development renewable energy sources; the size and types of fuel stocks; the direction of restructuring and ownership transformations within the fuel and energy sector; the direction of scientific and research work; and international cooperation. This policy is implemented using various tools, the most important of which are legislative and regulatory tools (recommendations, concessions, orders, prohibitions, technical standards, limits, amounts quotas) and economic tools (public ownership of key companies and infrastructure, regulated prices, concessions, subsidies, tax relief and excise, preferential loans, taxes on energy or pollution, emissions trading, etc.) (Elżanowski, 2008; Waligórski, 2008; Łucki, 2010). Energy policy is part of economic policy and is a microeconomic policy, although it also coincides with environmental and security policies.

The history and analyses of energy public policy since electrification, which is understood as providing a given area with access to electricity, reveal that the main objective of the state policy was to ensure energy security (Soroka, 2015; Chester, 2012). It was assumed that enough energy should be readily available at the right time and in the right place and that energy should be produced at a price that does not hinder economic development and ensures the possibility of storing energy

reserves, not only for the immediate future but also for longer periods. In the next stages of the development of energy policy, further objectives were added; primarily, these included minimising any negative impact on the environment, mainly through the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other environmentally harmful substances (Czech, 2016); balancing the interests of energy companies and energy consumers; diversifying the supply of energy sources; increasing the competitiveness of the energy market; increasing energy efficiency; counteracting the negative effects of natural monopolies; and creating innovations in energy and other associated areas.

The fundamental, continual challenge energy policy faces is to find the answer to the question how to maximise the efficiency of the energy system whilst simultaneously minimising costs for the end user, including energy prices. The development of the power industry can be divided into three stages, in each of which the state plays a different role. These stages reflect the ongoing debate in the power industry regarding the right balance between the free market and state regulations which stem from various dysfunctions in the energy sector.

The first stage of the development of the electric power industry, which began in the 1880s, was based on spontaneous, bottom-up development. It was driven by private companies that built individual power sources and power grids, usually near large factories and neighbouring streets. This model was characterised by high fragmentation, a lack of coordination, a lack of integration into one national energy system, and free market prices. This stage was characterised by minimal state interference in the natural electrification process that resulted from technical and scientific progress in energy engineering. During this period, there was no energy policy that could be understood as an institutionalised form of state influence on the energy sector. Cities were the main public entities involved in this process: they granted monopolistic concessions (for a certain period) to the companies that built the municipal electric power infrastructure. These companies built power sources and transmission lines with their own funds in exchange for the possibility of charging fees without competition. Throughout the duration of the concession, the infrastructure was owned by the concession holders rather than the city.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this approach was gradually replaced by a centralised model based on vertically integrated state companies. These

companies were expected to be more efficient than market competition due to the specific nature of the electric power sector, which encompassed limited energy storage capacity and the need to balance energy demand and supply; low short-term flexibility of demand and supply; placing strategic importance on the reliability of the system; ease of monopolisation; an inability to separate a commodity from its transmission; and treating energy as a public good rather than as a commodity. It was expected that the risk of abusing the monopolistic position of state companies would be neutralised by means of the regulation of prices by public institutions. These public institutions were supposed to ensure that the final cost of energy for consumers was closely linked to the cost of energy production. An important reason for this paradigm shift was also to ensure access to energy in areas where there were no market incentives to build the necessary infrastructure, i.e. in small towns. This model was widely accepted after World War II, when the strategic importance of access to energy sources and the need for state management of the energy system were recognised. After the war, energy assets were also nationalised in the free market countries of Western Europe. The state both owned and directly managed the companies that integrated the entire technological chain of electric energy generation and transmission (Mielczarski, 2000).

Since the 1980s, the United States, Great Britain, continental Europe and other parts of the world have partially returned to a liberal model that has limited the role of the state in the economy, including that of the energy sector. The decision was made to separate the transmission element of the sector from the vertically integrated energy company that became the state power grid monopoly. The transmission monopoly is in charge of the grid by making energy available to all sellers on equal terms (the TPA, third-party access, principle) but does not sell it itself in order to avoid a conflict of interests. This is enforced by unbundling, i.e. separating the generation and supply of energy from the operation of the transmission networks. This model assumes unbundling, which is followed by privatisation of the unbundled segments and the abolition of regulated prices (except for the transmission price, which is a natural monopoly), as it is not the regulator but free market competition that is supposed to create the most effective pressure for lower energy prices (Cameron, 2004; Hunt and Shuttleworth, 1996). Unregulated pricing

was supposed to create a new market segment, i.e. energy exchange trading, which would lead to the most appropriate energy price being set. As a result, the electric power monopoly model shifted towards a fully market-driven model within a well-developed retail market. The intended effect of the liberalisation of the energy market was to make energy trading similar to other commodities trading, i.e. to minimise deviation from the free market (understood as regulation of the activity of the operator of the transmission system). It was assumed that this model would create stronger incentives for competition, innovation, and a better customer service experience for the end user. This model is now widely accepted as the most effective, although in many countries the state maintains control over the energy system. This is evidenced not only in the state's regulatory function, but also through its ownership role, which secures the state's dominating position within the energy market of government-controlled companies.

## Energy in the Polish People's Republic

In 1945, after the end of World War II, which caused enormous economic damage, the level of electrification in Poland was higher than before the war. This was partly due to the electrification of villages during the war (about 500 villages were connected to power) but also to the shift of the country's border to the west. This meant that the eastern borderlands (the most underdeveloped areas of the Second Republic of Poland) were no longer part of Poland, and the western lands, which were better electrified than those of the Second Republic, were now within Poland's borders. Nevertheless, in 1945 only 10% of all Polish villages had access to electricity.

The communists rise to power and the introduction of a centrally planned economic system had dramatic consequences for the energy sector. The communist authorities attached great importance to this sector because electrification was a key developmental challenge which they planned to address quickly. For this reason, adequate funds were provided for investment in the energy industry and the mining industry. Construction of the high voltage grid, Śląsk–Łódź–Warszawa [Silesia–Łódź–Warsaw], was underway by 1946. Power plants and

energy companies, which had been mainly under the control of local self-governments before the war, were nationalised under the Nationalisation Act of 1946 (Bałtowski, 2009). In 1947, the Act on Planned Energy Management was adopted, which appointed the Central Energy Management Board [Centralny Zarząd Energetyczny, CZE] to coordinate 13 district energy federations. The federations supervised all the technical, economic, and tariff-setting aspects of the functioning of the energy companies; they formed a structure that was vertically and horizontally integrated, and they were responsible not only for the extraction of energy sources but also for maintenance, supply, sale, production, and all related services. In 1950, these Boards were incorporated into the ministries, and the federations became more important (specifically, after 1960, when their competences were more clearly defined).

Because the borders were redrawn after 1945, coal reserves in Poland increased significantly. Hence, it was natural that the coal-based energy sector would be favoured, therefore coal became the basis of Poland's energy security. Mining increased very quickly, which was more as a result of the demands of the USSR than the needs of the Polish economy. Before 1956, Poland exported large quantities of coal at very low prices, based on an imposed agreement between the Polish People's Republic and the USSR.

After the war, the energy industry in Poland was characterised by the limited scale of its installed capacity as there were no power plants with a capacity above 300 MW. This and the dispersed transmission infrastructure meant that power plants had to be located near large-scale consumers. In 1947, the Central Energy Management Board adopted a 3-year energy development plan which committed to reconstructing installations destroyed during the war and moving away from small power plants located close to the place of energy consumption in favour of building units that served larger areas. The focus was shifted from water-powered plants to large coal units.

In the 1950s, capacity grew slowly and was unable to keep pace with the increased demand from mines, steelworks, and other heavy industry plants. In spite of the fact that more capacity was generated in the years 1950–1955 than in the entire Second Republic of Poland, power shortages were a constant problem, which translated into periodic outages and reduced voltage. Large investments were made in the 1960s,

when power plants (Łagisza, Siersza, and Stalowa Wola), CHP plants (Siekierki in Warsaw), and power plants using lignite deposits (Turów, Adamów, Pątnów, and Łaziska) were built. What is important is that the number of power plants decreased due to the closure of pre-war power plants and the fact that the new plants had a much higher capacity. The real investment boom took place in the first half of the 1970s, when new investment was financed from foreign loans between 1971–1976, as specified in a five-year plan. Power blocks were activated in the following power plants: Kozienice, Jaworzno III, Rybnik, and Dolna Odra. Later, power plants in Połaniec and Ostrołęka were built. However, despite the record-breaking investment rate, energy supplies were still not dependable due to the large increase in energy consumption by new production plants which were built at the same time. As a result, restrictions on electricity consumption were introduced in public places in 1976, which was followed by the decision to reduce the voltage in the grid temporarily. In 1979, the government adopted rules according to which consumers were to be disconnected.

In the 1980s, the authorities continued to invest in the power industry by opening power plants in Połaniec, Bełchatów, and Opole. The power plant in Bełchatów was of particular importance. Its new ignite-fuelled power blocks were built between 1982–1988, and by the end of the period of investment this had become the largest power plant in Poland. In 1982, the construction of the nuclear power plant in Żarnowiec began. This was intended to be completed at the turn of the 1990s; however, due to the economic crisis in Poland, the funding necessary to complete the investment was cut. The decision to suspend investment (after about 40% of the work had been completed) was made in 1990 by the first non-communist government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki.

Despite the large increase in the volume of power generated, Poland still experienced shortages of electricity due to the high energy demands of heavy industry and the economy (which was twice as high as in West Germany, for example). This was as a direct result of having a centrally planned economy which specified quotas and thus did not encourage energy saving. Mining, which provided foreign currency in exchange for coal exports, was the favoured industry, so it was difficult to force the energy sector to save energy in mines when they were one of the main energy consumers. Low-quality coal was another problem that power

plants faced, as this hindered their ability to reach full capacity. Finally, investment in power grids was inadequate because available funds were spent on new power plants and the mining industry (Dwilewicz, 2016).

## Transformation and commercialisation

The Third Republic of Poland inherited a number of problems in the power sector from the Polish People's Republic. For example, many units were old and overused and generated little energy; the share of international exchange was low; the sector was centrally organised and managed; and there was no competitive energy market. Furthermore, regulated prices did not reflect the costs of energy production; huge overstaffing in power plants was a widespread phenomenon, operating costs were high, and organisational structures were complicated and were characterised by low efficiency and poor management. The electric power sector was not alone in facing these problems, and the changes in energy policy described above were in line with the general direction of economic changes, which consisted in moving from a centrally planned economy to a free market economy. The Contract Sejm decided that the main goal of energy reform was to decentralise and commercialise the energy sector and to lay the foundations for a competitive energy market. It was believed that independent and self-reliant energy companies would be forced to submit to the rigours of the market economy and to operate within competitive conditions, so it was decided to treat electricity as a commodity and not as a public good.

In October 1990, the Polish Parliament implemented an act that addressed the premises of energy policy for 1990–2010 developed by the Ministry of Industry. The act was critical of this policy and listed the following objectives: reduction of energy intensity (e.g. through the rationalisation of energy consumption and production, or the creation of economic mechanisms that would stimulate modernisation of energy-intensive technologies); environmental protection (the reduction of emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides) through reducing the consumption of solid fuels and replacing them with hydrocarbon fuels and RES; modernisation of the infrastructure and improvement of coal

quality; incorporating the energy sector into restructuring plans for the national economy to ensure a fuel and energy price structure that would reflect the cost of mining and energy generation; an increase in gas extraction and import together with the development of the transmission network; expansion and modernisation of transmission networks to reduce transmission losses; and the construction of new power blocks. In this act, the Contract Sejm proposed the establishing of an Energy Respect Agency that would be subordinate to the Prime Minister and be responsible for conducting the state's energy policy. However, this agency was never established.

It should be observed that these basic objectives, i.e. ensuring energy security, increasing the competitiveness of the economy and its efficiency, and protecting the environment and Poland's natural resources against all negative effects of the activity of the power industry, failed to change fundamentally throughout the entire period of the Third Republic of Poland. Consecutive governments differed in their approach to the day-to-day running of the industry but not to the direction of changes that the energy sector required as a whole. Thus, the act adopted by the Sejm formulated the direction that was continued by successive governments.

In 1990, responsibility for power companies and power plants was transferred directly to the Ministry of Industry and Trade. This strengthened the position of the ministry, which became the main coordination centre for energy policy, and one of its main competences was to set energy prices. The ministry's pricing model was maintained in the years 1990–1997. As regards the organisation of the sector, a decision was made to maintain the state monopoly in transmission, which became the responsibility of a company which held a majority stake in the state treasury and which took over all high-voltage lines with a power control room. Its task was to buy energy from power plants and sell it to power distribution companies, which made it a central link in the supply chain. Power plants and distribution companies were supposed to self-finance, which meant marketisation of the energy price at which power plants sold to the transmission companies, at which transmission companies sold to power companies, and at which power companies sold to the end buyer.

The various sub-sectors were separated in 1990, which allowed their management to be rationalised. The energy sector was divided

into generation (about 30 power plants and CHP plants), transmission, and trading (the natural monopoly was taken over by the Polish Electric Power Grids (Polskie Siecie Elektroenergetyczne, PSE), established in 1990), distribution, and sale (33 power companies). The elimination of intermediate levels and the separation of the sub-sectors allowed competition between fuel and energy producers (in theory, at least). However, because the Polish Electric Power Grids had the sole right to transmit and order energy, a single-buyer model was created in which the distribution company could not buy energy directly from its producer but only from the Polish Electric Power Grids, which hampered market development.

Energy companies underwent major changes. Internal restructuring was undertaken, which was aimed at increasing operational efficiency, reducing costs, creating a transparent organisational structure, and separating out ancillary activities in the form of separate business entities. New relationships based on trade agreements were fostered between companies in the sector. However, energy companies were not included in the Act on the privatisation of state-owned enterprises that was adopted in 1990. It was not until the Act on ownership changes was adopted in 1993 that they were commercialised, i.e. state companies were transformed into commercial companies. This meant subjecting state-controlled companies to the rigours of a free market economy, but this did not mean that they were privatised.

An exception in the process of energy marketisation was the decision not to deregulate energy prices to safeguard against the possibility of a jump in prices, which would be both politically unacceptable to society and difficult for many companies for which energy bills constituted the largest share of their expenses. Instead of marketisation, the authorities introduced the principle of gradually reaching an “economic” energy price, i.e. a price that would cover the costs of energy production (Mielczarski, 2017).

Transformation posed many new challenges, but it also solved the problem of energy shortages. The closure of energy-intensive companies meant a significant drop in demand for electric power that – combined with maintaining the previous capacity – provided a growing energy reserve. Those industrial companies that managed to remain on the market quickly rationalised their energy consumption. Moreover, the

first years of transformation were a period of economic recession, which further reduced electricity consumption (it was not until the year 2000 that the level of energy consumption seen in 1987 was again reached). The key challenge lay not in building new power blocks but in modernising the old ones, as the electric power sector lacked modern equipment, especially equipment for measurement, teletransmission, automation, telemechanics, and IT.

The key problem during the transformation period was payment bottlenecks resulting from consumers' difficult financial situations and from the low priority given to paying electricity bills due to the widespread belief that electricity was a public good. It was not just the large industrial plants that were in debt but also public institutions. Within several years, some indebted consumers went bankrupt, although others managed to restore financial liquidity and pay off their debts. However, mining constituted the biggest problem for the power industry. The prices at which power plants bought coal from mines were still set by politicians rather than by market mechanisms. This was due to the difficult situation in the mining industry, as its inefficiency resulted in high mining costs that exceeded the price at which coal could be exported. This put pressure on power plants to buy coal at higher prices and thus subsidise mining, which was a politically important sector.

Debt repayment improved the condition of the energy sector but did not provide funds for its development. Underinvestment meant that there was a lack of installations that prevented the emission of harmful substances, which hindered the modernisation of increasingly exploited and older infrastructure. This problem was solved by the introduction in 1994 of long-term contracts under which the Polish Electric Power Grids purchased electricity from power plants, which in turn enabled power plants to obtain loans from financial institutions for investment. This solution allowed many power plants to make the necessary investments, but it also caused certain problems. Long-term contracts covered 80% of energy demand, which petrified the market and made it difficult for new entities to enter it. In addition, the contracts concluded by the Polish Electric Power Grids were not subject to auction (which would minimise the costs of purchasing energy) and did not oblige beneficiaries to restructure or even reduce costs. The certainty of the supply of a fixed quantity of coal at a predetermined price discouraged attempts

to modernise management and, in particular, to tackle the issue of overstaffing that was inherited from the Polish People's Republic. An attempt was made in 1997 to terminate these contracts, but this was met with resistance from power plants and from banks, which were afraid that power plants would have problems with repaying their loans. As a result, the decision was postponed until Poland joined the EU. The EU treated such contracts as illegal state aid and forced their termination, which took place in 2007. The companies were compensated with the reimbursement of "stranded costs", which were in turn incorporated into electricity bills as a "transition fee" (Motowidlak, 2007).

## Privatisation and horizontal consolidation

Commercialisation was to be the first stage leading to privatisation. In 1996, the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) government prepared a strategy for demonopolisation and privatisation of the power industry which assumed the sale of some power companies and power plants. According to this document, the privatisation process would be possible after core decentralisation and the implementation of market mechanisms. It was assumed that the first step would be to bring energy prices to a level that could be economically justified (this primary concern became the reason why this strategy was not implemented). Nevertheless, the Energy Law was passed in 1997. This act facilitated the gradual implementation of market mechanisms in the energy sector; it introduced the principles that underlie the state's energy policy and the principles of supply and use of fuels and energy. The Law established the Energy Regulatory Office and delegated responsibility for the implementation of energy policy to the Minister of the Economy.

The succeeding government, i.e. the Solidarity Electoral Action-Freedom Union (AWS-UW) government (1997–2001), adopted the schedule for the privatisation of entities from the electric power sector and began selling off the assets, mainly to foreign investors. This strategy was continued by the next government formed by the Democratic Left Alliance-Polish Peasants' Party (SLD-PSL) (2001–2005). Privatisation helped with the restructuring of the individual companies involved and led to order in the structure of the sector as a whole. Side-branches, which

were remnants of the horizontal structure of the communist era, were separated out and then sold. In the opinion of the experts, and in terms of the financial results of the companies involved, privatisation brought numerous benefits, including access to international capital markets and the transfer of knowledge and experience in the fields of technology, organisation, management, marketing, and finances (Szymła, 2013). However, the privatisation programme was suspended due to political factors (a reluctance to privatise companies belonging to this strategic industry) and resistance from employees who feared redundancies (Grudziński, 2011).

The Solidarity Electoral Action-Freedom Union (AWS-UW) government adopted the proposals contained within the report on “The Electricity Market in Poland. Principles of Operation and Implementation for the Energy Market in Poland in 2000 and beyond”, which enumerated detailed rules for shaping the energy market in Poland, its structure, and the implementation schedule. The need to introduce market changes, to continue with privatisation, and to liberalise the energy sector was also indicated by foreign advisory bodies (OECD, 2002), which led to the establishment of the Polish Power Exchange. In 2010, it was decided to impose an obligation on energy producers to sell a certain amount of electricity through the Exchange in order to increase its trading volume. As a result, in 2011, almost 60% of the energy offered by generators was sold in this way. Although exchange trading was often carried out between companies belonging to the same concern, the transparency of exchange transactions made price manipulation more difficult.

The Solidarity Electoral Action-Freedom Union (AWS-UW) government also initiated horizontal consolidation of power generation in order to increase the effectiveness of the combined entities. Interestingly, as early as 1992–1993, a programme of reforms aimed at the so-called “horizontal consolidation” of generation and distribution companies was developed, although in the end the programme was not implemented. In 2000, Południowy Koncern Energetyczny (the Southern Energy Concern) was established and included power plants (Siersza, Łagisza, Jaworzno, Łaziska, and Halemba) and coalmines (Janina and Sobieski). The distribution sector was also consolidated, and the following companies were established: Energa in the Pomerania region, EnergiaPro in Lower Silesia, Enion in Lesser Poland, and Enea in Greater Poland. As

a result of the transformations, the number of power plants decreased from 33 to 14. In 2004, the Democratic Left Alliance-Labour Union government added to the existing energy concern, Południowy Koncern Energetyczny (the Southern Energy Concern), by creating a second energy concern called BOT, which included the Bełchatów, Opole, and Turów power plants. It should be emphasised that at that time consolidation processes were a common trend throughout Europe, and their manifestation was due to a series of megamergers of energy concerns at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Pyka, 2006).

## Vertical consolidation

The next stage of consolidation was the breakthrough strategy adopted by the Law and Justice (PiS) government in 2006. The EU's growing expectations regarding the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and the necessity to build new blocks to replace those built in the 1960s and 1970s resulted in the decision to merge groups of power plants as well as distributors. Thus, after horizontal consolidation, vertical consolidation began. In 2007, the Polish Energy Group was established, which comprised BOT, the Dolna Odra power plant, some of the Polish Electric Power Grids assets, and power plants in eastern and central Poland. In 2006, Tauron was established. This comprised the Polish Electric Power Grids, EnergiaPro and Enion distributors. The Enea distributor merged with the power plant in Kozienice, and Energa, which was established in 2007, merged with the power plant in Ostrołęka. As a result, within the Polish energy market, generation, distribution, and trade were dominated by the "Big Four" companies, of which the State Treasury was a majority holder. These companies still hold the dominating position within the market and are responsible for implementing energy policy (Kamiński, 2011). During the Civic Platform-Polish Peasants' Party (PO-PSL) government, the energy market was floated on the stock exchange and privatised (Enea – 2008, PGE – 2009, Tauron – 2010), although a controlling interest remained in the hands of the State Treasury.

The creation of vertically integrated concerns facilitated access to investment funds in order to finance the building of new blocks. For the financial sector, the key issue was to join distribution to concerns

as this would assure stable revenue due to the monopolistic position of individual distributors and guarantee profits provided by the tariff model introduced by the Energy Regulatory Office. While the pace of construction of new blocks was slow before consolidation, it accelerated substantially after (Bełchatów, Kozienice – 2017, Opole – 2019, Jaworzno – 2019). Vertical consolidation meant a departure from the original plans of both municipalisation of distribution companies and privatisation of the sector.

Changes in the structure of the sector also incurred significant costs. Horizontal and then vertical consolidation of non-privatised energy companies slowed the development of the electricity market in its initial phase and created a de facto oligopolistic market that was controlled by companies in which the State Treasury predominated.

## Unbundling and market liberalisation

The changes introduced into EU law were important for Polish energy policy. In accordance with the Europe Agreement, which was signed in 1991, Poland undertook the adoption of the market principles of the energy sector. This was followed by the enactment of the Energy Law in 1997, which introduced a number of elements of competition and market mechanisms in accordance with European Union directives and the trends of countries with well-developed market economies. The Energy Regulatory Office was a key institution with considerable powers. Its main responsibilities included licensing but also setting energy tariffs. In 1998, the third-party access principle was introduced, giving the right to all energy companies to use the transmission and distribution network on equal terms in order to accelerate the development of market competition among electricity sellers.

However, formal legal rules did not affect the development of competition. Producers that supplied energy and at the same time managed the distribution network had no interest in market liberalisation. Only EU regulations (successive liberalisation packages) enforced these changes. In 2004, the PSE Operator became a separate transmission network operator, which terminated the gross purchase of energy and left it to trading companies. Distribution network operators were also

separated. These companies belonged to large energy groups, but after 2007 all energy companies had to separate their trading and distribution activities in order to avoid conflicts of interest. Distribution operators had to make their networks available to all those who wanted to use them on an equal and transparent basis. The Energy Regulatory Office set prices for both transmission and distribution services based on a model of justifiable cost pricing, so that natural monopolists would not abuse their position.

The acceleration of liberalisation was facilitated by the fact that prices for all groups of recipients other than households were marketised after 2008. This meant that prices could be freely set and did not have to be approved by the President of the Energy Regulatory Office. This accelerated real tangible market changes and the transformation of “energy offices” into modern companies with efficient marketing and sales departments. It was not only the Energy Regulatory Office that contributed to the development of competition but also the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection, which repeatedly imposed penalties on energy companies for abusing their monopolistic position. However, competition did not apply to all sections of their customers equally. Companies that sold energy to households introduced very few changes due to regulated prices, which usually yielded minimal profit. The low price level set by the Energy Regulatory Office was not just due to political pressure not to increase prices for households, which would be politically costly, but also resulted from a desire to force energy companies to be efficient. Furthermore, the Energy Regulatory Office was reluctant to abolish tariffs, believing that the energy market was not mature or well-developed enough to abandon their policy of protecting households from high energy prices.

## Renationalisation

Better financial conditions allowed Polish companies to buy companies from their foreign owners, who were no longer interested in the Polish market due to the high investment risk (caused mainly by considerable state interference in market mechanisms in the energy sector). Therefore, after privatisation came renationalisation, which was deemed justifiable

in order to increase the potential of the largest Polish companies to be able to compete in the liberalised European market and to strengthen Poland's energy security. Under the Civic Platform-Polish Peasants' Party (PO-PSL) government, Polish Oil Mining and Gas Extraction S.A. (Polskie Górnictwo Naftowe i Gazownictwo, PGNiG) purchased the CHP plant in Warsaw from Vatenfall (2012), and Tauron purchased Górnośląski Zakład Energetyczny (2011). Enea also acquired the Bogdanka mine (Grudziński, 2011).

Renationalisation accelerated under the Law and Justice (PiS) government. In 2017, Enea purchased the power plant in Połaniec from French Engie, while PGE purchased the power plant in Rybnik and eight CHP plants from French EDF. As a result of these transactions, foreign companies were marginalised. The power generation market in 2018 was dominated by the Polish Energy Group (PGE) (43%), Enea (17%), and Tauron (10%). The largest shares among Polish private companies and foreign companies were held by PAK (4%) and CEZ (2%), respectively. The energy market is therefore not only dominated by state-owned companies but is also very oligopolised.

Under the Law and Justice (PiS) government, energy companies became shareholders of the largest mining company, the Polish Mining Group (PGG), which led not only to consolidation within the sector but also to the creation of strong links between energy and mining.

## Changing the energy mix

The Act of the Sejm of 1990 indicated that the diversification of energy sources, i.e. moving away from coal monoculture, was justified. However, due to the privileged role enjoyed by the mining industry in Poland and the relatively low price of energy generated from coal, progress in this field was limited. In order to avoid dependence on gas imports from Russia, renewable energy sources were recommended as the most promising energy source. Poland's membership of the EU, whose main objective was RES development, resulted in increased emphasis in Poland for diversification of the energy mix. The first amendment of the Energy Law Act in 2000 introduced the obligation to purchase energy from renewable sources. Another amendment in 2005 introduced

a certain number of green certificates (Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin), and energy companies either had to sell them or pay a substitution fee. Green certificates were issued by the Energy Regulatory Office to companies producing energy from RES, thus they benefited not only from energy sales but also from green certificates, which were traded on the energy exchange. The mandatory share of green energy in energy production was defined in the regulations of the Ministry of Economy, which amounted to 10–13% between 2010 and 2018 (Wasiuta, 2013).

The system of mandatory purchases by energy distributors of a certain amount of RES production is not the only mechanism supporting the development of the RES sector. Apart from this, the production of renewable energy enjoys regulatory and financial privileges. Consequently, the production of RES increased; however, freezing the quotas of mandatory RES purchases in the period 2010–2012 led to an over-supply of green certificates on the market. As a result, their prices fell sharply, and many investors went bankrupt as low certificate prices did not enable them to repay their investment loans. Low prices also halted investment, which prompted the Ministry of Economy to change its support system.

The auction system was introduced in 2015. This is based on the premise that producers of electricity from renewable sources will prepare an offer that states a price per unit of energy produced (1 MWh) and the amount of energy they will supply over the next 15 years. Offers with the lowest price per unit of energy are co-financed. Thus, the auction model enables the calculation of the investment profitability, unlike the system of green certificates, which depends on administratively determined substitution fees and the high volatility of green certificate prices on the exchange. It was predicted that the auction model would accelerate meeting the EU target (set in 2009) of a 15% share of RES in the Polish energy mix by 2020. The share of RES in the energy mix is expected to grow significantly in the coming years and decades because of the EU's strategy, which was set in 2019, to become climate-neutral by 2050; this will lead to an acceleration of the pace of energy decarbonisation. The motivation for accelerating the transition from fossil fuels to low- and zero-carbon sources is created not only by potential penalties for failing to meet the energy and climate targets but also by creating very strong links between EU funding and climate targets in both positive (more

funding for low-carbon investments) and negative (a ban on financing investments that run counter to climate targets) terms.

Nuclear energy is another possible energy source. The Mazowiecki government abandoned the idea of introducing nuclear energy in Poland, but the Law and Justice-League of Polish Families-Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (PiS-LPR-Samobrona) government returned to this idea, although it stopped short of any decision on building a power plant. The nuclear programme was adopted by the Civic Platform-Polish Peasants' Party (PO-PSL) government in 2014, although the PGE EJ1 Company, which oversees the programme, has not yet completed its first stage. After the Law and Justice party took power in 2015, the plans were to be continued, but no significant progress has been made and, most importantly, no significant source of investment funding has been found.

The need to provide a stable source of support for the unstable RES, as well as the acceleration of coal abandonment, problems with building nuclear power plants, and the development of gas infrastructure, which increases the reliability of the supply of this raw source, lead to the conclusion that the role of natural gas in the energy mix will increase in the coming years. Gas will probably support RES, i.e. it will play the role of a transition fuel during the period of the Polish energy transformation until the construction of nuclear power plants or the development of other zero emission technologies.

## Conclusions

The Polish energy sector has achieved several of the goals that were set in 1989. The energy intensity of the economy has been significantly reduced, the negative impact on the environment has been reduced, a legal and institutional framework for the energy market has been created, an independent regulator (the Energy Regulatory Office) has been established, energy companies have been commercialised and restructured, new generation capacities have been developed, many elements of the energy infrastructure have been modernised, and energy law has been adapted to the requirements of EU law. However, the goals that have not been achieved include significant diversification of the energy

sources; full marketisation of energy prices; creating real competition in the energy market; developing market relationships with the mining industry; professionalising supervision over energy companies; and completing the programme for modernisation of the energy networks. Recent years have witnessed a tendency to limit market mechanisms in order to maintain the dominance of state-owned enterprises.

In addition to the challenges that were identified long ago and have yet to be met, new challenges have resulted from technological changes and international determinants. Key challenges in the coming years include implementing the EU climate neutrality strategy (by 2050), which means meeting increasingly demanding EU targets for reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions; increasing the share of renewable energy sources in the energy mix; and increasing energy efficiency.

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Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski

University of Lodz

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3156-1842>

# Cultural policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Cultural policy can be defined as the continuous effort of public authorities to support artistic creation, cultural education, and the dissemination and promotion of culture that is based on axiological consensus and a defined institutional framework.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to describe the Polish model of cultural policy that has been in development since 1989 and to compare it with the cultural policies of other countries. The article begins by identifying the problems that are associated with attempting to define cultural policy; this is followed by a presentation of the cultural policy models employed in France, the USA, and Germany. Finally, the two main aspects of the contemporary model of cultural policy in Poland are analysed in terms of its historical development and the specificity of its scope

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Not only did Poland not participate in any discussions on the definition and scope of cultural policy in a democratic state during the half-century of communist rule, but also, after 1989, it failed to shape its cultural policy into a model recognisable amongst those of the developed countries of the Western world. As a result, the Polish model of cultural policy is close to the French model, with the absolute dominance of public patronage, but, at the same time, it is far more decentralised in Poland. Thanks to this, cultural policy in Poland is in many ways implemented in both a reactive and an anticipatory way. For example, whilst Poland lags behind in the sphere of cultural infrastructure, this has been made up for

by the establishment of institutions that are responsible for international cultural exchange, along with the initiation of an active policy of remembrance and the dissemination of Polish historical heritage.

**Keywords:** cultural policy, policy of remembrance, decentralisation, cultural institutions

## The definition of cultural policy

David Throsby (2011) notes that “cultural policy sometimes causes problems for governments because it is not clear how far it is supposed to go and what its objectives should be” (Throsby, 2011, p. 40). Cultural policy researchers have not yet developed an uncontroversial definition of cultural public policy. Daniel Przystek (2016) sees the very notion of cultural policy as a threat to artistic freedom, which is problematic for democracy because it “evokes associations with countries with undemocratic regimes, where culture is an important element of support for those in power, by promoting specific content rather than building a pluralistic model of culture” (Przystek, 2016, p. 10). A different approach is adopted by Karolina Golinowska (2017), who criticises the narrow understanding of cultural policy, which is limited to managing the institutional sphere that society has set up to “organise cultural and artistic life”. Golinowska emphasises the political aspect of cultural policy, which is supported by the very definition of culture as an “exchange of values and meanings” (Golinowska, 2017, p. 130). She uses the Aristotelian understanding of the term ‘politics’, which refers to values that are fundamental for a political community. It would be unreasonable to object to the claim that the objectives of cultural policy must be related to the values prevailing in a given political community. Following this path, definitions of cultural public policy are based on axiological consensus and a defined institutional framework, the continuous effort of public authorities to support artistic creation, cultural education, and the dissemination and promotion of culture.

The majority of scientific papers published in recent years have critically assessed the activities of public authorities in the cultural sphere in Poland since 1989. Dorota Ilczuk and Małgorzata Nowak (2011) wrote, “looking from the perspective of 2010, there are no systemic changes that would be consistent with the original cultural policy consistently implemented on the basis of the modern cultural legal system. Culture is the only unreformed economic system in Poland” (Ilczuk and Nowak, 2011, p. 88). The authors believe that Poland has failed to implement reforms within the cultural sector that would bring them in line with Western Europe. Leading European countries established intermediary bodies for the management of cultural policy which acted

as quasi-non-governmental organisations and were responsible for distributing public funds and providing advice. Thus, their reforms involved moving away from state involvement and limiting state control over the managing bodies. Przystek is also critical: he thinks that no stable cultural policy has been created and he believes that this sphere is dominated by “individual solutions resulting from the exercise of power by different political parties” (Przystek, 2016, p. 27).

## Cultural policy models

Scientific reflection on cultural policy focuses on defining the public policy models that exist. Other issues at the centre of theoretical reflection include the responsibility of public authorities for cultural patronage; the relationship between public patronage and private spending on culture; the decentralisation of cultural policy; the objectives of cultural policy and an evaluation of their implementation; and democracy in culture, which is understood as removing restrictions on access to culture for disadvantaged social groups.

The Europeanisation of cultural policy is a recent phenomenon, but it should be noted that cultural policy models in European countries depend on their national traditions. According to a commonly held view, since 1958 France has introduced the most coherent and expressive model of patronage in the cultural sphere. A characteristic feature of the French model is the high degree of state responsibility for financing cultural activities and cultural institutions. The centralised Unitarianism of the French Republic is influential in cultural public policy. The state budget finances a major part of expenditure on culture. Although local authorities' expenditure has increased significantly since the decentralisation reforms of the 1980s, it is still much lower than the state's. The French model of cultural policy is characterised by criticism of marketization of the cultural sphere and their conviction of the universal importance of French culture and its mission in the world. The French political scientist and historian, René Rémond (2008), has argued that contemporary France continues the tradition of royal patronage. He points out that France was the first European country to build state cultural institutions, which began in the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the Collège

de France and the Comédie Française, However, it seems that it was only with the French Fifth Republic that cultural policy was provided with a stable and well-thought-through approach. After 1958, not only was cultural patronage broadened, but also cultural policy was considered to be at the centre of government interest and governmental programmes. A symbolic expression of this approach was the nomination of André Malraux as Minister of Culture (Girard, 1997; Gierat-Bieroń, 2003).

The American model of cultural policy can be considered the most prominent alternative to the French solution. The public authorities are a minority “shareholder” in the cultural sphere, and the basic assumption of this model is that cultural projects are financed from private donations and “active” income, which is generated by the institutions themselves. Public funds generally only play a complementary role in supporting culture, although it should be emphasized that the US’s wealth allows it to finance world-renowned institutions such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution. It should also be added that philanthropic and non-profit institutions benefit from an extensive system of tax relief and preferences. Kevin V. Mulcahy (2011) qualifies the American model as libertarian and observes that this model is focused on the profitability of cultural activities and must therefore favour commercial works at the expense of quality cultural works. He questions the possibility of the democratisation of culture, understood as enabling equal access to it regardless of the social status of citizens, and cultural democracy understood as the diversity of cultural works. A feature of the American model is the absence of cultural policy at the federal level of government and thus the lack of a minister responsible for culture. Selected institutions (e.g. the Library of Congress and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) obtain financial support directly from the federal budget, while separate federal agencies, such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services, support the cultural sphere.

Traditionally, the United Kingdom followed the same model of supporting culture as the USA. However, after World War II, Britain established public institutions that would be responsible for patronage in this sphere. In 1940, the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (today called the Arts Council) was established and its tasks and

budget have since been expanded. The Council, supported by public funds and income from lotteries and private donations, was intended to be an institution independent of political power that would be able to undertake long-term activities in the area of investment in culture and to support artistic activity. In the 1970s, a permanent body responsible for culture was created within the established government structures, which currently operates as the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. In contrast to the French approach, the British model of cultural policy is more open to the commercialisation of culture, especially when the Conservative Party are in government. However, public authorities bear a considerable share of responsibility for the patronage of culture. The BBC's mission in the sphere of culture and education also plays a significant role, as do the activities of the British Council outside of the UK (Gierat-Bieroń and Galent, 2005; Pawłowska, 2002).

The German model of cultural policy combines the responsibility of public authorities for the sphere of culture with the decentralisation of management. Pascale Laborier (2011) calls this decentralised and cooperative federalism. The key premise of this policy, which was developed during the occupation of West Germany by the Allies, was a distrust of uniform cultural policy conducted at the federal level. The federalisation – and more broadly the decentralisation of cultural policy – were introduced in order to prevent the return of the totalisation of culture of the Nazi era. States and local authorities thus play a fundamental role in managing and financing culture. For example, in 2005, the federal government spent just over EUR 1 billion on culture, North Rhine-Westphalia spent EUR 1.35 billion, Bavaria spent EUR 993 million, and all the states together spent over EUR 8 billion in total (Laborier, 2011, p. 151).

The German model results in diverse cultural policies and responsibilities within one country. At the same time, in line with German political culture, the practice of horizontal cooperation between the states and the cooperation of the states with federal institutions play an important role. Since 1948, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany has been in operation, which has been instrumental in improving the quality of public activities in this sphere. The Federal Cultural Foundation is an efficient tool to aid cooperation between the states, which, among

other things, supports the purchase of works of art of supra-regional significance. According to the Constitution, the state has exclusive competence in matters of copyright, publishing, and preventing the export of German cultural goods abroad. German legislation introduced cultural preferences in terms of both the artists' status and tax regulations. In 1983, a social security fund for artists (*Künstlersozialkasse*) was established, providing a high guarantee of pension security. German legislation also includes imposing VAT for cultural services and cultural institutions (Koźbiał and Motyczka, 2005). Germany never had a ministry of culture at the federal level, but the importance of this level increased after the reunification of the country and the transfer of the capital to Berlin. As a result, in 1998 a Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and Media was appointed whose responsibilities include supporting national institutions, initiating legislative work, and looking after the interests of German culture on an international level. New institutions, which are financed from federal sources, have been established recently, such as the German Historical Museum and the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Germany also has a well-thought-out form of cultural diplomacy in the form of the Goethe Institute, which has been expanding since the 1970s and is responsible for both teaching the German language and cultural promotion and exchange.

## Cultural policy in Poland after 1989

Public policies introduced in independent Poland after 1989 could not have been shaped at the same time and in the same manner as those in the developed countries of the Western world. The earliest policies were initiated in those areas where the collapse of the socialist state required quick reactions regarding finances, the economy, and fundamental reforms of the state apparatus. Cultural policy slowly gained in importance and became increasingly consolidated at the end of the first decade of independence. According to some researchers, state politics in the first half of the 1990s was dominated by neoliberal doctrine (Modzelewski and Wojciechowski, 2004).

This view seems to be simplified. The legislative and organisational activities of the governments of the time were not based on neoliberal

doctrine but focused on combating the economic crisis and introducing reforms aimed at a free-market economy. Understandably, this meant that other areas were not of immediate interest to politicians, but the sector of public institutions was not destroyed (Gierat-Bieroń, 2009, p. 34). At the same time, actions taken in the cultural sphere at that time were very positive and included, for example, the liquidation of state control over cultural activity, the abolition of censorship, and the liberalisation of the press and the publishing market. Upon regaining independence, important legislative regulations that shaped cultural policy were introduced, including the Act on organizing and conducting cultural activity (1991) and the copyright regulations Act (February 1994), which gave authors legal protection in a free market economy. Two years previously, Parliament passed the Broadcasting Act, giving it a new commercial form. In 1996 and 1997, the Museums Act and the Libraries Act were passed, respectively.

In the new reality after regaining independence, it was obvious that cultural policy concerned with ensuring artistic freedom should be developed (Matyja, 1991). In 1990, under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Art, a document entitled "Premises of an operational programme in the transition period" was published in which it was declared that the notion of "state cultural policy, which had been compromised by decades of ineffective or repeatedly harmful practice, should be restored to its true meaning". The document "Cultural Policy. Assumptions", which was adopted by Hanna Suchocka's cabinet in 1993, can be viewed as the first attempt to formulate a cultural policy. This document indicated the priorities of cultural policy, which were support for the printed word and the protection of cultural heritage. It reveals a growing awareness that there was no alternative to state patronage in Polish society.

The provisions of the new constitution, which was adopted in 1997, confirmed the willingness of the state to take responsibility for the patronage of culture, thus creating a solid framework for cultural policy. According to Article 5 of the Polish Constitution, one of the fundamental objectives of the Republic of Poland is to protect its national heritage. The preamble to the Constitution defines the national community as based on history and culture. It expresses gratitude to Polish ancestors for "our culture rooted in the Christian heritage of the Nation and in universal human values" and obliges contemporary generations to

pass on to future generations “all that is valuable from our over one thousand years of heritage”. Article 6, which was inspired by the eminent film director and Minister of Culture, Kazimierz Dejmek, obliges the Republic to “provide conditions for the people’s equal access to the products of culture which are the source of the Nation’s identity, continuity and development” and to “provide assistance to Poles living abroad to maintain their links with the national cultural heritage”. The insightful commentary to the Constitution observes that placing Article 6 in the chapter on the principles of the Constitution was a conscious decision that raised the value of culture in state politics. The freedom of artistic creation and access to the products of culture obtained the status of constitutionally protected social rights. The constitutional framework justified a broad domain of public policy in the sphere of culture (Safjan and Bosek, 2016, p. 94; Pruszyński, 2002).

At that time, the provisions of the Act of September 1997, which introduced departments of government administration, were of practical importance. According to this Act, the department of culture and national heritage has many aspects and includes support for cultural activities, the protection of national heritage, the dissemination of culture, cultural education, and the promotion of culture.

## The Polish model of cultural policy

Contrary to critical opinion, it can be concluded that after 1989, independent Poland developed its own model of cultural policy, which was the result of well-thought-out actions in many spheres. Public policy in this field is closest to the model adopted in France because of the state’s fundamental responsibility for supporting culture. In Poland, as in France, cultural policy at the state level is the responsibility of a government ministry, which is dedicated solely to this purpose. The multifaceted nature of cultural public policy should be highlighted here, along with its responsibility for the support of contemporary artistic creation and the protection of national heritage. In Poland, this is distinguished from the French experience by the far-reaching decentralisation of the Polish state, which entails the greater responsibility of local authorities for implementing cultural policy.

In Poland, the key premise of this model is that private patronage is unable to match public patronage. This premise is based on the lack of a tradition of strong private patronage in Poland, and the belief in relatively small private capital resources for its citizens. The state and local governments are the owners of the vast majority of cultural institutions in Poland. The Minister of Culture and National Heritage owns 71 state cultural institutions, including 15 institutions that are listed in the register of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and are run jointly with another entity (most often a local government body). Local governments are responsible for 378 local government cultural institutions, including 44 which they co-run with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and which are listed in the register of local government organisers (Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2019).

Statistical data indicate that as much as 80 per cent of expenditure on culture comes from public sources, including over 30 per cent from the budget of local governments (Central Statistical Office, 2016).

Non-governmental cultural initiatives, including the internationally recognised Chopin Festival, the Beethoven Easter Festival, and the Festival Wratislavia Cantans, rely on public subsidies. The proceeds from the state lottery are of lesser importance and can be considered a form of public support. The only large private source of funding for culture is income from television broadcasters and film distributors. Funds at the disposal of the Polish Film Institute (*PISF*) support the domestic film industry and cultural film education. It is worth mentioning that the Polish Film Institute and the mechanisms of financing the film industry were inspired by the French models of support.

It should also be noted that Polish law has not established strong tax incentives for people who are ready to invest large sums of money on supporting cultural activities. These incentives are inadequate, not only in comparison to American regulations but also to the incentives built into the legislation of some European countries, such as Great Britain or Germany. CIT exemptions apply to taxpayers engaged in cultural activity. The law also allows PIT and CIT taxpayers to reduce their tax base according to donations made for cultural purposes within a defined limit. However, there are no tax preferences for donors who allocate large sums to public cultural institutions or private institutions with a public mission.

VAT exemptions and reduced rates are at a modest level in Poland, and their main purpose is to enable public cultural institutions to function without unjustified tax burdens. It is important for artists to be able to benefit from the 50% limit of the tax-deductible costs of creative activity.

The second wave of state decentralisation in 1998 had a fundamental impact on the cultural system and the model of cultural public policy. Decentralisation gave the local governments of communes (*gmina*) and voivodeships competence in the sphere of cultural policy and granted them power over a large number of cultural institutions. According to Elżbieta Malinowska-Misiąg (2016), of all the funds spent by local governments on culture, nearly half are spent by communes (*gmina*) without cities with county (*powiat*) rights, one third by cities with county (*powiat*) rights, and 17 per cent come from voivodeship governments. The share of counties (*powiat*) in the financing of culture is marginal.

It should be mentioned that local governments have become active actors in cultural policy. Their role far exceeds merely running public cultural institutions and the distribution of budgetary resources. Self-governments of cities and voivodeships undertake new investments and cultural initiatives and actively promote Polish culture abroad.

## The originality of Polish cultural policy

In a country such as Poland, which has had to focus its legal and political efforts on adapting to the requirements of its membership in the EU, special attention should be paid to those actions that have been taken on its own initiative without external pressure. In this context, Poland has been an original and driving force in several important spheres of cultural policy.

It is best to start with the forward-thinking investment effort. Since the mid-1990s, Poland has been catching up with the great lag of its cultural infrastructure, which was caused by the partitions and the destruction of war. During the Polish People's Republic only one new museum (the Museum of the Origins of the Polish State in Gniezno) and a few buildings for artistic institutes were built. In the first half of the 1990s, the state budget could only afford to finance a new building to house the National Museum in Poznan. Significant investments, which were

financed from national funds, were undertaken before EU accession, such as the modernisation of the Royal Castle and the reconstruction of the Kubicki Arcades. After EU accession, investment in the cultural sphere became an important priority for several governments, and the Ministry of Culture was well prepared to participate in EU programmes thanks to the establishment of the Department of Cultural Strategy and European Funds in 2004. With the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme, culture was considered a priority, thus creating the opportunity to use European resources to invest in many conservation projects and the construction of new cultural facilities. Poland was the first country among the new EU members that was able to use EU funds for large investment in cultural infrastructure. Although the other Visegrad countries spent a similar share of cohesion policy funds (Poland EUR 1 billion 14 million), Poland managed to implement the greatest number of large investment projects, including the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk, the seat of the Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra in Katowice, the National Forum of Music in Wrocław, and the Copernicus Science Centre.

The effectiveness of Polish cultural policy is also evidenced by the fact that Poland spent the largest share of funds from the Norway Grants and the European Economic Area (EEA) on culture (Inkei, 2019). The decision to finance cultural infrastructure was even more justified because, as a result of war damage, Poland's cultural potential was poor, not only in comparison to Western Europe but also in comparison to other neighbouring countries.

Another area of cultural policy was based on the early establishment of institutions responsible for international cultural exchange. The International Cultural Centre in Krakow, which was planned as an institution primarily serving as a cultural exchange centre for the Visegrad countries, was established as early as in 1990. Undoubtedly, Poland was the first country in the region to develop a foreign cultural policy based on a well-thought-out strategy. As a result of policies that were adopted while the coalition of the Solidarity Electoral Action and the Freedom Union were in power, the number of Polish institutes doubled, the cultural work of embassies and consulates was appreciated, and the budgets of cultural diplomacy increased many times. It was crucial to acknowledge that the main objective of cultural diplomacy was the greatest possible impact

of Polish culture on a wide range of foreign audiences. This was the idea behind the establishment of the Adam Mickiewicz Institute (IAM) in 1999, whose task is to stimulate and coordinate the promotion of Polish culture throughout the world. The IAM, supported by other public cultural institutions (such as the Polish Film Institute and the Polish Theatre Institute), created the potential for Poland to cooperate and promote culture to a European standard on a daily basis, as well as to organise complex international projects (such as Europalia in Brussels in 2001, the Polish exposition at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2000, the dedicated Polish Year in Israel 2008–2009, and the dedicated Polish Year in Great Britain, 2009–2010).

The ambitions and unconventionality of public policy in this area was also reflected in institutional support for alternative culture born far from official cultural life. Initiatives such as the Pogranicze Centre, the Gardzienice Theatre, and the Wierszalin Theatre received permanent support from public authorities, which also enabled their international activity.

The policy of remembrance and the promotion of Polish historical heritage was introduced and gained popularity during the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its proponents hailed the educational and communal dimensions of the policy of remembrance and the potential for the promotion of Polish heritage in Polish foreign policy. This was accompanied by a journalistic campaign of cultural policy programmes, thus giving it a significant dynamic (Kostro and Ujazdowski, 2005).

In 2000, the Minister of Culture initiated the first campaign based on modern instruments evoking the heroism and civic attitudes of the Home Army soldiers (“Heroes of our Freedom”). The next stage of this policy was to create modern history museums. In 2004, the Warsaw Rising Museum was opened, which is the most successful undertaking in this sphere. After 2005, the Museum of Polish History, the European Solidarity Centre in Gdańsk, and the Remembrance and Future Centre in Wrocław were established. Each of these institutions is designed to play both an educational and a promotional role. After 2007, Donald Tusk’s government initiated work on establishing the Museum of the Second World War. All of the above-mentioned institutions are open to the public, with the exception of the Museum of Polish History, which will be opened in 2022. Their message enables the promotion of Polish

historical heritage abroad and Poland's participation in international historical dialogue (Skibiński, Wiścicki, and Wysocki, 2011).

In this context, it is worth mentioning the establishment of the European Network of Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS), which was created in 2005 by the governments of Poland, Germany, Slovakia, and Hungary (later joined by Romania, with Austria, the Czech Republic, Albania, Georgia, and Latvia holding the status of observers). The creation of the ENRS was as a reaction to the conflict of memory that broke out in Central Europe at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was connected with attempts to commemorate the Germans who, after World War II, were displaced from land that became territories belonging to Poland and the USSR because of treaties signed after the war. The greatest outrage was caused by the resolution of the German Bundestag in 1998, which commemorated the fate of the displaced Germans, and the project submitted a little later by German expellees to create an institution commemorating their dramatic experiences. The violent opposition of Poland and other countries of the region were aroused by the rhetoric that was used at that time and which separated cause from effect by focusing, for example, on the suffering of the Germans who lost "their homeland" after the war, whilst ignoring the fact that it was Germany that had instigated this criminal war. After several years of public debate, because of intergovernmental negotiations, an institution was established to support international discourse on the history of Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which serves as an excellent example of international responsibility for the memory of totalitarianism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## A critique of Polish cultural policy

Various aspects of cultural public policy have been the subject of researchers' fierce criticism. Justified criticism includes accusations of not using expert knowledge and the failure to "regularly and consistently monitor the cultural sector on a national level" (Ilczuk and Nowak, 2011, p. 89). It can be assumed that the monitoring of the cultural sector does not generally affect innovation within cultural policy. Ilczuk and Nowak rightly draw attention to neglecting cultural education and the lack of stability of cultural institutions due to annual budgeting. Finally, the

lack of modern legal frameworks for cultural institutions should also be mentioned.

However, it would seem that the accusation that the legislation that governs Polish cultural institutions is outdated is not strongly justified. Although the act on cultural activity and cultural institutions dates back to 1991, it has changed significantly since then. Cultural institutions are equipped with legal personality and the prerequisites of financial autonomy. Before 2015, the model of culture management excluded the direct interference of a founding body in the activities of an institution, on both the government and local government level. The acts on museums and libraries were created in consultation with artists and were well received by those concerned. A serious weakness concerns not so much the general legal formula of the institutions as the failure of trusteeship councils, which were supposed to foster the continuity of cultural policy, improve the quality of management, and encourage the strong participation of civil society in culture. The possibility of appointing trusteeship councils was introduced by the Act on museums, and with time they were to be applied to other cultural institutions. However, the legislator did not equip the trusteeship councils with competences that would ensure a strong impact on the functioning of these institutions. The evaluation of the functioning of these councils is highly unsatisfactory. Two factors seem to be responsible for this situation: a lack of adequate competences and not enough people ready and prepared to perform their duties as council members.

The democratisation of culture is a difficult goal to achieve, and not just in countries that follow liberal political patterns. The French cultural policy researcher, Vincent Dubois (2011), argues that France has failed to meet the objectives of cultural policy, including the requirement to widen access to culture for the less advantaged strata of society. Similarly, after 1989 Poland failed to reduce the significant imbalance in access to culture that is the result of a Polish citizen's financial status and place of residence. This is confirmed by the conclusions of numerous reports on participation in culture and book readership (Koryś and Chymkowski, 2018). One of the reasons for this failure was the establishment of a separate department of culture, the specialisation of cultural policy, and its total dependence on artistic environments. This has resulted in the detachment of cultural policy from the domain of

education, which can be viewed in the context of the “silo” thinking that has afflicted the entire Polish administration. Entrusting cultural policy to a separate minister raises the rank of public policy in this sphere and guarantees a strong position in the state budget, but it also constitutes a structural obstacle to integrated cultural and educational policy.

The risk of arbitrariness in the actions of public authorities in this area must also be addressed. It is crucial to respect the principle of cultural pluralism and the continuity of cultural policy, which prevents biased policies that lead to discrimination against cultural trends that become unwelcome when priorities change. The autonomy of cultural institutions and pluralism has, on occasion, been violated in the last few years. It should be noted, however, that the discretionary nature of cultural policy in Poland is subject to several structural limitations, one of which results from the general decentralisation of cultural institutions, which significantly limits the central government’s ability to impose a uniform cultural policy. The Polish cultural policy model is based on the premise that regional diversity favours the richness of culture. Of equal importance is the corporate factor in cultural policy, which means a strong influence of representatives of cultural environments on decisions in this sphere and the importance of consultation procedures. In Poland, the corporate factor has several institutional dimensions. Patronage is mainly implemented through ministerial programmes with the participation of experts in the management panels of these programmes. In addition, the permanent consultative councils (e.g. the Monument Protection Council or the Museums Council) have a considerable impact on the decisions that are taken. The risk of arbitrariness of cultural policy is limited by the institutes that have been established in recent years, which have taken over some of the competences and tasks of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (such as the National Institute for Museums and Public Collections, the Theatre Institute, the National Heritage Institute, the Fryderyk Chopin Institute, the Book Institute, and the Polish Film Institute).

Some researchers and journalists postulate the total corporatisation of cultural policy and a reduction of the role played by the Minister of Culture and his ministry. The vast majority of his competences would be transferred to non-governmental institutions and agencies, and the role of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage would be radically reduced. However, the weakening of the Minister of Culture, and

specifically his absence as a constitutional member of government, usually leads to the marginalisation of cultural policy itself. A balance between an active role of the minister and the influence of the cultural environment is most desirable, as violation of this balance leads, on the one hand, to the politicisation of the cultural sphere and, on the other, to the total corporatisation of public policy. The French constitutionalist and political scientist, Olivier Duhamel (2016), warned against making politics in this sphere dependent on sectoral egoism (cultural sectors). The minister of culture can effectively care for the various spheres of culture.

## Conclusions

Classic works devoted to public policies discuss their originality and responsiveness, as well as the extent to which policies are shaped by the pressure and negotiation strategies of interest groups. In this context, Jeremy Richardson (2013) wrote about anticipatory and reactive styles. He classified France and Germany as countries with anticipatory styles of public policies: in the French model, the state is the only actor that animates policies, while in the German model a “rational consensus” between public entities and social partners is sought. In Richardson’s typology, Great Britain is a country with a reactive style of public policies; the actions of British public authorities are the result of the expression of interests coming from outside the state. Richardson’s classification can be applied to cultural policy implemented in Poland in recent years, although the conclusions will be ambiguous. Important decisions in this sphere were made under pressure from the outside world, such as regulations on copyright or the status of private and public media. Cooperation with professional circles and social partners was also an indispensable element of cultural policy. What is more important, however, is that in many spheres of Polish cultural policy the anticipatory style dominated, as is evidenced by the formation of cultural diplomacy, the modern policy of remembrance, and stable forms of patronage in the film industry. In these spheres, original institutions that have stood the test of time were also established.

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Marek Rymśa  
University of Warsaw  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8419-8813>

# Family policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** For years, family policy was treated as a specific social policy and as one of the policies that shaped the social sphere of the collective order. What distinguished family policy from other specific social policies was the collective addressee, which was the family unit that included dependent children. In recent decades, this approach has been abandoned in favour of the concept of family policy as horizontal policy, which crosses departmental and sector boundaries and takes into account public programmes that are directed at families and all other activities that have had a real impact on families and been implemented within the various specific policies.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to systematize the debate on family policy by highlighting a number of interrelated threads that facilitate our understanding of the essence of family policy and the direction of its evolution in democratically developed countries and the market economy. These threads include the main approaches to family policy, the controversies that these programmes have raised, the phases of public initiatives that have been implemented within family policy, and the most important arguments in favour of the observed increase in the scale of public programmes related to family issues. The final part of the article outlines the development of family policy in Poland that has occurred since 1989.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** In Poland today, family policy differs from that in most EU15 countries due to the political transformation Poland has undergone

and the fact that family policy was marginalized pre-transformation. The post-transformation period (after 2004) is marked by the rediscovery of family policy, accompanied by the conviction that it is a great driving force for change. A distinguishing feature of Polish society is that there is an overtly strong attachment to traditional family values. This weakens the impact of the progressive trend of directing public activities towards the transformation of the traditional social order, which includes traditional family life patterns.

**Keywords:** best interest of the family, social policy, social order, horizontal policy, social ideologies

## Family policy as an ill-defined set of public initiatives that intensify when the polarization of opinion increases

Family policy is a relatively young field of organized public action. Although the term ‘family policy’ has been used in academic discourse since the 1940s, “the government’s interference in family affairs had a much longer tradition than discussions on family policy” (Račlaw, 2018, p. 192). In the subject literature, family policy gained the status of a separate policy in the 1970s (Skevik, 2010, p. 454). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, family policy is one of the most dynamically developing types of public policy in Europe. At the same time, as a policy that directly affects the social sphere, family policy discourse reveals basic axiological and ideological differences in how social order is viewed (Račlaw, 2018, pp. 216–221).

It may seem that public activities in this area are organized in an irrational way. In a democratic system, public initiatives which should be intensified are those that have gained legitimacy, i.e. their goals and means have been socially and politically agreed on – if not by consensus, then at least by a relatively stable compromise (George and Wilding, 1992, pp. 1–18). At the same time, programmes that lack legitimacy should be the subject of lively debate rather than hasty implementation. Why is this not the case with contemporary family policy (at least in Europe)? Why do policy initiatives intensify whilst controversy surrounding their axionormative foundations continues to grow? This is largely caused by the undefined boundaries of family policy (Skevik, 2010, p. 454) and the differing ways of approaching it, which include viewing it as a separate field of policy, a policy instrument (i.e. a distinct set of measures used to influence collective life), or a policy perspective (i.e. a specific way of perceiving public actions) (Kamerman, 1995, p. 930).

Growing tensions and controversies around family policy also result from the course of political decision-making processes in the late (liquid) modernity of developed countries. It could be argued that achieving agreement or even mutual understanding among opposing parties seems to have ceased to be a goal of democratic public debate. The implementation of specific public action is supposed to legitimize ex

*post* the initial position of an interested entity rather than be a consequence of the general consent that is obtained by an entity prior to the action taking place. The intensity of the claims of groups that have an interest in implementing a given action increasingly replace the strength of substantive argumentation (with reasoned explanations as to why it is worthwhile to intervene by performing one public action and not another) and the strength of the political mandate resulting from a permanent majority of votes “in favour of” undertaking a given action (Zybała, 2012, pp. 77–98). Well-organized interest groups try to claim that their chosen public actions have no alternatives. Ultimately, if these actions are taken in response to such claims, this serves to prove that the claims are right.

The impact of the claims of interest groups on the shape of family policy has been strengthened by the progressing processes of individualization (Bauman, 2006) and the consumerization (Barber, 2008) of social life. The collective activity of citizens that is oriented towards the common good and results from rational public debate (for example, a social order that includes the family is viewed as a common good) has been displaced by the manifestation of particular consumer needs and preferences. It could be claimed that in welfare states of the late modern era the ability of the general public to agree on the legitimacy of the claims of particular interest groups and their vision of collective order disappears

In this situation, the strategy used to organize public actions from the bottom up is to push one’s own ideas as soon as there is “a window of opportunity” in which to do so. Subject literature sometimes describes limiting the decision-making power of elected political bodies in favour of the power of interested groups that are busy formulating their claims in order to realize deliberative democracy (Zybała, 2012, pp. 90–104). However, it is difficult to talk about the real dissemination of this form of direct democracy, as the conditions that are necessary for these deliberative instruments to be effective include having the ability to agree on certain solutions, which allows all citizens to participate in decision-making regarding public matters, and liquid modern societies lack this ability (Bauman, 2006). The distribution of influence on public decision-making among citizens is highly uneven; some groups’ interests and visions of collective order are realized, while others are marginalized, depending on the temporary distribution of power, their ability to influence public

opinion, and their ability to obtain external resources and mobilize their own resources.

As a result, the public initiatives that are implemented often turn out to be fragmented and inconsistent, and their effects sometimes cancel each other out. Therefore, family policy implemented by European countries in the 21<sup>st</sup> century ceases to be a unifying force for social cohesion. Family policy is unable to create institutional bonds of a universal character, and at the same time, it ceases to strengthen social bonds of a personalized character. It increasingly reflects (and sometimes even reinforces) social divisions. As is the case with other areas of public policy, in family policy a basic division is drawn between two differing visions of social order: the conservative and the progressive.

In the presence of strong axionormative polarization, the family policy actions of the state have intensified. The scale of pro-family transfers in social security systems is increasing, the number of available solutions which allow people to combine professional activity with fulfilling, caring roles in the family is increasing, and the number of services and other facilities for families with children is also increasing. On the other hand, it is no longer clear what the family itself is and what social functions it fulfils (Firlit-Fesnak, 2018, pp. 214–216): Does marriage (together with parenthood) remain the foundation of the family as an institution (Balcerzak-Paradowska, 2004, pp 26–37)? Does family life belong to the private or the public sphere (Kwak, 2015, pp. 67–71)? Is the family more of a productive (service) unit or a consumer unit (Kammerman, 1995, p. 933)? Should the state support or control the family (Cunningham, 2010)? Should family policy result in the strengthening of family ties or perhaps in the defamilization of social relationships (Raclaw, 2018, pp. 207–209)?

Despite the ambiguities and discrepancies that affect the imponderables of the social order, it is possible to reconstruct several generally shared (at least on a European scale) family policy objectives that have directed the public actions implemented in other countries. These include (1) the replacement of insurance family benefits and caring family benefits with general provision benefits financed directly from the state budget (Dumon, 1994); (2) promoting the equal rights and obligations of both women and men in the family and stipulating their equal opportunities in undertaking various activities in the public sphere,

including in the labour market (Raclaw, 2018, pp. 207–209); (3) striving to make it easier for parents to combine their professional careers and family life, especially with regards to childcare (e.g. work–family balance or family-friendly employment) (Balcerzak-Paradowska, 2004, p. 194); (4) orientation towards the best interests of children in the activities of public services that involve interference in family life (Arczewska, 2017).

## The evolution of family policy in developed countries

For years, family policy was treated as a specific social policy, and as one of the policies that shapes the social sphere of the collective order. Traditionally, the set of activities that constituted family policy was distinguished from other types of public activities, including economic policy (which was defined as a set of organized public interventions that shaped the economic sphere). In this approach, family policy had the same objectives as other specific social policies, such as social policy, disability policy, housing policy, etc. Primarily, this was to counteract poverty and guarantee social security for all citizens in order to encourage the regeneration of the intergenerational population (Golinowska, 2000, p. 109). Some researchers exclude demographics from family policy and assign the demographic factor to population policy (Hrynkiwicz and Szukalski, 2018, p. 190). What distinguished family policy from other specific social policies was not its specific goals or tools but the collective addressee, which was the family unit that included dependent children (Skevik, 2010, p. 454).

As a branch of social policy, family policy covered numerous pro-family solutions both within the social security system and in the organization of the labour market. The welfare state, which in Western Europe is the final product of policies that are aimed at solving social issues, was clearly pro-family and legitimized the nuclear family life model based on the premise of strong parental roles (associated with parental responsibilities) and the traditional division of roles within marriage (the husband as breadwinner, the wife as housewife, whether she is professionally active or not). These roles were protected in family laws that, together with civil laws, a labour code, and social legislation, constitute the four pillars of

the social order that is ingrained in the idea of a welfare state. This order, called the bourgeois order (Berger and Berger, 1983, pp. 3–21), dominated Western Europe and the United States until the turn of the 1970s, when bourgeois life patterns were challenged by protest movements.

The perception of family policy as an autonomous tool for solving social issues in the 1970s coincided with the recognition of the need for investment in human capital in the social sciences, especially from the point of view of economics (Golinowska, 1994, pp. 116–130). Attempts to counteract poverty – which was recognized as a key social problem – were then extended to include calls to improve citizens' quality of life, which was a positive formula for decision-making in public activities.

An important moment in the emancipation of family policy took place in the 1970s when Sheila B. Kamerman introduced the distinction between explicit and implicit family policy (Kamerman, 1995). The former is a set of public actions and programmes that were addressed directly to families in order to shape their economic, social, financial, and formal-legal situation; the latter is manifested in the implementation of public programmes that affected families unintentionally. For Kamerman, an example of implicit family policy was tax policy, but understood in a broader sense than its strictly fiscal activities.

According to Kamerman, in order to assess the state's impact on families, it is necessary to take into account public programmes that are directed at families and all other activities that are implemented within the various specific policies or have a real impact. This approach favoured a move away from treating family policy as sector-specific policy (an area of social policy), towards a concept of horizontal policy which crosses departmental and sector boundaries. The very fact that this approach covered the effects of implicit solutions on the family meant that it was conducive to expanding the instruments of explicit family policy that were based on co-opting activities from other public policies. Even if those other public policies continued to exert an indirect impact on families, the point was to make sure that this impact was positive. Hence, this type of solution was included in the programme portfolio of horizontal family policies.

The horizontal approach to family policy resembles the public management state programme that was developed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, within which it is postulated to move away from the silo approach in which each

department deals with its tasks in isolation from other departments. The scope of family policy is expanding, and its content is increasingly being defined by the ability of experts who create policy, or politicians who, as decision makers, attempt to predict the impact of various solutions on the family.

Recognition of the importance of investment in human capital brought about yet another significant change in the programming of family policy, thanks to which “modern family policy emphasizes the qualitative aspect of family development as the primary place for shaping a person’s personality and value systems” (Golinowska, 2000, p. 109). This is an expression of the state’s agentive approach to the family, in which the family has priority in bringing up children, is a co-producer of the collective order and the “social substance” itself, and has the right to protection and support, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 1997 (Article 18; 71).

The contemporary perception of foster care can serve as an example of how the state’s approach to the family has been reoriented towards its empowerment. At present, family care is not only favoured over institutional solutions, but the foster family itself is considered as a service for the child and his biological family. Thus, the foster family ceases to be a client of the support system and becomes its constituent element. In such a system, one family supports another, and the role of the state is largely one of mediation and coordination.

The development of horizontal family policy led to controversial debates concerning the best interests of the family as an objective of the state’s intervention, as well as around the perception of family life and even definitions of the family itself (Gillespie, 2010). This was as a direct result of the protest movements of the late 1960s, which criticized bourgeois culture and its institutions, including the nuclear family as an entity that, through upbringing and socialization, consolidated post-Victorian social role models. The protests were not homogeneous, as they included clearly defined ideologies such as, for example, feminism, which criticized the family as an institution of patriarchy, and proponents of the emancipation of sexual minorities, which promoted lifestyles that were alternative to the traditional family model (Slany, 2008). Despite ideological differences, the protesters shared the view that the family was not an addressee of the state’s protection and public support, but

“the family has become a problem” (Berger and Berger, 1983, p. 3). The defenders of traditional family life patterns united to counteract their multidimensional criticism.

In the 1980s, Brigitte Berger and Peter Berger described the growing ideological dispute regarding family life patterns and the attitude of the state to the family as the “battle over the family”, which was waged between progressives and conservatives. As a means to overcome polarization and to develop a rational, non-ideologized family policy which was seen as capturing the middle ground, the Bergers suggested narrowing the programme of family policy by excluding worldview disputes from its scope (which destroyed family policy from the inside) and by not implementing any initiatives that went beyond family policy. In their opinion, family policy should *ex definitione* serve families since all state actions should serve citizens and their communities. At the same time, they expressed the conviction that the social order should be based on the nuclear family as a triad: father–mother–child (Berger and Berger, 1983, pp. 187–193).

The progressive approach did not accept this narrowing; in the 1990s, their programme evolved towards recognizing lifestyles that are alternative to the traditional family model as “non-normative family models”. Progressives considered family policy itself as a tool to promote a new approach to the family. In this approach, family policy can and even should offer instruments that directly support families, as long as support also covers “non-normative” families, which the state should treat agentively. Traditional patterns of family life should be subject to a pro-equality adjustment. The conservative approach unequivocally advocated the state’s active support for families defined as a mother–father–children triad, and the desire to preserve traditional family roles that differentiate between male and female duties.

Thus, the cause of disagreement between progressives and conservatives is the pattern of family life (now also the definition of the family itself) and not the instrument that the state uses to support the family. Rather than being pragmatic, this dispute is therefore of a worldview or even civilizational nature. With ideological polarization in Europe, three approaches to family policy programming are crystallizing. According to the first, family policy should protect the traditional vision of the family as a father–mother–children triad, which is a civilizational achievement

and the foundation of the collective order. The family as a basic social unit should be supported and protected by the state, especially in times that have witnessed the atrophy of social bonds (Zych, Dobrowolska and Szczypiński, ed., 2016). According to the second approach, family policy should protect family life and support the family, but it should be flexible and adaptable to changes in customs and family life patterns (Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Szukalski, ed., 2004). Within this approach, the state's role is not to 'create' cultural changes but to accept them *ex post*. Within the third approach, it is believed that the purpose of family policy is to trigger and accelerate cultural change by actively supporting emancipatory movements (Woodwareth, 2010). Proponents of these three approaches are only partly able to agree on the instruments to be used within family policy, which makes it difficult to talk about one family policy rather than acknowledging various family policies.

In the 1990s, demographics entered the discourse on family policies, which indicated the importance of the ageing of European societies. Starting from the theory of the second demographic transition, which linked fertility decline with an increase in wealth (Slany, 2008), it was observed that the social security system is a significant mediating factor whose availability increases average life expectancy in general, and life expectancy after reaching retirement age specifically.

This causes an increasing burden on social security systems that have to provide retirement benefits (Thurow, 2013). The increase in the share of elderly people in the population led to the crystallization of a new public policy in Europe, known as senior policy, which is treated as a new horizontal policy and is not merely reducible to a section of family policy (Szatur-Jaworska, 2017, pp. 93–101).

It was also noticed that the extensive social security system is conducive to a decline in fertility rates and it would appear that the creation of human capital in families is subject to economic calculations (Becker, 1997). In a consumerist society in which care for the elderly is provided by the state, children cease to be seen as an investment for their parents' future, but rather become more of a parents' personal expense. As a response to this realization, social security systems began to increase the scale of benefits addressed to families with dependent children in order to mitigate declining procreation. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, provision benefits that are addressed to all families and children are definitely on

the increase. Thus, a new segment is emerging in the social security system, i.e. family support. At the same time, a side effect of this type of policy is the emergence of a new social problem, i.e. growing and poorly controlled migration to European welfare states. Pro-family social benefits do not seem attractive enough to change the consumerist attitudes of members of developed societies, but (Peterson and Rom, 1990) they attract families with children from poorer countries because they act as a social magnet. This was definitely not the aim of the pro-family adjustment of European social security systems.

## Ideological positions and related trends in family policy

Diverse approaches to family policy are easier to understand if we bear in mind that they reflect general trends in public policy programming. Researchers classify these trends in different ways (Schröder, 2013, pp. 31–57). The greatest explanatory power lies in connecting the concept of public policy programming with social ideologies, the most important of which are liberal, conservative, and socialist (as the ideology of social democracy) (Rymysza, 2000). This tripartite typology of ideological trends in family policy relates directly to the characteristics of the three worlds of welfare capitalism described by Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990) and the classical typology of social policy models provided by Richard Titmuss (1974).

In the classical liberal (free-market) approach, the family is considered the basic institution of social order and a natural market corrector of the allocation of goods, whose order-creating and binding force is not mediated by the state (Berger and Berger, 1983). By intervening in collective life, the state can weaken the family by taking over its functions. Therefore, family programmes should be limited to providing a minimum amount of disposable income. The most popular instrument of social transfer used by liberals is social assistance, since the application of an income test in the selection of those eligible for support allows the scale of redistribution to be limited. It is even better when redistribution is conducted through the activities of charity organizations; it is then voluntary for both donors and the beneficiaries. Extensive pro-family social transfers reduce the

productivity of family members in the marketplace (the effect of demotivation is an unwillingness to seek gainful employment); it also reduces the autonomy of the family unit (social programmes not only provide support but are also a form of administrative control). Moreover, liberals argue that the state's intervention in collective life, which includes interventions undertaken within family policy, is often counterproductive (Murray, 1994). In classical liberal terms, marginal policy is the optimal family policy, as is the case with all public policies (Titmuss, 1974).

Contemporary liberal thought, however, is moving away from the free-market canon towards a trend that can be labelled as cultural liberalism. It extends individual freedom to "the right to choose their family unit type" (Firlit and Fesnak, 2018, p. 224). This approach brings the position of the neoliberals closer to the postulate of the defamilization of collective life which is advocated by the new left.

In the conservative vision of social order, solidarity and social cohesion occupy a key place (Baldwin, 1990). The state's social programmes are intended to counteract the atrophy of social ties (including family ties), providing each member of the political community with a sense of belonging and social rootedness. At the same time, the assistance that is provided by public services cannot replace the role of the family or civil society actors but should be of a subsidiary nature. The conservative approach to the state's support for the family differs from other approaches in advocating a Christian vision of family life which endorses the social teachings of the Church and emphasizes the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity, (van Kersbergen and Manow, ed., 2009). Family policy is a decentralized and socialized policy in which local governments, non-profit organizations, and the charitable activity of churches and religious associations play a significant role.

In the conservative approach, it is assumed that the solutions introduced will be permanent. Therefore, pro-family solutions are extensively implemented in the highly stable social security system, in which not only employees but also their dependent family members are protected against the effects of social risks (by means of indirect social benefits) (Clasen, 1994). Conservative social policy that is designed to protect the family is referred to as an industrial achievement-performance model (Titmuss, 1974), since much social protection is derived from employment.

In the social-democratic approach, family policy is aimed at equalizing the living standards of families through social money transfers and making goods and services available to citizens outside of the market (the decommodification principle). Thus, this approach is called institutional and redistributive (Titmuss, 1974). At the same time, family policy aims to eliminate inequalities in status within the family by strengthening the position of women in relation to men (Woodward, 2010) and children in relation to parents (the issue of children's interests begins to be considered as separate to those of the family). Understood in this way, family policy becomes part of equality policy as a horizontal megapolicy covering all areas of social life (Raclaw, 2018, p. 200). Ultimately, state intervention aims at the best interests of individuals in the family rather than the best interests of the family as a whole.

The social-democratic approach is also characterized by the desire to use tools that can be considered axiologically neutral to support the family (or rather individual family members). In practice, this involves softening and broadening the definition of the family whilst at the same time striving to make an individual's right to social support independent of their marital status. One can say that the social-democratic welfare state is being defamilized here (Esping-Andersen, 1999).

All three ideological approaches are actively present in public debate and in the world of politics. The differences between them highlight and ideologically embed the three areas of controversy and the dilemmas of choice in programming family policy:

- Whether to limit the state's intervention (the classical liberal trend) or to increase it (the social democratic trend); the conservative trend is ambivalent here and places more emphasis on the nature of state intervention than on its scale;
- Whether to support the autonomy of the family (an agentic approach that is present in the conservative trend) or to intervene in the family in a pro-egalitarian manner (the approach advocated in the social democratic trend); the liberal trend is internally divided on this issue;
- Whether to support family cohesion (the conservative trend) or individualization and individual choice in the sphere of family life (the contemporary liberal trend); the social-democratic trend favours diversity and individualization, but only if this

marginalizes patriarchal patterns of family life and promotes egalitarianism.

Family policy in Europe evolved from the domination of the classical liberal trend (with a preference for a marginal role of family policy), through the popularization of conservative views (supporting the family through explicit and implicit solutions), to the spread of the social democratic approach (family policy as an element of horizontal equality policy). The model of extensive horizontal family policy which dominated in the last quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a joint undertaking of the conservative (supporting family cohesion) and social-democratic (large-scale, pro-family transfers) parties. Current progressive changes regarding family policy which intensified in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in many Western European countries are supported by the social-democratic alliance. The new left is less interested in economic egalitarianism and more in promoting the emancipatory aspirations of cultural minorities, which is supported by some neoliberals.

## Family policy in Poland after 1989

The origins of family policy in Poland reach back to the communist era. Post-war socialist family law was generally family friendly, and the regulations of the Family and Guardianship Code are still applied today (with adaptations). The dynamic development of family policy instruments which took place in Western European countries in the 1970s also influenced Poland. In the period of “consumption on credit” under Edward Gierek, pro-family social solutions were introduced, including a general family allowance that was paid by the Social Insurance Institution. This benefit was available for every minor. Considered the legacy of socialist social policy, the pro-family instruments of state policy were limited in the first years of the political transformation. For people and families who were unable to cope with the new reality, a social assistance system was established in 1991 which used the income criterion to select those eligible for support, mainly in order to limit redistribution. After 1994, this system covered a number of former provision benefits, including family benefits. Income tax changes included the introduction of joint taxation for married couples in 1991, which was beneficial for families.

This was extended to include the right to joint taxation for a parent and a child in single-parent families. In 1999, within the framework of four social reforms, county (*powiatowe*) family assistance centres were established, and non-contributory periods in the length of service that are calculated when determining pension rights were abolished, which was definitely unfavourable for parents bringing up disabled children requiring 24-hour care. To sum up, the decade of political transformations (1990–2000) was characterized by ambivalence in the state's approach to the family, but the overall balance of family policy from this period is negative (Rymsza, 2016). As a branch of social policy (rather than being seen as a tool of social investment), family policy focused on protective measures for families which had 'lost out' as a result of economic reforms.

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Poland's politics focused on accession to the European Union, including meeting the accession requirements and, after 2004, introducing EU priorities into national politics. This resulted in the inclusion of the work-family balance in state policy, the introduction of a one-off new-born child allowance (after the birth of a child), as well as the implementation of solutions aimed at combating domestic violence. However, family policy remained outside the interest of mainstream public actions.

The next decade was a period of a slowly increasing interest in family policy. During the period of the PO-PSL (Civic Platform – Polish People's Party) coalition (2007–2015), support for families in difficult situations was introduced in the form of the provision of community care assistants, small tax exemptions for parents, the Large Family Card, and the prolongation of paid maternity leave (which was transformed into parental leave). To a large extent, this was a result of the advocacy activities of pro-family organizations, especially the Large Family 3 Plus Association. However, family policy was still not of a horizontal nature, as responsibility for its implementation fell within the scope of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

The breakthrough moment in the development of family policy in Poland happened with the implementation of the "Family 500+" programme by the Law and Justice Party (PiS) in 2016. The impact of this programme on family policy was initially associated with its hybrid character (Rymsza, 2018). The 500+ benefit allowance (of 500PLN per

month) paid for the first child in the family was a selective benefit (it was available after meeting a set income criterion), while for the second and each subsequent child in the family it was a universal benefit. The scale of redistribution within the “Family 500+” programme determined the reorientation of the principles of programming public policies away from limiting the scale of expenditures towards the social investment policy, and from preferences for selective measures and towards the universality of support. At the same time, with strong political polarization, its hybridity made the programme hard to criticize; whilst it could be criticized for not being universal, it could also be criticized for not being selective enough. In 2019, the income criterion was abolished and was replaced by the provision programme, in which the state contributes to the costs of raising children, who are treated as the public good. Therefore, the programme should be considered primarily as an instrument of family policy (understood as a social investment policy), and not as a tool for counteracting poverty or determining procreation decisions (Rymsza, 2018).

The “Family 500+ programme” has become the “flagship” programme of family policy in Poland and has since been augmented by other programmes with a “plus” in their name. Some of these can be assessed positively, such as Maluch Plus (*Early Child Plus*) or Senior Plus; in others, such as the Mieszkanie Plus (*Flat Plus*), the “plus” in the name has no justification. Nevertheless, family policy in Poland has moved towards horizontal policy, and the change of ministry from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy reflects a real change in the programming of public actions in relation to the family.

At the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the situation in Poland is different to that of most of the “old” EU countries due to its specific development trajectory, which includes the country’s political transformation, during which family policy was marginalized. Another distinguishing feature is a clearly strong attachment of Polish society to traditional family values, which translates into weakening the impact of the progressive trend in the programming of public actions aimed at the transformation of the social order, including family life patterns. The most visible sign of changing family life patterns in Poland is the rise in cohabitation (Slany, 2008), although this remains within the parameters

of Bergers' man–woman–child triad. As a result, the post-transformation period in Poland (initiated by accession to the EU) is marked by the rediscovery of family policy, which is accompanied by the belief that it is a great driving force. However, this may be a temporary state as, with time, the progressive trend may become more widespread in Poland.

Will there be a heated confrontation between the progressives and the conservatives regarding family policy in Poland? This issue is still very debatable. Such a confrontation could lead to the accepted norms concerning the family that are embedded within the Constitution and the Family and Guardianship Code being questioned. The polarization of the political scene might be conducive to this, but it is possible that due to the strong pro-family orientation of Polish society, effective measures will be taken to develop a version of the Berger policy that would capture the middle ground. This would have to be a response to the on-going civilizational processes that are characteristic of "liquid" late modernity, such as the individualization of lifestyles and the commodification of social relationships, both of which translate into the differentiation of family life patterns. However, the imponderables of the social order, in which the family (based on marriage and parenthood) remains a permanent institution of social life, would be preserved.

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Tomasz Geodecki  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7028-0162>

# Innovation policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Innovation policy involves supporting the transfer of scientific and technical knowledge to market applications by providing adequate resources (e.g. capital) and knowledge (e.g. managerial knowledge). This policy is based on two assumptions: that the ability to be competitive depends on which economic structures, institutions, and values dominate in a given organization, and that innovation is not a universal feature but is closely linked to innovation culture and the state structures that support it.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of this article is to present the evolution of innovation policy, which is designed to support innovation within the economy, to explore the tools that are used in implementation of this policy, and to analyse and evaluate the achievements of the innovation system in building a knowledge-based economy in Poland.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Poland has fast productivity growth and a relatively good institutional environment, which is strengthened by the fact that it is an EU member. However, expenditure on innovation activity is at an unsatisfactory level and the results in the form of granted patents prove its lack of effectiveness, although expenditure on innovation activity in Poland is growing more quickly than in the original 12 EU countries. The main deficits of the Polish innovation system are the separation of the main actors of innovation (enterprises, universities, the administration), which leads to low indicators of innovation cooperation and

public-private joint ventures, as well as the relatively low responsiveness of institutions to the needs of entrepreneurs.

**Keywords:** economy innovation, enterprise innovation, economic growth, knowledge-based economy

## Technical progress as a driving force for economic growth and development

The first in-depth study in which the role of innovation in qualitative industrial change was investigated was Joseph Schumpeter's *Theory of Economic Development* (1960). In 1912, he described a mechanism of "creative destruction" that was caused by breakthrough innovations (e.g. the railway destroyed the market for mail stagecoaches but enabled the creation of new economic structures). Innovators are those entrepreneurs who have the ideas and energy that allow them to gain the capital and instigate production of new products or services. Their success eliminates those companies that are unable to adapt to the new reality from the market; it also attracts followers, and as a result new methods of production become commonplace in the industry in which they operate. Monopoly profit is a reward for being able to do something better than your competitors. Schumpeter points out that large monopoly companies became a powerful source of technological improvement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and stresses the role of the cultural foundations of capitalism, which highlights the importance of material success. It is the culture and the institutions of capitalism that transform inventions into products; without the perspective of profit, these inventions would not be utilised.

Robert Solow, whose model of growth dominated the domain of development processes for three decades, contributed to the recognition of the significance of innovation for economic growth. In 1957, he calculated that technological changes were the source of half of the 3% average annual growth of the US economy in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Why and how entrepreneurs introduce innovations were questions that went beyond the scope of interest of economic policy at the time. It was thought that the state has no influence on the long-term growth rate when the level of investment is determined by market forces. As a result, developing countries would have a good chance of catching up with developed economies in terms of production output levels per worker, in line with the assumption that the return on investment should be higher in relation to the relative scarcity of capital. The inconsistency of this conclusion, which was evident after even superficial observation, has become an important criticism of Solow's model. In 1986, Paul M. Romer published an article in which he rejected the assumption of

decreasing marginal productivity of capital and outlined the mechanisms for spreading technical knowledge (competitors observe the innovator) and learning by doing (adopting a hands on approach to learning) (Romer, 1986). These mechanisms can make the revenues from additional capital disproportionate for the economy. Rich economies that invest in knowledge are able to develop faster than poorer countries that cannot afford the investment. Therefore, support for entrepreneurs in investing in research and development (R&D) and human capital results in the positive outcome of a stable acceleration of economic growth.

In the mainstream economy, this was used to undermine the belief that there is an inevitable shift to achieve the equilibrium of GDP levels. However, it was acknowledged that technology transfer could help less developed economies catch up with the technology peloton. For example, the model proposed by Robert Barro and Xavier Sala-i-Martin (1997) assumes that as actors in the developing economy face a shrinking pool of cheap foreign technologies to copy, they are increasingly motivated to use their own solutions, and the cost of innovation in relation to the cost of imitation increases. Catching up with the leaders is followed by an increase in R&D expenditure. Of course, institutions that favour investment in knowledge and competences are important here, as the rate of knowledge accumulation should be higher than the global progress rate, but the transition to innovation development seems to be a natural consequence of the development of enterprises.

## Competitiveness and the institutional determinants of innovation

The debate about the role of innovation and technological progress owes a lot to the development of competitiveness theories. This category initially referred to the ability to sell on the international market (Geodecki, 2016). Nicholas Kaldor (1978) observed that this ability was not linked with low prices, since in the post-war period the growing exports of developed economies were accompanied by increasingly higher relative prices and wages. It is difficult to explain this phenomenon without taking into account the factor that allows sales to increase despite rising costs. According to Jan Fagerberg (1996), this is a qualitative

advantage resulting from technological progress. Increasing productivity makes it possible to raise both wages and market shares. The search for factors of this competitiveness prompted Michael Porter (2001) to conclude that the comparative cost theory that determines a country's specialisation in international trade is incomplete. This does not account for the fact that the most important production factors today, i.e. skilled human resources and scientific achievements, are not inherited but created. They decapitalise quickly and have to be constantly reproduced; therefore, they require substantial investment. In the end, the only way to maintain a competitive advantage is to raise productivity levels by manufacturing more and more sophisticated products using increasingly efficient technological processes. Since this competitive ability depends on the dominant economic structures, institutions, values, and history, innovation is not a universal feature but depends strongly on innovation culture and state structures.

## The systemic nature of innovation

Interest in the institutional environment of innovation increased with the development of the evolutionary organization theory. Acquired routines that play a similar role as genes in the theory of evolution are the key determinants of entrepreneurial activity. Their mutations, i.e. innovations, are changes in routines within various aspects of the operation of an organization. The more often they happen, the more favourable the environment is to them. In the economy, the equivalent of the environment is the innovation system, which consists, according to Bengta-Åke Lundvall (1992), of elements and relationships that interact in the production, diffusion, and application of new, economically useful knowledge. The elements that comprise the system are enterprises, research units, public administration, and educational institutions.

“Varieties of capitalism” is an important trend that includes institutional analysis in the evaluation of technological development. This was proposed in 2001 by David Hall and Peter Soskice, who argued that a national institutional framework would determine the international patterns of specialization and the advantages of economies in manufacturing certain products. They distinguished two main types of market

economies that depend on the dominant model of building relationships with the environment: liberal and coordinated (Hall and Soskice, 2001). For example, in Germany, which has a typically coordinated economy, companies are associated in the chambers of industry and commerce, which offers them an opportunity to educate their employees together, learn from one another, and expand into foreign markets. In addition, agreeing on and influencing the shape of regulations which are to apply to individual markets in Berlin (and nowadays increasingly in Brussels) enables entrepreneurs to plan the necessary investments and directions of development for their businesses.

## Innovation in developing countries

The study of development economics has become interested in the “national productive capabilities”. They are based on the assumption of the necessity for a strong state that protects developing industries and controls the flow of capital, and of the need for an industrial policy that is aimed at changing the economic structure. The international division of labour is considered unfavourable to developing countries when their only advantage is in the export of raw materials, low-tech unprocessed products, and low added value. Erik M. Reinert (2007) argues that this is the result of over 200 years of technological leadership of developed countries. Many researchers claim that the process of economic development is a story of companies’ and governments’ efforts to overcome specialisation linked to the abundance of non-knowledge-based production factors (e.g. cheap labour).

In the 1950s, there were calls for the development of the manufacturing industry, as it was acknowledged that this industry had a positive impact on production in other sectors. This led to development being equated with industrialization, which draws political interest groups into development coalitions and enables the achievement of social goals. However, creating a competitive industry in a given country requires temporary protection against foreign competition. The assumption of an inward-oriented development strategy found practical expression in the policy of import substitution industrialisation that was implemented in Latin America until the 1980s. Paul Krugman attributed the failure of this strategy to markets

being too small to achieve returns to scale (Krugman and Obstfeld, 2007), while Celso Furtado (1976) attributed this failure to control of the flow of technology, which serves to maintain the dominance of the countries at the world's centre over those on the periphery.

In the 1990s, Asian countries (e.g. China, Korea, Taiwan) focused on restricting the opening of their economies to international exchange; instead, they focused on the independent development of technological competence based less on foreign investment than was the case in Latin America (Amsden, 2001). In the process of technology acquisition, domestic companies were supported by the state, as knowledge that generates economic benefits is closely guarded by international corporations. Development success was achieved by those countries that – having gained their first technological competences – quickly and aggressively focused on the development of the latest technologies (especially electronics). Jan Fagerberg and Manuel Godinho (2004) observe that in Japan and Korea this was facilitated by the creation of large national industrial conglomerates that closely cooperated with public administrations. A reciprocity mechanism was applied: the state gives support and protection and expects a rapid increase in added value in return (Amsden, 2001).

## Innovative development in the globalised world

Globalisation has brought new hopes of a technological leap forward for developing countries. The idea of global value chains is an important trend in globalisation research. Immanuel Wallerstein's world-systems theory emphasizes the continuous reproduction of the unequal exchange that results from the division of labour between the world's core and the periphery that emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. More optimistic followers of Gary Gereffi analyse the likelihood of industrial upgrading made by participants of the chain, i.e. the transition to such functions in the value chain that create greater added value and are usually related to the use of knowledge-based resources. The inflow of foreign investment to countries with low labour costs offers a chance for 'point' industrialisation and the development of technological competences in a given phase of production (in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was necessary to build whole

industries for this purpose, which was a greater challenge). However, this may be unfavourable from the point of view of developing technological competences. The first and last links in the global value chain – which is those that generate the greatest added value, such as R&D, design, or customer service – often remain in the country where the parent company is based. Production phases are located in developing countries, generating little revenue and excluding them from participating in the global technology race. Additionally, the final products bear the brand name of the company that organises the production network and decides on the distribution of profits (Bair, 2005; Baldwin, 2006; Milberg and Winkler, 2013).

Thus, the market mechanism pushes poorer countries toward the path of exploiting their advantage of cheap labour and raw materials. Without a strategic approach to shaping a modern economic structure, weak national entities will not be able to develop their own technological competencies and will never launch brands that will become well known. Moreover, faced with rising labour costs, international corporations will find cheaper subcontractors for the labour-intensive production phases in other locations. This is called the middle-income trap that is set for those economies that have not managed to move from competition based on cheap labour to competition based on technological and managerial competences (Gill and Kharas, 2007). Observing China's path of development, which also faced this challenge, one can say that decision-makers in the Middle Kingdom took this threat seriously.

## From science policy to innovation policy and the renaissance of industrial policy

From the above review of theoretical concepts, we gain insight into the evolution of the relationship between innovation and economic growth. Innovation policy belongs to a set of public policies that aim to strengthen the qualitative aspect of economic growth. Earlier categories of policy, including science policy and technology policy, are closely linked to this, which is why the acronym 'STI policy', i.e. policy relating to science, technology, and innovation, is sometimes used. The emergence of contemporary innovation policy did not happen due to a clear paradigm shift

but because of a shift in emphases and a broader view of the economic, social, and cultural determinants of technical change.

The aim of science policy is to provide the financial resources necessary for research and knowledge gathering. Knowledge, which is a public good, does not guarantee the return on investment that is needed to acquire it and can be used by an innovator's competitors. However, as it is widely available, knowledge also serves to inspire other innovators and inventors in unforeseen ways. To counteract underinvestment in science, public authorities subsidize R&D expenditure of enterprises, establish public institutions that produce scientific knowledge, and protect intellectual property.

However, acceleration of economic growth is not due to having a leading position in the world of science. Rather, it is enabled by the effective application of science in the economy. Since the 1960s, science policy has moved closer to industrial policy, and technological transfer from laboratories to the production sphere has become the focus. The aim of such understood technological policy is to apply scientific knowledge to the development of technology in order to accelerate technical change (Isaksen and Remøe, 2001). Mission-oriented policy is focused on selected technologies, while diffusion-oriented policy is its opposite.

Innovation policy does not eliminate the objectives and tools of previous generations of STI policies, but rather it incorporates them. The aim is to support the transfer of scientific and technical knowledge to market applications by providing complementary resources (e.g. capital) and knowledge (e.g. managerial knowledge), thus ensuring a healthy business climate and the protection of intellectual property. This is targeted at supporting enterprises and aims to help them introduce innovations, i.e. new production processes, products, services, and management techniques (Geodecki and Bajak, 2014; Edler and Fagerberg, 2017).

In the last decade, contemporary innovation policy has moved closer to industrial policy once again. Its renaissance is largely as a response to the economic crisis and the requirement to protect production and employment and support the real economy, which stems from an unprecedented decision to support the financial sector. Researchers observe that many of the breakthrough technologies developed in the last half-century came about as a result of public administration. Private capital joined the development of the internet, cellular networks, and

biotechnology only after the “entrepreneurial state” (Mazzucato, 2013) had already financed the risky basic research.

To sum up the evolution of innovation policy, a catalogue of the instruments that are used in it is presented below. This catalogue reflects their diversity, which results from the systemic nature of innovation. Jakob Edler and Jan Fagerberg (2017) classified these instruments in terms of policy goals (Table 1). It is worth noting the emergence of newer-generation instruments (other than the traditional R&D support instruments) that include public procurement as a means of stimulating the innovation of companies and the creation of regulations and standards that trigger innovation races.

Table 1. Taxonomy of innovation policy instruments in relation to goals

	Increase R&D	Skills	Access to expertise	Improve systemic capability, complementarity	Enhance demand for innovation	Improve framework	Improve discourse
Fiscal incentives for R&D	***	*					
Direct support for R&D and innovation	***						
Policies for training and skills		***					
Entrepreneurship policy			***				
Technical services and advice			***				
Cluster policy				***			
Policies to support collaboration	*		*	***			
Innovation network policies				***			
Private demand for innovation					***		
Public procurement policies	**				***		
Pre-commercial procurement	**				***		
Innovation inducement prizes	**				**		
Standards					*	***	
Regulations					*	***	
Technological foresight							***

Relevance to the policy goal: \*\*\* high, \*\* medium, \* low.

Source: Edler and Fagerberg, 2017p. 12.

## Institutional framework and outcomes of innovation policy in Poland

The R&D sphere in Poland includes economic entities that conduct or finance R&D activities and entities that specialise in research. The latter group includes, for example, 69 scientific institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences, 113 departmental research institutes, and 200 universities. Although innovation policy was traditionally the domain of ministries that were responsible for the economy, industry, and education (including higher education), as the interest of decision-makers in innovation increased, numerous public institutions that supported it were established in various countries, including Poland. In this context, it is worth mentioning Polish institutions within the “higher education and science” section of the budget, for example the National Science Centre and the National Centre for Research and Development. When considering the innovation system a little more broadly, these institutions should also include other executive agencies such as the Polish Space Agency and the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development.

Apart from the ministries (i.e. the ministries of science and higher education, economy, and national defence) that traditionally apply the basic instruments of innovation policy (i.e. financing R&D and innovation), many other ministries implement solutions that benefit broadly understood innovation, e.g. the ministries of education, digitisation, entrepreneurship and technology, environmental protection, infrastructure, energy, and agriculture.

Support for financing research and innovation activity in Poland is provided by the system of EU funds that Poland receives as part of the EU cohesion policy. One of the key elements of this policy is to strengthen the EU’s innovation in accordance with the objectives of the Europe 2020 Strategy. Between 2014–2020, Poland is to receive a total of around EUR 82 billion, which amounts to over PLN 40 billion a year. About 40% of this sum is managed by regional governments, with the remaining 60% divided into operational programmes that are coordinated by the minister in charge of regional development. The central programmes include the following operational programmes that are aimed at supporting economy innovation: Smart Growth (EUR 8.6 billion), Knowledge, Education, Development (EUR 4.7 billion), and Digital

Poland (EUR 2.2 billion). Moreover, all voivodeships implement their own regional operational programmes which prioritise support for R&D, innovation, digitisation, and entrepreneurship (about 30% of funds).

An example of the return of industrial policy which can be seen in Poland is the strategic projects implemented under the medium-term Strategy for Responsible Development for the period up to 2020, which was implemented in 2017. As Marek Naczyk argues (2019), the ideas behind this strategy had been maturing among Polish managers on both sides of the political spectrum since 2009. Its goal is to strengthen the responsibility of the state for shaping economic processes and to support the development of strategic sectors that can become the engines of the economy.

## Innovation of the Polish economy in the light of measurement systems

The indicators used to measure innovation economics reveal the ambiguous state of the Polish economy (Geodecki and Bajak, 2014). Scientific and technological indicators are based on measuring scientific and R&D activity and the commercialization of their results. One of the most popular measures in this group of indicators is outlay on research and development. The basis for the classification of industries according to technological intensity is the ratio of expenditure on R&D to turnover of enterprises in a given industry. The most popular classification distinguishes four categories of branches: high-tech (HT), medium-high technology (MHT), medium-low technology, and low technology. Another group of measures covers patent indicators, which include the number of patent applications and the number of patents granted. Table 2 provides an overview of the basic scientometric indicators. Poland is a country with relatively low expenditure on R&D activity. In recent years, research in the enterprise sector has significantly increased, but it is difficult to compare it with that of Asian countries; when calculated as a percentage of GDP, this number does not even approach the level of developed countries despite its much higher nominal domestic product. As a result, a relatively low share of the added value of industry is recorded by high-tech industries, and the number of registered patents is low, although this is increasing.

Table 2. Scientometric and technometric indicators in the period 2000–2017

Indicator	Germany		Italy		Hungary		Poland		Romania		South Korea		China	
	2000	2017	2000	2017	2000	2017	2000	2017	2000	2017	2000	2017	2000	2017
R&D expenditure (% of GDP)	2.40	3.02	1.01	1.35	0.91	1.35	0.62	1.03	0.36	0.5	2.34	4.55	0.94	
R&D in the enterprise sector (% of GDP)*	1.67	2.09	0.5	0.83	0.37	0.89	0.22	0.67	0.25	0.29	1.78	3.62	0.57	
Added value of HT and MHT**	54.5%	59.9%	35.8%	38.4%	43.9%	55.8%	25.8%	29.1%	21.9%	27.3%	60.3%	65.9%	37.1%	
Patent applications per million inhabitants***	163.5	237.2	32.1	63.4	18.0	29.1	2.9	13.1	0.8	4.2	41.4	304.9	1.1	
Share in the number of patents****	13.6	8.4	1.49	1.52	0.07	0.07	0.02	0.14	0.00	0.02	1.62	4.53	0.16	

\* Data from Eurostat.

\*\* Value added in branches C20–C21 and C26–C30 classified as medium-high and high-tech sectors (see Eurostat, *high-tech classification of manufacturing industries*) in relation to the value added of all manufacturing branches (C10–C33), WIOD data.

\*\*\* Patent applications filed in the PCT procedure, OECD data.

\*\*\*\* Patent applications filed simultaneously in Japan, the USA, and the European Patent Office, OECD data.  
Source: own elaboration based on Eurostat, OECD, and WIOD data.

In response to the need to take into account the fact that innovation activity has a wider scope than R&D and its results are not limited to technological changes, direct innovation indicators were developed that used the Oslo methodology. As well as measuring expenditure on innovation activity, the results of innovation activity were also measured according to the share of innovative products in the revenue of enterprises. Table 3 presents selected indicators of innovation activity in several EU countries. It can be noticed that a relatively small percentage of Polish companies are active innovatively (22%), although they represent the majority (59%) of the turnover of all the companies. The structure of expenditure on innovation activity is typical for developing countries: not much is spent on R&D, and the majority goes towards the purchase of machinery, equipment, and software. Technologies are most often transferred through these channels. Revenue from the sale of new or significantly improved products is relatively low in Poland.

Table 3. Innovation activity in selected EU countries in 2016 (in percentage terms)

		Germany	Italy	Hungary	Poland	Romania
Enterprises that have either introduced an innovation or have had any innovation activity	Percentage of innovative enterprises	63.7	53.8	29.0	22.0	10.2
	Turnover of innovative enterprises as a percentage of total turnover	90.9	81.0	61.5	58.8	23.1
Expenditure of enterprises that have introduced product and/or process innovations by expenditure area	Expenditure on R&D (performed in-house and contracted out)	57.3	52.0	38.4	24.5	40.8
	Acquisition of machinery, equipment, software, and external knowledge.	26.4	31.4	58.6	67.4	44.3
Revenue of enterprises that have introduced product innovations from the sale of new or significantly improved products (percentage of revenue)		20.9	23.1	20.7	17.7	35.4

The data refer to enterprises from areas B04–M73, i.e. Innovation core activities. Source: Community Innovation Survey, Eurostat.

Since the 1950s, economists have often used total-factor productivity (TFP) to measure the technological component of economic growth. In its simplified version, the growth rate of labour productivity is used for this purpose. The data presented in Table 4 indicate a relatively rapid growth rate of labour productivity in Poland compared to other EU countries, although China was the record-breaking country.

Table 4. Average annual growth rate of labour productivity (GDP per employee) in 2000-2017

Period	Germany	Italy	Hungary	Poland	Romania	South Korea	China
2000–2017	0.7%	-0.3%	1.7%	3.0%	5.4%	2.4%	8.8%

Source: OECD.

Complex innovation indicators are gaining in popularity as the systemic approach becomes more widespread. Their advantage is that they take into account the multidimensionality of the innovation phenomenon. The two most common are the Global Innovation Index (GII), which has been published since 2007, in which Poland is ranked 39<sup>th</sup> out of 129 countries (2019), and the European Innovation Scoreboard (EIS), which covers the EU countries and has been published since 2000. In this rank, the total indicator placed Poland at 56% of the EU average and 25<sup>th</sup> in the EU. Poland scores relatively poorly in the subcategories of attractive research systems, finance and support, and linkages, but relatively high in human resources, innovation-friendly environments, and employment impacts.

A systemic look at innovation reveals a broader context for assessing the willingness of individual enterprises to undertake innovative activities, and of the whole economy to achieve a structure in which modern sectors can dominate. Heterodox trends in economics highlight the role played by cultural and institutional factors, as well as those related to the political and economic domination of entities from developed countries over entities from developing economies. Their importance is well reflected in the construction of the Global Competitiveness Report, which has been published annually by the World Economic Forum since 1997. Based on empirically verified factors of productivity growth, the authors identified 12 pillars of competitiveness, among which institutions and their technological readiness are significant. Innovation is the

most important factor in developed countries, along with the business sophistication that is complementary to it. A vital indicator of competitiveness is the presence of strong national entities which are managed by professionals with high managerial competences who will shape their ability to cooperate in the interests of the industry, to create brands, to manage the company efficiently and decentrally, and to protect and take over a large part of the added value created in value chains.

Table 5. Business sophistication positioning in the global competitiveness rank (out of 137 economies)

Indicator	Germany	Italy	Hungary	Poland	Romania	South Korea	China
Business sophistication, including:	5	25	96	57	116	26	33
Local supplier quantity	4	12	128	45	122	11	52
Local supplier quality	5	25	71	34	63	30	56
State of cluster development	4	8	90	64	119	28	27
Nature of competitive advantage (cost vs. uniqueness)	11	12	59	100	113	22	30
Value chain breadth	7	11	98	64	87	23	29
Control of international distribution	2	30	66	61	128	9	29
Production processes sophistication	10	25	84	49	94	24	39
Extent of marketing	6	52	134	47	100	38	57
Willingness to delegate authority	13	116	88	84	129	78	47

Source: Schwab, 2018.

## Innovation in the Polish economy: selected theoretical perspectives

Evaluation of the effectiveness of innovation policy should make it possible to verify the extent to which productivity and growth rates can be increased with the use of qualitative factors linked to the economy's high level of innovation. Conclusions regarding Poland are ambiguous. On the one hand, Poland has a relatively high level of innovation, understood as more than merely the implementation of R&D activity

(e.g. investments in machinery and equipment through which technology transfer takes place), or the fast growth rate of labour productivity in recent decades. On the other hand, in the long run, without moving from the model of imitative to innovative development (the latter based on expenditure on R&D activity, which generates industrial property rights that create high economic rent (Geodecki et al., 2012)), Poland may face the risk of falling into the middle income trap (Hausner et al., 2013); this trap results from rising labour costs and the simultaneous lack of entities with a base in Poland which would create high added value through technological and competence advantages.

Any evaluation of innovation policy in Poland depends on which theoretical perspective is adopted. In neoclassical economics, although the thesis of the inevitability of the equalisation of GDP levels between poor and rich countries has been challenged, investing in technological knowledge and human capital seems a natural consequence of the development of enterprise when paired with sound macroeconomic policies and efficient state institutions. From this perspective, the rate of growth of R&D expenditure in Poland is relatively low. Despite rapid productivity growth (according to Eurostat data, this was 24.1% in the period 2010–2018) and a relatively good institutional environment that is strengthened by Poland's EU membership, outlay on innovation activity is at an unsatisfactory level and the results in the form of granted patents prove this low effectiveness. However, this dynamic is higher than in Western European countries, which allows us to believe that the innovative foundations of economic growth will be strengthened in the long run.

The systemic approach to innovation reveals deficits in the Polish innovation system. The three main actors, i.e. the enterprise sector, universities, and the administration, remain separate entities in Poland, which is reflected in low indicators of innovation cooperation or joint public-private publications, as well as in the relatively low responsiveness of institutions to the needs of entrepreneurs. The institutional set-up and socio-cultural characteristics of post-transformation societies are mutually dependent. Unlike Anglo-Saxon countries that are focused on radical innovation, high R&D expenditures, and the strong role of the markets and the stock exchange in financing development, Poland has failed to build the strong mechanisms needed for a liberal market economy, and the structures of a coordinated market economy have not

been rebuilt. In such an economy, associations play a significant role in the coordination of collective actions, and by stabilising expectations and facilitating cooperation and mutual adjustments they effectively support the interests of the entire industry, reduce environmental uncertainty, and extend the planning perspective. Urszula Kurczewska (2013) analysed the activity of associations that represent business and discovered much less involvement of Polish entities than their western counterparts in the creation of EU standards and regulations, which are, after all, an important instrument of innovation policy. This is consistent with the conclusions formulated by Andrzej Bukowski and Seweryn Rudnicki (2017), who diagnosed international cultural differences and concluded that the key features for innovation are less advanced in Poland in comparison with the countries ranked higher in the Global Innovation Index. The level of risk avoidance is high, and a short-term approach dominates.

The perspective of development economics may be interesting in the era of the globalisation of production and the emergence of global value chains. Its representatives consider international political economics to be essential for understanding the dynamics of the development of contemporary capitalism as it focuses on analysis of the most important relationship which exists between states and entrepreneurs. In their studies of the diversity of capitalism, German researchers Andreas Nölke and Arjan Vliegenthart (2009) argue that the Visegrad Group (V4) countries represent emerging examples of “dependent market economies” whose advantage is a cheap but educated workforce that allows the use of medium-high technologies. The limited development prospects are due to the domination of transnational corporations. They do not contribute to the development of local innovation systems, invest little in R&D and employee training, and import new technologies from their parent companies’ headquarters. László Bruszt and Béla Greskovits (2009) argue that although these economies rely on global companies in the development of technology and managerial competence, the nature of dependency has changed significantly since the 1970s, when the dependence theory prevailed. By joining global value chains, V4 countries became significant exporters of high-tech products. To maintain their comparative advantages, they invest heavily in the development of human and physical capital. This means that dependency no longer contradicts complex forms of industrialisation since the actors in the

production network gain the opportunity to learn, whilst improving the quality of products and processes is a condition necessary to become a link in the chain. In the end, however, this model may have a negative impact on the structure of the economy, as labour-intensive production phases are located here due to low labour costs, which implies specialisation in sectors in which cost rather than technological competition predominates. Moreover, participation in global value chains is only key to technological development in the first stages of production capacity. In further stages, it may slow progress down because technological leadership that generates the highest profits requires developmental autonomy, i.e. building one's own technological competence (Amsden, 2001; Geodecki and Grodzicki, 2015), which feeds domestic manufacturing capacity. The lack of a strategic approach to building technological and managerial competences is manifested in Poland and other V4 countries by the relatively insignificant role played by high-technology departments, the relatively low domestic value added in exports, the small number of familiar own brands, and the related slow development of business processes. These countries also score low in comparison with developing economies, such as South Korea or China, which until recently had been much poorer and lagged technologically.

## Conclusions

An effective innovation policy directs the innovative initiatives that are undertaken by enterprises towards solving problems that are socially defined in the process of reaching political agreement (Edler and Fagenber, 2017). This policy requires that administrations (but also entrepreneurs) possesses the necessary competence to initiate a variety of solutions from which the best are implemented. Innovation policy instruments should be applied to all phases of the innovation process, not just the first inventive phase.

These conclusions, which are directed at the decision makers who implement innovation policy in developed countries, should be placed within the context of Poland as a developing country. In view of the peripheral nature of Central European economies, the goal should be to build industries capable of creating high added value and reinvesting it in

innovative activities. This means undertaking a mission-oriented policy (Mazzucato, 2013), i.e. focusing not so much on counteracting market malfunctions as on creating markets and supporting the development of projects that are wide ranging and high risk. In developing countries, such activities include developing breakthrough technologies created by local entrepreneurs with the strong involvement of competent public administrations.

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Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse

University of Warsaw

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7270-8900>

# The globalisation and Europeanisation of public policies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** According to widespread opinion, globalisation, which is understood both as the international integration of the commodity, service and capital markets (economic globalisation) and as transferring political competences and responsibilities from the national and/or regional level to the global level, places certain restrictions on states in the sphere of their public policies. These effects of globalisation have not, however, been widely observed, and many countries have retained broad autonomy in their fiscal policy and have maintained extensive social security systems.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to analyse the impact of the processes of globalisation and Europeanisation on public policies. The main problem in this area results from the fact that globalisation poses a challenge for countries because of the increasing interdependence and economic competition it brings. However, it does not lead to the unification of solutions in terms of institutions or public policies, and it is left up to individual countries to determine how to deal with globalisation. The article focuses on Europeanisation as the clearest example of globalisation and examines the various phenomena of globalisation: the strengthening of some countries and the weakening of others; competition between countries regarding the regulations within their internal markets; different degrees of Europeanisation in different spheres; and the creation of new narratives that legitimise and support Europeanisation.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Using Poland as an example, the article concludes that

there are three strategies for dealing with Europeanisation: adopting all its forms without questioning any of its aspects, assuming that they make it possible to eliminate the weaknesses of the Polish state and initiate the modernisation of Poland accordingly; emphasising the inadequacy of European regulations to effectively deal with the national requirements of Poland, and attempting to influence the political process in the EU more effectively; and Euroscepticism, which postulates Poland's exclusion from participation in future European policies.

**Keywords:** globalisation, Europeanisation, Euroscepticism, Poland's European policy

## The impact of globalisation

The discussion on the impact of globalisation on a state and its public policies is multi-faceted and leads to ambiguous conclusions (Hay, 2011). There are widespread opinions that globalisation, which is understood as “the international integration of the commodity, service and capital markets” (economic globalisation; Garrett, 2000, p. 946) and as “transferring political competences and responsibilities from the national and/or regional level to the global level” (political globalisation; Hay, 2011, p. 380), places certain restrictions on states. Global financial markets restrict state politics, especially by enforcing macroeconomic stability and a balanced budget. This usually reduces public spending on social policy and social security (sometimes against expectations at a local level), and thus restricts electoral democracy or politicians’ freedom to make decisions on fiscal policy. The need to attract investment will lead to, for example, the liberalisation of labour market regulations, limiting the role of trade unions in the economy, and reducing taxes.

These effects of globalisation have not, however, been widely observed. Instead, mainly as a result of economic crises, considerable pressure to reduce public spending, especially in the social sphere, has been observed in many countries. The greatest restrictions in this sphere were introduced in countries that were the beneficiaries of international aid programmes. For example, Argentina received aid from the International Monetary Fund under strict conditions regarding its budgetary spending in both 2018 and 2019. However, many countries still have broad autonomy in their fiscal policy and maintain extensive social security systems, as is the case in some European countries, especially the Nordic and Western European ones. Labour market arrangements and taxation also vary greatly among countries. Some countries build their economic competitiveness on liberal labour relations and low employment costs (e.g. Poland), others maintain high taxation and strict employment regulations (e.g. Germany and France), and see their chances for competitiveness in advanced services, investments, and modern technologies. There are also mixed solutions, such as the extensive social programmes and liberal employment regulations that have been introduced in the Nordic countries.

Globalisation affects countries as it poses a challenge by increasing interdependence and economic competition. However, it does not lead to

the unification of institutional solutions, such as in social policy, social welfare, taxation, or labour market regulations. Although globalisation limits the autonomy of some countries, it is also an opportunity for development. It can also be claimed that it leads to the economic strengthening of some countries and the weakening of others. However, this does not always mean that large countries win, and small or peripheral countries lose out.

According to many researchers, communist China is the “winner” of the most recent phase of globalisation that has been taking place since the end of World War II, mostly thanks to the internal reforms China has initiated since the 1970s (Góralczyk, 2018). Moreover, the success of this country has failed to lead to a radical reduction in the power of the state (and the communist party), or to a change in its political system. On the other hand, President Donald Trump’s politics was based on the conviction that globalisation no longer serves the American electorate and national economy, as it brings increasing benefits to the US’s geopolitical rivals and their allies. Therefore, Trump sought to revise the existing economic relationships between the US and its main partners, which led to economic and geopolitical tensions and ruined the existing institutions of the global economy (e.g. it weakened the World Trade Organization, G7, G20). The ‘losers’ of globalisation also include other powers such as Russia, which for a long time had stayed apart from the global exchange, except for the export of energy sources and arms. This led to an economic monoculture within Russia which systematically weakened its economic and geopolitical potential. The ‘winners’ of globalisation include many smaller countries, especially the Asian tigers (e.g. South Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan). In these countries, the role played by the state in the economy, especially with regard to their industrial, innovation, and trade policies, has not been reduced.

Globalisation exerts a strong impact on some areas of public policies but a lesser impact on others. In most areas, the impact of globalisation is derived from a country’s politics. For example, some countries try to pursue an active industrial policy and promote exports, while others leave this area to the free market. Some countries influence the exchange rate in order to improve the competitiveness of their exports, while others believe that monetary policy should be independent of political authorities and should focus primarily on inflation rather than on economic growth. Some countries are stricter in their approach to the international

regulations that accompany globalisation, while others are more flexible and adapt them to the needs of their economies at any given stage of development. Neither is there a universal institutional rule. While globalisation generally promotes liberal solutions, some countries and even some international organisations often resort to protectionism. In most cases, liberalisation leads to opening up these industries or markets when domestic companies feel strong and competitive. Protectionism is used to protect one's own market or domestic companies from rivals that are too strong. This example demonstrates that the process of globalisation sometimes triggers conflicting trends in national adjustments.

Globalisation increases competition between both companies and countries. It has become an arena for economic and geopolitical rivalry. This is why some researchers point to the growing role of the geoeconomy, i.e. the use of economic tools to gain geopolitical advantage (Luttwak, 1990; Grosse, 2014). Countries compete for markets, access to raw materials, technology, the control of production and services (e.g. financial, telecommunications), etc. International institutions are subject to particularly intense competition. Countries try to impose regulations on each other that are primarily beneficial to their own local companies; however, these solutions may be less than beneficial or might even be harmful to their rivals. Frequently, a country prefers regulations that proved successful in the past and with which local entrepreneurs were well acquainted, even though these solutions do not always correspond to the interests of external companies as they incur higher adjustment costs.

Globalisation also exerts a strong impact within the sphere of ideas (Hay, 2014). Intellectuals, scientists, journalists, and politicians formulate different opinions about globalisation and its effects. Thus, the aim of the various narratives is to trigger social mobilisation for the various adjustments being introduced, which are sometimes related to globalisation and are sometimes introduced only under the pretext of globalisation. In this way, globalisation can be a substitute topic, a 'scapegoat' in the public debate, although it undoubtedly ignites emotions and serves to legitimise public policy. Political debate often raises issues not only about the need to adapt to globalisation but also about the need to protect against it, e.g. against predatory capitalism or speculative financial investors. Sometimes there are geopolitical threads within this discussion, for example, related to attempts at neo-colonisation by

foreign capital from former imperial powers. In this way, the narratives accompanying globalisation are not only used in electoral policy, but they also shape international relations.

Regionalisation is an important aspect of globalisation. The European Union is an example of regional integration in the economic and political spheres, including growing economic interdependence and, at the same time, fierce competition between companies and member states in the internal market. Progress in integration is often related to globalisation, both in terms of global cooperation and competition with external competitors. European integration and the Europeanisation that accompanies it, is therefore an important condition for globalisation processes in all the EU member states, including Poland.

Europeanisation can be defined as the impact of European integration on member states and their public policies (Grosse, 2011). In Europeanisation processes, we can see all the previously mentioned features of globalisation. First, Europeanisation may strengthen some member states and weaken others. Second, it leads to competition between countries over regulations within the EU's internal market. Both liberal and protectionist solutions are applied, depending on the preferences of the countries which have the greatest political influence in the EU. Third, Europeanisation is both weak and ineffective in some areas but is very strong in others. It often leads to contradictory goals and produces contradictory results. Fourth, Europeanisation is a sphere in which political narratives are intensively shaped in order to create positive attitudes towards certain regulations, to legitimise the progress of integration, to cover up its shortcomings, and to pacify potential political opponents.

In the next section, the aforementioned aspects of Europeanisation and globalisation will be analysed based on policies that are applicable to the internal market, including broadly understood social, fiscal, and labour market policies.

## Strengthening or weakening the state?

In answering the question as to whether globalisation and Europeanisation strengthen or weaken the state, arguments that point to three different trends can be applied.

First, Europeanisation may weaken or restrict EU member states due to the transfer of a number of competences to the EU level; this means that some matters are no longer decided independently by national authorities but are subject to restrictions imposed by EU institutions and legislation. For example, fiscal and social policies, as well as the regulation of labour relations, are treaty-based and remain within the domain of member states. However, European law introduces further standards within labour law (including non-discrimination) and limits the fiscal policy of governments by imposing fiscal criteria and macroeconomic monitoring procedures on them. This reduces the autonomy of member states, as well as the ability of governments to fulfil their election promises, especially those that have consequences in the form of budgetary expenditures or labour market regulations.

Second, Europeanisation supports member states and their public policies. One example of how this is achieved is financial support under the EU's cohesion policy, which is directed at reducing social disparity, supporting social assistance and health care, reducing unemployment and inequalities in the labour market, etc. The European Union also provides standards and experiences within public policies, which in many cases help national authorities to solve local problems.

Third, Europeanisation can simultaneously strengthen some countries and weaken others in terms of their economic and social policies. This is often the result of introducing European regulations that may be more beneficial to some countries but less beneficial to others. EU regulations may be more or less well adapted to local economic institutions, and thus may create additional costs for enterprise, the state budget, or citizens. In this way, they affect the competitiveness of the local economy as well as the level of public spending.

For example, the drive to introduce minimum standards in tax law covered VAT regulations and enterprises' tax bases (especially those representing the digital economy). Such measures were intended to pave the way for the harmonisation of taxation for enterprises in the internal market. This was intended to eliminate the possibility of individual countries competing for investors by reducing their tax burden (this was an economic development strategy used by some smaller countries such as Luxembourg and Ireland). It was also intended to counteract tax competition between the EU member states, which was known as

“the race to the bottom” because it resulted in lower taxation in Europe. Understandably, countries with the highest taxes were in favour of this harmonisation strategy. These efforts were strengthened by the European Commission, which increasingly often made decisions or initiated legal proceedings against countries and corporations that used low tax rates or tax exemptions. A good example here is the Apple Corporation: in 2016, the European Commission demanded the reimbursement of 13 billion euros of state aid that Apple had obtained years earlier in the form of tax relief from the Irish government. According to the Irish Minister of Finance, the whole case was politically motivated, and its aim was to eliminate low tax rates in Ireland (Robinson, Bradshaw, 2016). Such taxation made the country the seat of almost all major American IT and pharmaceutical corporations operating within the EU market.

The public debt crisis in Europe significantly contributed to the intensification of political efforts against granting tax exemptions to multinational corporations and for tax harmonisation within the EU. Supported by various governments, including Germany and France, the EU sought to dismantle the model of economic development that was based on attracting investors by offering them extremely low taxation, which had been practised for years in Luxembourg and (to a lesser extent) in Ireland and Central European countries. It may also be predicted that Britain exiting the European Union will significantly weaken the liberal camp, which means that tax harmonisation within the European market may only be a matter of time. In his 2017 Speech on the State of the European Union, the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, announced that he would strongly support “moving to qualified majority voting for decisions on the common consolidated corporate tax base, on VAT, on fair taxes for the digital sector and on the financial transaction tax” (Juncker, 2017).

The example of tax harmonisation in the EU well reflects the ambiguity of the impact of Europeanisation on its member states. First, the aim of the introduction of common standards is to avoid “the race to the bottom”, i.e. the reduction of tax rates and of investors avoiding their tax obligations, which should protect budget revenues and strengthen member states, as many countries are over-indebted. Second, the introduction of tax harmonisation or other European standards in budgetary policy limits the autonomy of states, especially the sovereign powers of

national parliaments in this area. This may have negative consequences in terms of respect for democratic standards in Europe. Third, taxation is naturally a field for competition between member states and their socio-economic models. The imposition of certain institutions or regulations by stronger (or a majority of) countries may lead to the strengthening of some countries at the expense of others, especially in terms of their economic competitiveness.

## Competition between countries

The issue of workers being posted to other countries in the internal market in order to provide services is a good example of competition between EU countries. In March 2016, the European Commission presented a proposal to amend a directive that dates back to 1996. The institution, which had been a long-standing advocate of liberal solutions to the internal market, proposed changes that were aimed at restricting existing freedoms in this market. As Jean-Claude Juncker stated, the aim of the amendment was to guarantee workers “the same pay for the same work in the same place”. The then-President of the European Commission also announced the establishment of a new European inspection and enforcement body for ensuring fairness in the single market, which specifically included rules on the postings of workers (Juncker, 2017). This directive aimed to increase the burden on companies that post workers within the EU internal market and could therefore hinder the flow of workers across the EU. In addition to the minimum wage requirements within the local market concerned, these companies had to take into account other specific wage rules of the host country, such as bad-weather allowance, overtime allowance, and other rules resulting from collective agreements with trade unions. This was beneficial for companies from countries with a high level of regulation and unionisation, which were mainly those of Western Europe, but it hit the interests of Central European countries the hardest. This European regulation was intended to protect jobs in more regulated Western European countries, but this would be at the cost of employment reduction in less regulated Central Europe, where average employment costs are sometimes several times lower than in the West. It was estimated that

as many as 500,000 Poles could lose their jobs after the introduction of this EC directive; the state social security system and the state budget would also have suffered losses.

Because of the proposal launched by the EC in March 2016, Poland initiated the so-called “yellow card” procedure in May 2016. This procedure enables a certain number of national parliaments of EU member states to object to a draft legislative act and to ask the Commission to amend or withdraw it on the grounds of the principle of subsidiarity. This was the third time that this procedure had been launched, with the consensual frontline support of all Central European parliaments (with the addition of the Danish parliament). Some Western European parliaments (the lower chambers in Spain and Portugal, both Italian chambers, the House of Commons in the UK, and the French Senate) issued opinions under the so-called “political dialogue” procedure, in which they indicated that the project complied with the subsidiarity principle. In this very turbulent dispute, which involved not only national governments but also the majority of parliaments from member states, the EC clearly took the side of Western Europe. In a very laconic response to the procedure launched by the Central European parliaments, they found that there would be no violation of the principle of subsidiarity and recommended that the controversial legislative initiative be continued.

Another chapter in the conflict between the eastern and western states of the EU was the European Commission’s initiative to limit social benefits in the internal market in December 2016. This proposal introduced the requirement that an employee had to be employed in a given country for at least three months’ before he could claim benefits, including unemployment benefits. According to the proponents of this solution, it was supposed to limit welfare tourism, which allowed the citizens of poorer member states to abuse the freedom of movement and employment in the EU market and benefit from the more generous benefits available in Western European countries. However, once again, this change restricted the freedom of movement of people within the common market, while at the same time mainly affecting the rights of the citizens of Central European countries.

In spring 2017, the European Commission proposed the *European Pillar of Social Rights*, which aimed to introduce minimum standards in, for example, labour law, social protection (including pensions and

unemployment benefits), minimum wage and basic income. This is probably the most spectacular evidence of the retreat from liberal trends in the internal market. This proposition was intended to rebuild trust among EU societies, which, because of the crises, were opposed to the progressive liberalisation of labour law, social benefits, and widely applied austerity measures. However, the implementation of this project could amount to a serious fiscal burden for the poorer and most indebted countries. It may also restrict competition in the internal market with regard to labour and social security regulations. As Marita Ulvskog, a Swedish member of the European Parliament, put it, the aim of the pillar is to shift competition within the internal market from emphasis on the conditions and costs of labour and more or less generous welfare systems to workers' skills, knowledge, and qualifications (Ulvskog, 2017). This shift seems beneficial to the Swedish economic model, but it would require significant effort and costs from EU countries that have so far built their competitiveness on cheap production costs and liberal labour relations.

## Diversity and the contradictions of Europeanisation

Europeanisation exerts a weak impact in some areas and a strong impact in others. For example, in 2000 the EU Summit adopted the Lisbon Strategy, which recommended the modernisation of the European social model and stressed that a high level of social protection is crucial for the EU. It was considered unacceptable for people to live below the poverty line and suffer from social exclusion. All European citizens should have access to decent work and a decent life, including after retirement, and member states were obliged to introduce measures to eliminate poverty and social exclusion by 2010. The strategy proposed that all countries should introduce a minimum wage and measures that reduce income inequalities for their citizens. In 2004, a committee chaired by former Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok, evaluated the implementation of this plan and clearly demonstrated that the objectives could not be achieved. The result of this evaluation was a suggestion that the strategy should be modified to focus on faster and greater economic growth and job creation. Despite an attempt to revitalise the

strategy, it again failed to achieve the intended objectives, mainly due to the economic crisis post 2008. The strategy was therefore abandoned in 2010 in favour of a new “Europe 2020” plan, which had three objectives: economic development based on knowledge and innovation, sustainable growth, and inclusive growth. The strategy established specific indicators to be achieved by 2020, one of which was to increase the employment rate for people aged 20–64 to at least 75%. In addition, it postulated a reduction in the number of Europeans living below the national poverty line by 25%, which would result in lifting more than 20 million people out of poverty. As they also failed to reach these targets, the socio-economic situation in many countries deteriorated as a result of the protracted Eurozone crisis. This caused discontent among voters, who increasingly criticised the national authorities and the EU itself for its inefficiency in combating economic and social problems.

Between 2016 and 2017, the European institutions again took steps to improve the social situation in Europe under the banner of “Social Europe” and the European pillar of social rights. A number of ambitious standards were announced in order to effect change within the labour market, social welfare, health care, unemployment benefit, the minimum wage, and a minimum basic income. The main aim of the programme was a propaganda exercise in order to shore up support for the proposals. This was meant to show EU citizens that the EU institutions had not forgotten their concerns, but once again these declarations are difficult to implement in practice. All new standards are voluntary in nature and intended not to undermine the stability of national public finances. However, with time, some of these standards could become obligatory; for example, minimum rules that all countries within the EU must observe. If this happens, they could put a strain on the budgets of less prosperous member states as well as on the economic competitiveness of countries based on a liberal model with low production costs.

Although social policy standards are provided with some support from cohesion policy funds, they are generally poorly implemented. Thus, the EU makes little contribution to supporting national public policies in this area. Moreover, EU actions sometimes hamper the implementation of these policies due to conflict between the objectives of European policies. In addition, some actions of the European institutions are much more strongly enforced than social policy standards, and this is often at the

expense of social policies. This was the case during the Eurozone crisis, when austerity policies were implemented that were aimed at reducing public debt in the countries affected by the crisis. This happened at the expense of social spending and included cuts in unemployment benefits, social and health care spending, pension system spending, minimum wage reductions, etc. Austerity policies were effectively enforced by the EU institutions, as successive tranches of rescue programmes for countries in crisis depended on their implementation. This is why some researchers believe that the crisis in the monetary union put an end to the dream of a 'social Europe' (Lechevalier, Wielgohs, 2015). Even if this opinion is exaggerated, it is clear that the EU's objectives could conflict with one another. In addition, for the time being, budget savings are being enforced by Europeanisation far more strongly than by social standards.

## Narratives on globalisation and Europeanisation

Narratives and political ideas used for the benefit of Europeanisation perform various functions. First, they are intended to pave the way for the smooth implementation of a specific public policy and legitimising it in the eyes of European societies. When a policy fails to be implemented, the role of the narrative accompanying Europeanisation is, at the very least, to distract citizens' attention from the ineffectiveness of the EU, the contradictions among its objectives, the mistakes made by EU decision-makers, etc. The ideas of Europeanisation are essentially intended to support European integration and protect it from criticism or disintegrating tendencies. They are also intended to support integration, which is understood primarily as the transfer of competences to the EU level and as increasing the power of EU institutions. At the same time, the 'content' of particular narratives, i.e. the detailed arguments, may change over time or even be contradictory. Even before the Eurozone crisis, both the European Commission and the European Court of Justice were often in favour of the liberalisation of the flow of workers within the internal market and granting access to social benefits in individual countries. During the crisis, the narrative changed, and the EU institutions increasingly supported countries that restricted access to social

benefits for EU citizens from other countries and restricted freedom of employment in the internal market. Each time this was done, the EU institutions tried to build a credible and convincing case for their position by appealing to justice, solidarity, and Europeanness.

The basic ideas that underlie the narratives accompanying the processes of Europeanisation cover the need to develop European integration; to create new EU laws; to transfer competences to the EU level; and to strengthen the powers of EU institutions. It is often argued that it is better to manage certain public policies or solve social problems within the whole EU than at the level of the individual nation states. At the same time, according to this argument, the EU Commission and the CJEU are essential in order to ensure the effective Europeanisation of public policies.

The Europeanisation narrative often uses the term 'globalisation'. This happens both when it is necessary to adapt to globalisation and thus to liberalise certain public policies, and when we want to defend ourselves against globalisation and protect the internal market and European social standards.

The narrative supporting liberalisation most often references economies of scale, which ensure better allocation of public goods, more efficient spending of public funds, and the effective resolution of social problems. Economies of scale also ensure faster economic growth and more jobs, both of which are expected to benefit all societies and member states. Liberalisation in the internal market also strengthens the competitiveness of European companies and thus allows them to prepare for global competition.

The economic crisis that began in 2008 slowed the rate of growth within the euro area (especially in southern Europe), increased unemployment and social inequalities, and thus stimulated negative social sentiment towards liberalisation, globalisation, and Europeanisation. As a result, and in fear of their own voters, politicians in Western Europe, especially in France, decided to change the direction of Europeanisation. The aim was to protect Western European countries from unfair competition, both in relation to countries outside of the EU, but also from enterprises from the 'new' EU countries. In this way, the narrative was intended to defend them against globalisation and to reverse the overly liberal direction of Europeanisation, especially in areas where

companies and workers from Central European countries were more competitive.

French politicians, supported by politicians from Southern Europe, succeeded in creating a new type of narrative that not only supported protectionism against the largest non-European rivals but also demanded that liberalisation in the internal market be limited in order to protect jobs and social standards in Western European countries. This narrative condemned liberal industrial relationships and the cheap labour costs and low social benefits enjoyed in Central European countries. It sought to legitimise the introduction of minimum standards in social and fiscal policies, which in fact meant the transfer of institutions dominant in Western European countries to countries with more liberal systems, as well as to poorer ones.

The narrative thus served to reassure the voters of countries belonging to the 'old' Europe. Nevertheless, the result was a growing aversion to this wave of Europeanisation in Central European societies for which it was detrimental. It was supposed to improve the competitiveness of some member states whilst also increasing budget expenditure and reducing competitiveness in other states. At the same time, this narrative was supposed to mask all the shortcomings of the proposed policy, one of which was its relatively low effectiveness, especially with regard to the promotion of social standards, but also with regard to the much stronger enforcement of austerity policies in the EU. Moreover, while emphasising the importance of social standards in the EU, the narrative concealed the fact that this policy could lead to a deterioration in the competitiveness of countries with liberal socio-economic models and result in excessive fiscal burdens in poorer or less developed countries.

## Poland and Europeanisation

To sum up the above considerations, it is worth synthesising the Polish experience of Europeanisation. In the opinion of many researchers, Europeanisation strengthens public policies in Poland, primarily through funds obtained under the cohesion policy, but also by improving the performance of public administration, including in the sectors responsible for spending EU funds and strategic programming (Grosse, 2011).

However, Europeanisation also restricts the autonomy of state authorities, especially in many areas that are regulated by EU law. In some areas, the European Union imposes solutions that are demanding from the point of view of local determinants and therefore require high adjustment costs. A good example is the European energy and climate policy, which is particularly difficult to implement in Poland as its energy sector is primarily based on coal. This means very high costs for transformation, which are transferred directly to local companies and individual energy consumers. In other areas, the costs of Europeanisation are lower, as Poland is not a member of the monetary union and thus maintains the freedom to shape its exchange rate, which is beneficial, especially in times of economic crises. Additionally, compared to euro area members, Poland is less strictly bound by EU fiscal criteria. From the perspective of the EU proposals of higher standards in social policy, the labour market, and tax harmonisation, the Polish authorities are faced with the need to change their economic model. If these standards become binding for all EU members in the future, this will mean a need for economic transformation from competitiveness based on liberal regulations and low labour costs to a model based on greater productive and technological investment, higher productivity, and a greater share of services in national product. These changes to the economic model are a strategic objective of the Polish authorities, and it may be possible to gain increased assistance from EU cohesion and innovation policy funds to achieve them.

Like other countries, Poland undertakes regulatory competition in the EU in order to shape EU law that is most favourable to their national interests. This is a major determinant of whether Europeanisation will strengthen or weaken public policies in Poland. Research reveals the low effectiveness of Polish governments in this area, regardless of whether they are pro-European or Eurosceptic (Copsey, Pomeranian, 2014). The main reason for the Polish authorities' lack of impact on Europeanisation is their inability to craft a political narrative in the EU that would be sufficiently catchy and persuasive for their partners.

To an extent, Poland's struggle with Europeanisation results from its peripheral geographical location and the fact that the 'new' Central European member states have so far been treated by Western European countries as secondary actors in European policy. In addition, politicians

from Central Europe lack experience in playing politics in the EU arena. The Polish authorities are not always able to accurately identify strategic national interests and defend them before the EU. Attempts to defend these interests, especially in confrontation with the policies formulated in Brussels by the largest countries of the 'old' Europe, are sometimes considered inappropriate or doomed to failure in advance.

In the course of integration, three different national responses to the pressure of Europeanisation have been identified. The first is based on accepting (with gratitude and without much reflection) all forms of Europeanisation as being absolutely positive from the point of view of Poland. The rationale for this approach is the conviction of the weakness of the Polish state, the administrative structures therein, and the world of Polish politics, especially in terms of identifying national interests and then operationalising them strategically. As a result, EU regulations and other solutions provided in the process of Europeanisation will eliminate the weakness of the Polish state and initiate its modernisation and economic development.

In the second approach, Europeanisation is perceived from the perspective of the inadequacy of the European regulations and other European standards to be favourable to Poland's national conditions. Therefore, it is postulated that Polish diplomacy, Polish MEPs, and other public or private actors should influence the political process in the EU more effectively. It is particularly important to influence new European regulations to make them more beneficial to Polish interests.

In the third approach, Europeanisation is a source of increasing concern that is caused by restrictions to national sovereignty (the autonomy of democratic authorities in public affairs) and by a number of European initiatives that have incurred high costs or been harmful to national interests. At the same time, it is disappointing that the Polish position (and, more broadly, that of the Central European countries) has not been taken into account properly in EU decision-making processes. This has caused growing Euro-scepticism and a distancing from Europeanisation. As a solution, it is postulated that Poland withdraws from participation in particular European policies, as was the case with postponing Poland's accession to the monetary union.

It seems obvious to state that in the first years of Poland's EU membership, positive views on Europeanisation (i.e. regarding the EU's

influence on Poland) prevailed; however, since the wave of European crises, the third option, i.e. resistance to further Europeanisation, has become widespread.

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Andrzej Zybała  
SGH Warsaw School of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1030-8792>

# Institutions, organisations, and public policies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Public policy, which is understood as any public action that is undertaken based on objectivised analyses in a deliberately created context utilising specifically tailored instruments, takes place within the institutional context of the state and the economy. Institutions should be understood in broad terms, not simply as entities of action, but also as rules (e.g. rules governing entry/exit to/from an action, or to/from a group of stakeholders), rules of action, and analyses of public (collective) problems.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to analyse the features of macro-scale public policies in Poland (excluding sectoral policies). The analysis is based on concepts derived from the tradition of institutionalism and focuses on the programming and implementation of public actions. Thus, the article analyses the factors that influence the formation and implementation of public policy.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** From the perspective of public policymaking, the model of public policy formation that has been prevalent in Poland since 1990 is based on étatism. This is characterised by a low level of deliberation, consultation, and pluralisation; it is primarily governed by specific rules, norms, and strategies that are applied by the public policy actors involved in its formulation and implementation. These set the foundations for the actors' participation in public actions, the importance they attach to objective analyses, their consensual decision-making, and their ability to be guided by the public good in their actions.

**Keywords:** public policy, institutions, institutionalism, culture, public governance



## Public policies and institutionalism

Public policy is any public action that is undertaken based on objectivised analyses in a deliberately created context utilising specifically tailored instruments. In order to achieve this, public policy takes place within the institutional context of the state and the economy. Analysis of public policy in Poland in this article will be based on concepts taken from the theory of institutionalism. Institutions should be understood in broad terms, not simply as entities of action, but also as rules (e.g. rules governing entry/exit to/from an action, or to/from a group of stakeholders), rules of action, and analyses of public (collective) problems.

In political science, three types of institutionalism and paradigms can be distinguished, each of which differently defines the space and mechanisms of the collective action of political actors. Traditional institutionalism focuses on the role of democratic institutions and the structures and procedures that function within them, which are often described in legal language (parliaments, governments, public administration, political parties, interest groups, etc.) and which define the space for possible actions/decisions. Behavioural institutionalism assumes that these institutions are merely empty shells when compared to the factors which actually are the driving force for the actions undertaken by political actors. These factors are norms (including informal ones) and preferences (values). The third type of institutionalism is linked with the paradigm of rational choice (e.g. public choice theory and game theory), and from this perspective it analyses the actions of actors using the concepts of neoclassical economics by treating them as if they were market mechanisms. It is assumed that actors' collective choices are less influenced by institutions (which only introduce certain limitations) and more by their desire to maximise their benefits (which can be material or non-material). In the systems of public action, the aggregation of individual options (behaviours) allows a certain balance.

In the 1980s, a new research trend called neo-institutionalism emerged. Its proponents emphasize that collective actions are the product of mutual interaction between actors and institutions. Actors are rooted or trapped within a network of formal and informal institutional rules. An actor is a kind of *homo institutionalis*. Actions that correspond to their values and expectations are a result of these rules. In order

to understand public policy, a public policy researcher must simultaneously analyse the individual actor's behaviour, the institutional structures involved, and the binding rules and norms (Knoepfel et al., 2007, p. 91).

## Programming and implementing public policy in Poland

A researcher of the public policy arena in Poland might wish to use the concepts described above but must be aware that all analytical perspectives have limitations. As a process, public policy is extremely complex as it encompasses many components, such as the institutions which formulate and implement policies/programmes, the financial resources, the party politics, as well as the numerous determinants that are involved, including historical ones. Additionally, a part is played by the narrative structure, factors that determine the attitude and mindset of the actors of public actions, and current factors related to the interests and dynamics of mutual interaction.

The supporters of the traditional 'old' version of institutionalism emphasise the role played by traditional institutions that form the political and economic systems of the state. In Poland, this approach has great explanatory value because these institutions play a significant role in the process of programming and implementing public policies. This is also the result of reducing public policy to the process of law-making, which is a process that takes place within the following dynamic: political parties – government – parliament. At the same time, this is the result of inadequate attention being paid to elements such as participation, deliberation, objectivised analysis, etc. within the political process. The programming of solutions to key problems that are high on the agenda of those in power usually only takes place within parties and does not occur elsewhere. These solutions are then selected, legislated on, and implemented through administrative means. This approach has its roots within models of public governance by means of legislation, in which it is the main instrument of action. It also seems justified to claim that Polish public policy functions within the *étatist* architecture of public governance. The Polish political process can still be best presented through a stage model of public policy, which is based on the American model from the

1950s, adapted to fit Poland’s needs. In this model, policies were generally designed under the influence of the executive, the administration, and the strongest interest groups. Figure 1 demonstrates étatist public policy.

Figure 1: The cycle of policy programming in Poland



Source: own study.

The formation of this model of public governance, which is based on étatism in Poland and in other countries of the region after 1990 (Peters and Pierre, 2005), is a result of insufficiently pluralised decision-making processes. Of course, current étatism is not the same étatism that was typical of the Polish People’s Republic, but they share certain similarities, such as the one-sidedness with which the political class operates in the sphere of programming activities and the limited role of non-governmental entities despite the implementation of various consultation mechanisms. The first post-1990 actions, including the very concept of a systemic

change in the economy and political system, can serve as an example of a programming style that became standard in the years that followed.

Actions that are undertaken by those in power are based on the premise that the state and the party apparatus give them sufficient resources and knowledge to single-handedly resolve those problems that they themselves consider important and possible to solve in a specific order, using the public administration subordinated to them. If there is any public participation in this process at all, it usually follows the rules set by those in power. An example is what happens to the consultation of most draft bills, which is usually short and takes on the simplest form possible, although it must be admitted that standards in this area have tended to improve (some offices draw up summaries of and reports from consultations, create lists of submitted proposals, etc.).

Those in power devote a lot of energy to gaining the subordination or control over other stakeholders. This is because they assume that non-governmental policy stakeholders have to adapt to the regulations generated by policy projects/programmes/reforms. They take care to maintain a position that allows them to include others in the policy action and implementation of public interventions, believing that participation in itself is a privilege that can be granted to groups of their choice.

The policy process is devoid of complex architecture and is often action-oriented (actions are often taken without adequate resources). Empirical studies (Zybała, 2014) reveal that significant reforms of policies have been initiated only when there was a considerable threat to stability, usually to public finances, or a risk of social crises as a result of a given public policy. On the other hand, action was also taken when decision-makers believed that available legislative tools would be sufficient to achieve the intended result, i.e. they did not have to refer to advanced participation procedures and, as those who held power, could conduct the decision-making process on their own. Sometimes they decided to apply the *Blitzkrieg* strategy, i.e. to take quick action before stakeholders realized how the implemented changes would affect their interests (this is how the implementation of the shock strategy introduced in January 1990 is interpreted). Table 1 presents the consequences of such a public governance model for the entire process involving the formulation and functioning of public policies.

Table 1. The impact of public governance patterns on the phases of public policymaking

Phases in the making and functioning of public policies	Consequences
The phase of defining a public problem	The main problems are those that pose a direct and immediate threat, in particular to the stability of state finances and other frameworks on the basis of which the state functions (e.g. energy security). Long-term risks and those resulting from weak social policies (education, health, and administration) are often neglected.
The phase of formulating alternative solutions	A limited availability of research and expert analyses. The adoption of a given solution results more from cost calculations for current public finances and political calculations than from evidence.
The phase of public consultations	A limited range of opinions, knowledge, concepts (short deadlines, poor information about consultations, routine communication methods, a low level of inclusion, domination of the strongest interest groups).
The phase of <i>ex ante</i> evaluation	Evaluation mainly among political stakeholders (parliamentary committees, possibly party sub-groups). Lack of mechanisms of learning based on evaluation.
The phase of implementation of the adopted solution	An administrative style of implementing new concepts. Prevalence of legal regulations as an instrument of action (acts, regulations). Under-utilisation of 'soft' instruments (those that catalyse policy actors' attitudes), such as positive stimuli, leadership, or nudging.
The phase of <i>ex post</i> evaluation	Evaluation of the results of actions is mainly limited to publishing reports on the implementation of nominal actions undertaken by the offices responsible for a given action. Lack of independent evaluation (except for EU-funded actions).

Source: Zybala, A. (2013). Public policies and patterns of public governance. *Zarządzanie publiczne*, no. 4, p. 44.

The process of policy programming and implementation that is typical in Poland can be considered an important reason for the inefficiency of public policies in this country. In particular, this applies to projects that aim to solve particularly complex problems, with the result that reaction requires ever more complex actions (Geyer and Rihani, 2010). Many reforms that have been undertaken since the 1990s have been based

on legislative tools, including complex health or education policies (Włodarczyk, 2005). Public policies were seen as a process designed and implemented from the top down. Moreover, they were treated as a mechanical process – an operation aimed to exchange selected parts of the mechanisms of a given policy for their new or improved versions. Often, however, institutional changes failed to bring about the expected results (e.g. some of the reforms of Jerzy Buzek’s government, or the reform of the judiciary system).

At present, success in reforming public policies depends on numerous conditions, including the ability to:

- undertake comprehensive action through a pluralised decision-making process;
- apply complex implementation and evaluation instruments (not only legislative but also those that catalyse stakeholders’ attitudes);
- instigate adaptation mechanisms among stakeholders (e.g. self-regulation);
- raise professional and moral standards among the professional corporations involved;
- raise the level of accountability for stakeholders’ actions;
- encourage learning (reflecting on experiences, drawing conclusions from failures);
- manage conflicts of interest, reach compromises, etc.

Effective programming also requires adequate human resources, especially specialists in the public sector, including analysts who are recruited on the basis of their professional competences and are prepared to use advanced analytical techniques. Those who are able to integrate the dispersed potential inherent in society can be used for effective programming.

Summarizing the above, it is easy to see the factors that maintain the étatist model of public policy. First, the nature of political (party) life in Poland should be mentioned. In this respect, it failed to create balance between the processes of programming public interventions on the basis of objectivised knowledge (policy) and the processes of political decision-making (politics). Politicians are not able to share the impact of their programming of policies with experts; they also often rely on random knowledge, unproven data, intuition, and do not know how to reach a broad consensus regarding the reforms that are important for

the state. Public action is understood as a mechanical rather than an organic process in which it is impossible to match policy tools to a particular action.

On the other hand, in Poland, as well as in other Central and Eastern European countries, one can see many processes that are aimed at the modernization of public policies that are based on Anglo-Saxon models. Important factors in this respect were the rapprochement to Western countries after 1990, accession to the EU, and especially the availability of European funds. Many officials began to hold positions on various EU bodies and had to learn how to write professional analyses and reports on their actions. Gradually, a whole range of solutions in public sector governance were introduced, impact assessment mechanisms were applied, strategic documents were created, and programmes were evaluated.

Various solutions to a number of public problems were transferred from the EU and other countries (the Europeanization of national policies). Many interventions are programmed according to European objectives and priorities, sometimes as a result of internal ineptitude or when it is assumed in advance that a foreign solution is better. This happened in reforms within education, the pension system, healthcare, and economic policies. Thanks to the EU, a whole range of policies have been implemented, such as the senior policy, the active labour market policy, the activating mechanisms of social reintegration policy, the social cohesion policy, and the social inclusion policy (e.g. social cooperatives).

The process of programming public policies is enriched by various forums for dialogue, conciliatory bodies (including, among others, the Social Dialogue Council), and advisory bodies that function in many institutions. Thanks to EU funds, a significant number of scholars have conducted numerous interesting research projects which yielded unprecedentedly large resources of analytical policy knowledge, including knowledge-based recommendations for public authorities. The programming of at least some sectoral policies involves entities from outside the governmental–administrative circle. For example, a number of think tanks have published expert studies of considerable value. In addition, trade unions and employers' organisations are constantly strengthening their structures in the area of expert work. They feel a growing need to have experts to represent them in public policy disputes, and their

activists operate within European structures (the European Economic and Social Committee) and within public policy-making mechanisms that are coordinated at a national level (Eurofound, 2019).

However, knowledge resources that remain outside the administration do not often become the basis for programming public policies. Studies reveal that the administrations of the most important offices are still not sufficiently knowledgeable (Olejniczak and Widła-Domaradzki, 2010). In particular, there are problems with translating research findings and recommendations into the programming of real actions.

## Neo-institutional analysis of the public policy arena in Poland

Public policy in Poland can also be analysed using a neo-institutional approach in which the key concept is the arena of public policy, which is understood as a space where actors (individual and collective) interact, exchange goods and services, and try to solve problems, but they also clash and fight for dominance (Ostrom, 2007, pp. 27–28). Their actions are the result of self-interest, but at the same time this is balanced with a motivation to initiate policies that are also in the interests of the public.

Neo-institutionalism assumes that although actors are generally rational (they are goal-oriented), they are also subject to cognitive constraints (they act without possessing complete information, which generates various risks and affects their strategies and actions). In this way, institutions are essentially understood as shared concepts that exist in the minds of the participants of social life in the form of implicit knowledge rather than knowledge expressed explicitly (Ostrom, 2007, p. 23).

According to the proponents of neo-institutionalism, policy can be understood through skilful analysis that is focused on the actors' actions and behaviours, their interactions, rules, norms, and strategies (Ostrom, 2007; Schlager and Cox, 2017). Interactions between actors are shaped by three types of rules: daily behaviour, collective choice (rules that state who can influence operational rules), and constitutional choice (rules that state who can participate in the creation of collective choice rules and how they can be changed).

It is also important to analyse the norms (of the individual actors), which are considered to be either the drivers of collective choice decisions or factors that influence the ways in which dilemmas of collective action are resolved (achievement of public vs. private objectives). Norms reflect actors' values and preferences and shape the patterns of action as they consider necessary, unnecessary, or appropriate, as well as the accepted results of action. Norms specify to what extent individual actors take into account the interests of other actors when acting and the principle of reciprocity (Ostrom, 2005, p. 112).

Elinor Ostrom uses a very broad concept of actor-specific mental models which influence the behavioural patterns of actors and thus influence most characteristics of the political arena. Actors consolidate their mental models through the feedback of impulses that emanate from the environment (interactions, experiences, their perception of a situation) and through the system of beliefs in which individuals are rooted (Ostrom, 2005, p. 105).

Mental models determine the quality and dynamics of the actors' interactions, influence their behavioural strategies (e.g. cooperative vs. individual), their perception of other actors (their good or bad will), their preferences (e.g. a desire to be credible), and the results that are possible in a given policy arena (e.g. fair/balanced distribution of benefits vs. risk of heavy losses). They also influence patterns of information processing (knowledge and data) and simplify complexity in times of limited rationality (their natural cognitive constraints).

The above theoretical assumptions provide a potentially useful framework for analysing the arenas of public policy. The main research subject covers the behaviour of policy actors, their rules and norms, and the strategies that shape them. The main challenges in this research include the multiplicity of factors that should be analysed and the impenetrability of rules, standards, strategies.

Certain features of the public policy arena can be identified through data from sociological or sociological–psychological analyses, which reveal that this arena is not characterized by order understood in the sense that actors are guided by a system of unchanging rules that could stabilize the way the arena functions (institutionalization). In other words, the “rules of the game” are not complete in the sense of a structure that would ensure their transparency and the predictability

of the processes that are key for the actors involved. In the language of neo-institutionalism in Poland, there are no clear constitutive rules (rules of the game) in the arena of a particular policy, and consequently it is based mainly on operational rules. Although these rules have a certain binding power (exceeding them is penalised), they are not perfectly understandable to the actors themselves or to the public.

A deficit of norms and rules which are shared by actors and could form the basis of their actions can be observed in many instances of public action. It is likely that long-term strategies which are aimed at respecting negotiated norms and rules are seen as too risky to keep in a highly competitive environment. Actions are ad hoc and are intended to achieve short-term benefits, as are expectations regarding interactions with other actors. "The free rider problem", i.e. the use of public resources without bearing their cost, is not effectively penalised.

Actors perceive any decision taken within a particular policy as temporary and likely to be contested as the result of unexpected developments, e.g. the challenge of a sudden strengthening of a rival interest group or an advocacy coalition which would lead to a change in the balance of power and thus reach a new cost/benefit 'deal'.

In this context, it is difficult to initiate processes that would lead to complex collective problems being solved and the creation of development opportunities that are independent of particular goals.

Due to the rules they follow, the actions of actors are rather poorly rooted in the notion of public interest, although this is different for different sectoral policies or sub-policies. The land-use policy is a good example here, as it is dominated by the interests of property owners and those who trade in properties on the market. The social costs of this phenomenon are enormous: researchers estimated the cost to be at least 84 billion PLN per year, which is calculated just on the basis of the cost of the dispersed development and the growing costs of infrastructure maintenance, e.g. roads and water and sewage systems (Kowalewski et al., 2018). However, these calculations did not motivate those in power to reformulate the foundations of this policy.

The norms actors adhere to make them also stick to already obtained benefits, including group privileges (e.g. the Teacher's Charter, mining privileges, etc.). It is difficult to take into account the interests of other actors because it does not 'pay' to meet wider expectations. Hence,

actors tend to perceive attempts at structural transformation as a threat to their financial status as well as to their symbolic status, so they adopt conservative attitudes towards attempts at reforms.

Actors that behave according to the dominant model of interaction described above do not generate a sufficiently significant dose of synergy in those spheres of action that can be considered “common denominator” areas (i.e. public interest). They find it very difficult to cooperate (although to a different extent in different policies), even when they represent the same stakeholders. They are motivated by the idea of striving for consensus, but they usually fail to reach it, just as they do not pursue a win-win strategy. These phenomena seem to result from a low level of trust, as has been demonstrated by numerous studies over the years.

An example of the difficulty of cooperation – even between groups that represent the same stakeholders – is the multiplicity of employers’ organisations and trade unions that operate in the same sectors, as well as in the organisations that represent the stakeholders of specific public policies. Rafał Bakalarczyk described a far-reaching division between carers of people with disabilities, who are divided into carers of disabled children (those born with a disability) and carers of disabled adults (Bakalarczyk, 2015). Interesting examples are also given by analysts who examined a network of organisations representing the interests of organic farming. In Poland, there are three competing organisations, bringing together only 10 per cent of all entities in the sector, while in the Czech Republic there is only one organisation that brings together 50 per cent of all entities (Moschitz and Stolze, 2010, p. 251). Other studies indicate that the chambers of commerce in Poland are also highly dispersed, and their number is greater than in Germany or Great Britain, although they represent a smaller number of companies. For example, in Italy there are 120 chambers, which represent over 600 thousand companies, while in Poland there are 128 chambers representing fewer than 300 thousand companies (Kurczewska, 2016, p. 22, 129–130). Only 20 per cent of companies belong to employers’ organizations, which is the lowest percentage in the EU, except for Lithuania (European Commission, 2014, p. 25).

Actors co-create the policy arena, which is characterized by a high level of polarization of group interests, including political interests. This has increased since 2005, and most notably since 2015 (Makowski,

2019). The very modest scale of possible cross-party cooperation in the area of policies that can be considered strategic for the state and society has been reduced (Zybała, 2019), as is evident when considering the changes implemented in education policy (lowering the age of compulsory schooling, changes in the structure of education, and changes in the judiciary). The number of important policies formulated and implemented in a non-cooperative manner has increased (Makowski, 2019).

The above factors lead to a situation in which governmental actors do not conduct consultations on draft bills, nor do they discuss possible solutions to problems with actors from other fields. This leads to an underdeveloped network of experts who can exchange knowledge and experience, as well as inefficiency in the transfer of solutions to problems between different environments. The learning processes of policy makers are hindered or limited. This can have a number of negative outcomes, such as a lack of cognitive potential to identify the sources of instability in advance, and poor adaptability to changing circumstances (e.g. the changing structure of energy sources, management, or implementation of sophisticated regulatory mechanisms).

Table. 2. Types of public policy rules and their characteristics in the Polish political arena

Types of rules	Characteristics
Entry/exit rules – define the rules under which actors enter the arena of public policy and the conditions of their exit from it.	To enter the political arena, actors must have considerable resources (logistics, political contacts, capacity to influence significant social groups, significant financial resources).
Position rules – define how to form a position or obtain a role in a given public policy/programme (change of position).	Actors' positions are obtained on the basis of their ability to acquire: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tangible (financial) and intangible (e.g. media impact) resources,</li> <li>• the support of the political class,</li> <li>• the support of influential social groups that are relevant to party politics.</li> </ul>
Scope rules – define the results that can be achieved by actors in a given policy (results must be considered acceptable).	Actors can count on results (benefits) that are strongly dependent on their place in the policy arena and on the size of their resources. Actors receive a significant part of the benefits because of “the free rider problem” (benefits that result from breaking the rules).

<p>Authority/choice rules – define the scope of activities assigned to specific positions (i.e. actors who occupy positions) as well as the scale of subordination to which other actors must submit.</p>	<p>Decisive influence of the political class and its decisions to initiate action.</p>
<p>Information rules – define how information flows among actors, depending on the positions they hold.</p>	<p>It is usually public institutions that generate knowledge (including academic), which is often poorly processed and then turned into concepts useful for solving public problems. Information is treated as a private good (it is more often kept in the actors' own domain than the domain for public good). Access to information is a competitive advantage in the quest for benefits.</p>
<p>Aggregation rules – define the requirements that actors must meet in order to take action. They determine the level of control they have when it comes to action.</p>	<p>The initiation of policy is strongly dependent on the political class, its pressure, influence, and interest groups.</p>
<p>Payoff rules – define what benefits and costs are required, allowed, or prohibited for actors, depending on their position. Ways of being rewarded or punished in specific action. These define the links between costs and possible benefits.</p>	<p>The strongest actors are capable of obtaining significant benefits, regardless of the costs involved. The important phenomenon of “the free rider problem”.</p>

Source: own elaboration based on E. Ostrom's structure of rules (2005).

## Mental models

Actors of the public policy arena have the mental models, which frame their policy activity. These models determine the dynamics of their interaction, including their strategies (e.g. cooperative vs. individual) or the perception of other actors (antagonism vs. partnership). Full analysis based on this concept would require extensive consideration and further conceptual distinctions. However, it is worth mentioning several features of actors' mental models, starting with the model identified by Włodzimierz Wesolowski, which is a “conflicting and antagonistic perception of reality” that is characteristic of the Polish political arena. In various situations, this perception changes from its hidden form to an open one, which is accompanied by a belief that “misery is meant for some, whilst joy and

good fortune are meant for others". Weaker groups experience a sense of harm, fatalism, and a conviction that their situation must continue for incomprehensible reasons, whereas privileged groups believe in "their own natural superiority and worth" (Wesołowski, 1993, p. 128).

Within their interactions, actors also tend to focus on their existential interests, i.e. on satisfying the most elementary needs that guarantee their survival or that maintain their position. For example, in labour relations, trade unions focus on activities that concern the preservation of jobs or wage levels, but they neglect long-term attempts that are aimed at strengthening their professional skills, etc. An important problem is that actors perceive their interests in isolation from the interests of other layers of society or the public interest, which leads to strong polarisation (especially when the "other actor" is seen as a rival rather than a partner in pursuing a common goal).

Another issue is how actors perceive the problem being considered. Observations reveal that most actors tend to "privatise problems", i.e. to reduce the scope of problems, which in many developed countries are considered public problems. Hence, this leads to a relative amount of inactivity in the sphere of some public policies, as the problems within them are perceived to be a private matter for the citizens concerned, rather than a matter for the state or society as a whole. After 1990, the involvement of the Polish government in, for example, housing policy was non-existent (as a flat is often considered a private good), despite the huge housing problems that were experienced by millions of Poles. This was also the case with the fight against social exclusion. Income was considered a very private matter in the labour market (it was a private matter whether you had a job or not). Desolidarisation was the manifestation of a specific mental model in pension policy; social insurance was commercialised as a result of the perception of retirement income as a private matter (this was mitigated years later when the commercialised system proved to be economically inefficient).

Relying on specific mental models led to underutilisation of using analytical knowledge in the programming and implementation of public actions. This phenomenon, which took place in the period after 1990, indicates that actors rarely rely on knowledge when they are faced with formulating reforms, making important public decisions, or preparing draft bills. In many sectoral policies, standard research methods for

producing analytical knowledge have not been developed. Although, as mentioned before, the number of think tanks is growing, the public administration still does not possess adequate analytical potential in public policies (Ledzion, Olejniczak 2014). According to Michael Howlett, this includes the ability to analyse public policy, as well as the competence and capacity to create an effective system of knowledge acquisition and its application in the process of formulating and implementing public policies (Howlett, 2018).

The inadequate level of analysis in Poland has a long historical resonance (Zybała, 2016), which translates into the current situation in this area of politics. The politician, Jerzy Regulski, who is one of the main architects of local governance, concludes in his memoirs: “in Poland, there is still no respect for the knowledge that someone else has” (Regulski, 2014, p. 570).

Actors succumb to a specific mental model, which Adam Skwarczyński termed “romantic politics” or “romantic ideology”. This model is synonymous with very noble, heroic acts, even martyrdom, but it has nothing to do with “the real situation, with any reality ...” (Skwarczyński, 1934, p. 32). It is a tradition that encourages great reform projects that are not, however, based on proper substantive knowledge or analytical foundations. This is the result of following the “act first, think later” principle or the “bite off more than you can chew” principle (i.e. aim high). There is, therefore, a deficit of the Cartesian tradition that emphasizes the importance of a scientific background (sage’s glass and eye), i.e. in-depth analysis preceding decisions and public action.

## Summary and conclusions

The above analyses describe the foundations of the functioning of the public policy arena in Poland. Based on selected trends of institutionalism, it can be concluded that the rules and standards that are currently in force do not allow actors to create a high-quality public policy arena, i.e. one that is characterised by a sense of stability and permanence of the adopted rules, and whose priorities are aimed at professionalising public actions (e.g. through a knowledge-based model of public policy).

The deficit of binding norms and rules make it difficult to overcome the significant underdevelopment of the formula for collective action, including in public policies. In the 30 years that have passed since 1990, a number of countries in our region have still not fully modernised their methods of programming and implementing public actions/interventions. As Leslie A. Pal wrote, this is the effect of the lack of public tradition in the area of public policy in Central and Eastern Europe (Pal, 2014). Martin Potůček and Lance T. Leloup noted that this part of Europe is at present searching for a clearly defined identity for this discipline (Potucek and Leloup, 2003). Although recent years have witnessed progress in some spheres of sectoral policies, others are still neglected.

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Marcin Kędzierski  
Cracow University of Economics  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3950-9384>

# Public policy networks and public governance

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The notion of a political network in the arena of the public policy sciences is ambiguous and covers a set of varying theoretical approaches focused on the relationships and dependencies between governments and other public and non-public entities. The understanding of a political network that is closest to the concept of governance (defined as steering the networks of non-hierarchical interdependencies between public and non-public actors, which coordinates collective action and solves collective problems) defines it as a separate, autonomous, usually non-hierarchical and not necessarily formalised structure in the political system, whose basic feature is a distinctive way of (self-) organisation and internal communication.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to relate the concept of political networks to that of public governance, and, using empirical observation, apply the concepts of policy networks and public governance to public policy in Poland. After defining the concept of policy networks, the author discusses their application by analysing the distribution of power between public and private entities that together form a structured political network; in this context, governance is understood to be more than simply a mechanism used to coordinate the delivery of public services.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article lists numerous limitations of both the concept of policy networks itself and its application in research on public governance. With regard to the application of public policy in Poland, it is

clear that there is a lack of structured public policy networks capable of implementing public governance. This does not mean, however, that the Polish government has autonomous control over public policy in Poland, as it is significantly limited by the involvement of informal networks.

**Keywords:** policy networks, public governance, interest groups, lobbying, legislative process

The process of public policy involves a wide range of public and non-public actors. The scale of their involvement usually depends on their function within the political system (government, public administration, self-government, etc.) and the level of impact that a given policy can exert on these actors (e.g. the role of trade unions in labour market policy). An equally important factor influencing the level of participation in this process is the level of organisation of the various actors that represent particular interests. This is because relatively small interest groups may significantly influence the final shape of a policy, or large interest groups may have only a marginal influence on policymaking and implementation. Moreover, particular entities may represent different policy actors at the same time. The result of the above is the formation of policy networks that are structured to varying degrees.

As the number of actors and, consequently, the level of interaction increases, the complexity of policy networks increases. Globalisation and advances in information technology are key phenomena that affect the complexity of policy networks and public policymaking today. Another important factor influencing the increase in the number and complexity of policy networks is the growing scope of public policy, which translates into increased specialisation, decentralisation, and fragmentation.

The growing importance of networks in public policymaking has been accompanied by the emerging concept of a public governance that consists of “steering the networks of non-hierarchical interdependencies between public and non-public actors, which coordinates collective action and solves collective problems” (Mazur, 2015, p. 13). It is worth noting that the Polish subject literature lacks clear, unambiguously accepted definitions of these two concepts, which are sometimes equated with each other. Thus, an attempt to define the concept of political networks in relation to the concept of governance is made below.

The concepts of policy networks and public governance are used to empirically analyse the practice of public policy in Poland. Finally, the conclusion addresses the question as to what extent the state (government) as the main actor of public policy is able to maintain (or regain) control over the process of public policymaking today.

## Definition of policy networks

The issue of creating public policy networks has been explored in the subject literature since the 1970s as a result of research on interorganisational theory. This theory describes the mutual dependence that exists between actors, based on the resources to which they have access and which are necessary to achieve their goals (Adam and Kriese, 2007, p. 129).

The notion of a political network in the arena of the public policy sciences, which became topical in the 1990s, is ambiguous and covers varying theoretical approaches focused on the relationships and dependencies between governments and other public and non-public entities. In the Anglo-Saxon subject literature, the phenomenon of political networks was analysed through the identification of entities such as issue networks (loose coalitions established to achieve a specific goal) (Heclo, 1978); the “iron triangle” (mutual relationships between American congressional committees, interest groups, and bureaucracy) (Jordan, 1981); political sub-systems and subgovernments (a set of entities representing various actors involved in making routine political decisions in a specific area of public policy) (Freeman and Stevens, 1987); policy communities (Richardson and Jordan, 1979); and epistemic communities (Haas, 1992; Rhodes, 2008, p. 426).

On the basis of European studies, which are less focused on analysing the functioning of subgovernments and the relationships between individuals, and more on the structure of inter-organisational relationships, two fundamental ways of understanding the term can be distinguished (Adam and Kriese, 2007, p. 130). A political network is:

1. a new, separate, autonomous, usually non-hierarchical (horizontal) and not necessarily formalised structure in the political system, whose basic feature is a distinctive way of (self-) organisation and internal communication; this understanding of a political network is closest to the concept of governance (see Kenis and Schneider, 1991);
2. an umbrella term that covers the differing, unstructured relationships between public and non-public actors within the various political subsystems; depending on the model of relationship between these two types of actors, symmetrical or asymmetrical

networks can be distinguished that have a strong and clearly distinct centre in the form of a dominant government (*nota bene* the latter case is contrary to the concept of governance).<sup>1</sup>

However, following Rhodes (2008, p. 426), a single, relatively consistent definition can be formulated, although it is not very precise. Policy networks are a set of structured and/or unstructured but not necessarily formalised links of varying strength, stability, and permanence that exist between governmental and non-governmental actors that organise themselves around shared (or at least continuously agreed on) values and/or interests in public policymaking and implementation. These actors are interdependent, and the policies that emerge are a result of the interaction between them. It is worth adding that due to the progressive weakness of the state as a policy actor, it is nowadays increasingly difficult to claim that the government occupies a dominant position within the network.

However, the concept of policy networks can be viewed much more broadly, and three different levels can be identified. These are the characteristics of policy networks (the descriptive level); the mechanisms of network creation and functioning (the theoretical level); and the recommendations for policy network management (the prescriptive level) (Rhodes, 2008, p. 426). The characteristics of policy networks can be described with reference to interest intermediation, inter-organisational analysis, or governance. In theoretical analyses, the functioning of political networks can be explained from the perspective of two approaches: rational choice theory or Emersonian social exchange theory, which is also known as power-dependence theory. Finally, at the prescriptive level, there are three approaches to network management: instrumental, interactive, and institutional.

Governments responsible for creating public policies must negotiate with various groups that are characterised by both different interests and different expectations regarding their implementation. These include

1 S. Adam and H. Kriese also distinguished a third way, which is a quantitative approach in the analysis of social networks and focuses on describing the relationships that exist within the network, i.e. the logic of its functioning. The analysis of network centralization, the strength of links, and network density play a key role in this approach (Marin and Mayntz, 1991). However, it does not explain the dynamics of network formation and evolution, which is why it can be omitted here.

groups (outsiders) that are not recognised/accepted by their government, which resorts to extreme action and hold unrealistic expectations. They are counterbalanced by insiders, i.e. groups accepted by the government, which are willing to cooperate with the government and aim to fulfil their expectations under the existing formal rules of the political game (public consultations etc.). In practice, the expectations of insiders often undergo *sui generis* institutionalisation (e.g. trade unions and minimum wage). Over time, formalised relationships between the government and insiders can develop into routine informal relationships and thus lead to the emergence of policy networks. To use a neat expression, it is said that within such networks, insiders “do not lobby, they eat dinner” (Rhodes, 2008, p. 427).

The process of interest intermediation with insiders, which is probably the most important aspect of political networks, may take place within more or less formalised structures that are close to either political communities or communities formed to address a specific issue. The former have the following features: a relatively small number of participants (with the deliberate exclusion of specific groups); frequent and effective interactions between all participants; a cohesive and stable approach to the values, policy objectives and principles of participation; a general consensus on shared ideologies and political views; and rules governing the exchange of specific resources that are possessed by individual members of the community. In this sense, a key type of interaction within a political community is bargaining. An important feature of the political community is also the balance of power. However, this does not have to translate into an equal distribution of benefits, but rather into convincing all members that participation in the network is a positive-sum game.

Unlike political communities, communities formed around a problem are characterised by a much larger number of participants; an unstable level of interactions (in quantitative and qualitative terms); more frequent conflicts; relationships based on cooperation rather than the exchange of resources; and an uneven distribution of power, therefore some members of this community may have little resources, little access to benefits, and practically no alternative to participation in the network (Rhodes, 2008, p. 428).

Based on the criterion of closeness and the permanence of human relationships, the typology of networks that are formed by political

communities and communities formed around a problem derives directly from the American approach to political networks, in which interactions between individuals play a key role (hence the use of the term “community”). In Europe, the typology of networks is essentially based on two other criteria: the distribution of power within the network between the different political actors, and the prevailing nature of the interactions taking place in the process of negotiating their interests (van Waarden, 1992; Adam and Kriese, 2007).

When analysing power distribution, it should be assumed that there are essentially four groups of political actors within the network: state actors who represent the state (the government, public institutions, etc.); and three groups of non-state actors, namely political parties, interest groups, and non-governmental organisations/social movements. Due to the legitimised possibility of resorting to force, state actors occupy a special position within the network, which, however, does not have to mean that they dominate. Individual actors may strengthen their position by forming coalitions that are either homogeneous (state vs. non-state actors) or heterogeneous (e.g. government and NGO vs. opposition parties and interest groups). The three most commonly used methods of interaction that are employed by the various actors when negotiating their interests are based on conflict/competition, bargaining/negotiation, and cooperation. The particular method that is employed by a network in a chosen situation depends on the dominant type of interactions within it.

Table 1. Typology of political networks

Distribution of power	Type of interaction chosen in the process of negotiating interests		
	Conflict	Negotiations	Cooperation
Concentrated	Dominance	Asymmetric bargaining	Hierarchical cooperation
Fragmented	Challenge	Symmetric bargaining	Horizontal cooperation

Source: Adam and Kriese, 2007, p. 135.

The type of political network employed depends on the specificity of the political system at both international and national level. In Europe, which is very well politically integrated, and in an era of globalisation, both the distribution of power (including political resources) and the

prevailing type of interaction are subject to significant transformations (Coleman and Perl, 1999). The European Union, with its multi-level governance, is a particularly interesting example of the evolution of national and transnational political networks (Szczerski, 2008).

Although of less significance, another perspective to consider is inter-organisational analysis. Within this perspective, researchers' attention is not focused on the interpersonal relationships that exist within the network, but rather on analyses of the formal relationships that exist between ruling parties, ministries, business institutions, trade unions, and other interest groups that form a political network. The concept of an organisational state was developed within this perspective (Laumann and Knoke, 1987). Accordingly, although contemporary relationships between the state and society are increasingly vague, they create a peculiar mixture of influences which are exerted by particular institutions and the power relationships that exist between them. Understanding this mix makes it possible to explain many public policy decisions. However, the belief in the "predictive power" that comes from understanding the structure of the political network is commonly questioned.

## Political networks and public governance

Studies devoted to the power distribution between public and private entities that form a structured political network in public governance contributed considerably to understanding the nature of political networks (Rhodes, 2008, p. 429; Jordan, 1981). In these studies, governance is treated as a broader concept than simply a mechanism used to coordinate the delivery of public services.

This practical approach to the concept of governance can be divided into several trends. One particular example was implemented in the UK at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when there was a shift in emphasis from market mechanisms (which prevailed during the time of the Conservative Party's rule in 1979–1997) to network governance, partnerships, and joined-up government, which was introduced under the Labour government of Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997–2007). Studies on governance in the US distinguish between 1) political decisions that concern the creation of rules of interaction between the participants of political networks

and the formulation and enforcement of standards of public services (called steering), and 2) problem solving and public services delivery (called rowing). Importantly, in the case of the latter, it was observed that the bureaucratic approach was completely inadequate. David Osborne and Ted Gaebler (1992) even proposed a transition from the traditional model of hierarchical government to entrepreneurial government, whose most important task should be to create patterns of interaction within the political system (or political networks) and to control this system (less rowing, more steering).

B. Guy Peters (1996) contested the hierarchical model of public governance and proposed four alternative models of governance: market, participative, flexible, and deregulated. Their common features are fragmentation, flexibility, responsiveness, and networking (Rhodes, 2008, p. 430). In this sense, political networks, and more specifically their interaction patterns and governance methods, can be considered key elements of the governance concept.

There is abundant subject literature in which authors attempt to explain the functioning of networks based on two specific theoretical approaches: power-dependence and the concept of a rational actor (Börzel, 1998; Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan, 1997; Salamon, 2002). The former treats policy networks as a group of resource-dependent social actors who are forced to exchange their resources. In this situation, interaction strategies within the network focus on creating the rules of the game in the exchange process. The aim of each actor in this game is to maximise his influence through the skilful use of resources, in order to gain an advantage over others and thus become independent of them. In this sense, the logic of the functioning of networks is based on the principles of competition and rivalry, and the differences between networks result from the distribution of resources and the ability of individual network participants to conduct exchanges.

The proponents of rational choice theory try to explain the functioning of political networks by combining the concept of rational choice and the concept of new institutionalism, which results in the creation of actor-centred institutionalism (ACI) (Scharpf, 1997). This combination is supported by the argument that institutions establish a system of rules that give particular actors (individual and collective) the opportunity to achieve the goals of their choice. Explicit and stable rules of interaction

within the network reduce uncertainty, improve the quality of communication, and foster non-hierarchical coordination. Thus, “public policy is the result of the interaction between actors with specific resources and bounded rationality. The potential of particular actors, their preferences, and their perceptions of reality are to a large extent, but not entirely, determined by the institutional standards under which they interact with one another” (Rhodes, 2008, p. 432; Scharpf, 1997).

Fritz Scharpf used game theory, which is based on the theory of power dependence in social exchange, to analyse and explain the rules of interaction within the network (Rhodes, 2008, p. 432). Thus, it seems that the two theoretical approaches (power-dependence theory and rational choice theory) that are used to analyse the functioning of political networks are complementary.

As political networks gained popularity and the concept of governance became more widespread, these ceased to be purely theoretical and became a real challenge for governments facing increasing limitations on their power. The key issue policymakers must address concerns the present forms of governance of policy networks that emerged because of the evolution of political systems. Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan (1997) distinguished three approaches that can be utilised: instrumental, interactive, and institutional. Within the instrumental approach, it is the government’s task to shape the relationship between actors in the political process in such a way as to enable the government to maintain legitimate authority. However, this strategy has a significant weakness: its focus on influencing the relationship between particular actors can result in strong resistance from those who are decisive in solving specific public problems. Consequently, the instrumental approach can lead to less flexibility in conducting public policy.

Conversely, the interactive approach is based less on a desire to maintain hierarchical relationships in which the government maintains the dominant position, and more on the government interacting with and understanding all the actors involved. In practice, this means that “public managers” must possess well-developed communication and interpersonal skills that enable them to listen to the voice of the network participants and jointly seek acceptable solutions for all interested parties. This allows them to build long-term, stable relationships within the network (or even within political communities). The problem with this approach is that

the process of building such a community is long and costly, and it does not provide the ruling party with any guarantee of achieving satisfactory results within a given timeframe for the simple reason that sometimes there is no solution that is satisfactory to all the actors involved. Moreover, actors' satisfaction is an extremely subjective concept and is relatively more difficult to measure than the effects of political decisions that are made using the traditional, hierarchical model.

Finally, the institutional approach focuses on an incremental change in the set of stimuli and principles, as well as on political culture in its broadest sense. This change leads to the dissemination of a communal approach to solving public problems. However, this is not a particularly concrete approach, and actors with the greatest resources, who often equate their sectoral interest with public interest, are not necessarily willing to change the rules of the game (especially if they are likely to succeed).

## Challenging the concept of political networks

Theoretical deliberations, which are devoted not only to political networks but also to the idea of public governance, are marked by numerous ambiguities and suffer from significant limitations and challenges, which have led some researchers in the field of the public policy sciences to criticise the conceptual foundations of governance (Mazur, 2015). They argue that even if it is possible to describe the structure and functioning of one policy network, e.g. using ethnographic research, this description will not be universal, which makes it difficult to extrapolate it to other networks created by other entities on the basis of a completely different set of values and objectives. Within the transnational/global dimension, there are hundreds of policy networks that form polycentric structures. It is not feasible to conduct ethnographic studies, to compare their results, and to work out a set of universal principles that determine the structure and operation of networks on this basis. Thus, a general theory that would explain how a particular political network is created does not seem attainable. It is also difficult to imagine developing a theory that would explain how political networks influence public policymaking, which poses a major challenge to the concept of public governance.

Rhodes (2008) points to three main approaches that combine network theory with analyses of policy change: advocacy coalitions, the dialectic model (the function of interactions between the network and its members, the environment, and the results), and decentralised analysis (ethnographic research). Without entering into a detailed analysis of each of these approaches, it can be concluded that they share two features. The first is that they encourage field research into the individual networks, which further enables analysis of particular social interactions and their impact on the final shape of a policy, understood as solving specific public problems. The second is that they draw attention to the role of ideas and storytelling in the management of political networks and public policymaking. In this sense, deliberation plays a key role in the process of (multi-level) public governance (Sroka, 2008).

Amongst the challenges that are faced when discussing the concept of political networks, it is worth mentioning that this concept is increasingly being used to describe and explain events occurring in the international arena. This is especially the case considering the fact that the structure of actors participating in international relations and those participating in national relations have become similar (heterogenisation) and furthermore, considering the specific nature of the mutual relationships between the individual actors (dehierarchisation). In this context, new actors that form political networks on the national and international arena are becoming less and less institutionalised in nature, and at the same time they are beginning to permeate one another, due to, for example, the information revolution and the advent of the internet and social media.

As a result, the greatest challenge for both researchers and policy makers is to find their place in a new polycentric and de-institutionalised structure, in which responsibility and accountability have blurred, in which the traditional methods of coordination (the state or the market) and the relationships that exist between them are diminishing, and in which the mismatch between the existing instruments of policy is growing. In practice, this means that the question that must be answered is how to conduct public policy when the state ceases to play a monopolistic role; this is not a voluntary decision that is taken, as is the case within the concept of governance, but it is as a result of objective changes that take place in the global political system.

## Political networks in Polish public policy

The issue of policy networks in Poland can be considered from four main perspectives: first, an attempt to identify the networks (and their areas of operation) that influence public policymaking in Poland; second, analysis of the process of network creation and functioning; third, consideration of the impact political networks exert on public policy in Poland; fourth, the wider international context, including, in particular, the European Union and its multi-level public governance.

The findings reported in the subject literature and the interviews with researchers in the field of the public policy sciences lend support to the claim that in Poland, *de facto*, there are no structured public policy networks capable of implementing public governance. It is difficult to find examples of structured cooperation between the various actors, even within such natural relationships as those that exist between central government and local governments, not to mention other public and non-public actors. There are probably many reasons for this state of affairs, but it suffices to say that, in Poland, structured dialogue within the law-making process is practically non-existent, whereas in the USA, for example, such dialogue has led to the creation of the “iron triangle”. It seems that the facade of both the public consultation process and the lobbying regulations (for example, the Act on lobbying of 2005, which *de facto* encourages informal lobbying) will consolidate this lack of structured political networks.

This does not mean that public policy in Poland is conducted by the government in an autonomous manner. Many authors point to the weakness of the executive, which is evident in scientific literature (Wolek, 2012; Hausner, 2015), popular science (Matyja, 2018), and even in the media (Sienkiewicz, 2018). These authors give a number of examples that show that even with the goodwill of those in power, reliable diagnosis, cross-party consensus, and the appropriate official apparatus at the highest level of governance, those in power lack adequate tools to achieve the planned goals; failure is brought about by the sum of small inefficiencies at the level of secondary offices or agencies. This problem can be seen in, for example, the education system or road safety, which affect most of society (Sienkiewicz, 2018). It is extremely difficult to find these small deficiencies in the maze of informal connections, just as

it is difficult to negotiate interests between the representatives of particular groups, including the political and business elites. The authors mentioned above try to diagnose the weaknesses of the state, and some offer reform proposals that are, however, of a metapolitical rather than an institutional nature (e.g. creating a civic think-tank or launching a debate on the contemporary role of the state). This is not an accusation; it is possible that the contemporary state needs to redefine how to negotiate policy effectively.

The language used in books and reports devoted to the weaknesses of the state has entered everyday speech in the form of terms such as 'theoretical state' and 'cardboard state'. Thus, it can be claimed that the final shape of public policy is not dependent on the government. Rather, it is the result of informal bargaining between different interest groups operating within unstructured political networks, or... it is the result of chance, i.e. an unpredictable and scientifically inexplicable coincidence caused by either intentional or unintentional actions of the various actors. Deciding which of these two explanations is more relevant to the analysis of a specific public policy requires in-depth case studies.

One of the first and best-known case studies was conducted by Kaja Gadowska (2002), who carried out a comprehensive analysis of the process of creating public policy in mining, with particular emphasis on the role of network connections between actors. Paweł Ruszkowski and Andrzej Wójtowicz (2009) identified the interest groups in the privatisation process of the Polish power industry. Another interesting scientific study devoted to the role of political networks was Paweł Swianiewicz's (2008) analysis of the distribution of money from European funds in the first post-accession financial phase (2004–2006). In recent years, scientists working in this area of research were joined by journalists who attempted to describe the informal, unstructured networks that influence the shape of public policy; one of the most interesting examples here is the analysis of networks operating in the railway sector that was conducted by Karol Trammer (2019).

However, studies devoted to informal political networks in Poland did not just investigate sectoral issues. Radosław Sojak and Andrzej Zybertowicz (2008), among others, analysed the role of informal mechanisms in the process of political transformation in Poland. One element of their analysis was a description of Zygmunt Solorz-Żak's business network and

its impact on public policy in Poland. An interesting analysis of another Polish political network was conducted from an international perspective by Janina Wedel (2009) and focused on the Ordynacka Association. The origins of both these networks can be traced back to the final years of the Polish People's Republic. The links that were established between the power apparatus and the criminal world before 1989 are the sources of many informal networks that were operating in Poland in the years following the political transformation. A comprehensive picture of these networks by Adam Podgórecki, called "dirty communities", can be found in a publication edited by Karol Nawrocki and Daniel Wicenty (2018).

One of the most interesting examples of unstructured and informal yet internationalised networks for creating (and *de facto* blocking) public policy in Poland is the issue of re-privatisation, i.e. the return of property nationalised by the communist authorities, including the restoration of Jewish properties to their previous owners. In the post-war years, a specific network of actors with an interest in this subject was created that included the representatives of municipal authorities and tenants of nationalized properties (Luterek, 2016). It was only after 1989, when people started to voice their claims to nationalised property and the reprivatisation policy began to be treated seriously, that we can speak about the dynamic development and growth of a political network focused on this specific area of interest. The participants of this network are not only public and non-public national entities (including central and local government offices, and, for example, political parties and other entities that bought property subject to reprivatisation for very low prices), but also international entities: the governments of countries that represent the descendants of their heirs (through their embassies in Poland), international Jewish organisations, the central banks of third party countries, investment funds, international law firms, etc.). As a result of the actions of the aforementioned entities, the reprivatisation law failed to be ratified in the first 25 years of the Third Republic of Poland. The closest it came was in 2001 when it was ultimately vetoed by the then President Aleksander Kwasniewski. Reprivatisation also became one of the flagship projects of the government of Law and Justice when it came to power in autumn 2015. Despite strong political will and intensive legislative work, including the process of agreeing the regulations with the various interest groups, the government succumbed to pressure from

international entities (including Jewish organisations and the embassies of Israel, the USA, Canada, and Australia) and ultimately decided not to submit the almost complete reprivatisation bill to the Parliamentary process. The bill regulated the maximum amount of compensation for heirs and the rules for applying for compensation. The failure to legislate on this issue means potentially higher compensation costs for the state budget and further petrification of the problem, which is a sensitive point for Polish foreign policy.

## Conclusions

The issue of public policy networks and the concept of public governance seem to be extremely valuable from both a theoretical (understanding the course of political processes) and an empirical (public management) perspective. At the same time, despite being intuitive to a certain extent, these concepts are both imprecise and broad enough to lead to numerous misunderstandings. It could be argued that political networks, which by definition should be inclusive, may exclude some entities more categorically than is the case with the traditional Weberian model of public administration, which is based on coercion.

Regardless of the theoretical dilemmas, the question of whether Poland should strive to build structured networks for creating public policy and direct public management towards governance remains open. This approach has undoubted advantages. It could be said to increase both the degree of adjustment of policy instruments to meet real needs and the level of social acceptance of the implemented solutions; there are several examples of countries in the world where this concept of governance has been implemented (e.g. the Netherlands). The effectiveness of governance depends on the type/quality of the political culture and it probably takes a lot of time to adapt this culture to the model of governance. However, there is no guarantee that this would work in Poland. What is more, it should not be forgotten that both the application of governance and the adjustment process involve specific costs in terms of both time and money. It would be unreasonable to expect that interest groups operating today within unstructured political networks will remain passive in creating a model that can limit their influence on public policy.

Therefore, it seems reasonable to ask whether Poland should try to implement governance that is likely to further weaken the already inefficient state and which must compete with increasingly powerful actors on the international arena, namely other states and global non-public players. It can be argued that the government formed after the 2015 elections has more or less consciously tried to consolidate power into the hands of the state, which must result in growing tensions in its relationships with external entities. This strategy is controversial, but it must be emphasised that it is not unreasonable. However, the fate of the reprivatisation law proves that it has its limitations, especially in a situation in which the Polish state has limited resources and thus limited international agency. It is therefore possible that the creation of structured policy networks and the implementation of public governance will increase the transparency of the policymaking process and thus strengthen the resilience of Polish public policy against the informal influence of national and international interest groups, despite the considerable costs involved in these safeguards. There is no guarantee that the adoption of such a strategy would be the optimal solution, but continued debate of the issues presented in this article is undoubtedly fundamental for the future of public policy in Poland.

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Marcin K. Zwierzdzyński  
AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow  
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4248-5897>

# Evidence-based policy

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Evidence-based policy is an approach to policymaking that assumes that the best political solutions can be created through the integration of experience, systematic learning, and research. An important aim of this approach is to ensure that public policymaking continuously combines four perspectives: the experiences of its addressees and stakeholders, the voices of experts, the opinions and value systems of policymakers, and evidence derived from research.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of this article is to analyse the essence, origins, argumentation, legitimacy, application, controversy, criticism, challenges, and recommendations of evidence-based policy. The research problem and the research method of analyses conducted in the article are based on a critical analysis of subject literature devoted to evidence-based policy in both its global and local dimensions. The research problem focuses on the assumptions and applications of the paradigm of evidence-based policy. The article addresses questions about the essence and origins of evidence-based policy and reviews arguments for the use of it and examples of their implementation; it ends with some recommendations and a discussion of the challenges of evidence-based policy and the arguments against it.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The analysis concludes that the success of evidence-based policy depends on convincing policymakers of the value of knowledge. Policymakers must be able to distinguish between less and more valuable knowledge and treat it as a resource to be managed rationally

and responsibly. The recommendations focus on four dimensions of evidence-based policy: personnel, communication, methodology, and institutions.

**Keywords:** evidence-based policy, knowledge, authority, public management

In 2019, the Nobel Prize in Economics was awarded to a team of scientists for their “experimental approach to alleviating global poverty”. What might seem surprising is that the award winners did not study poverty itself but instead focused on areas closely related to the problem, mainly in education and health (Banerjee and Duflo, 2011; Duflo, Dupas and Kremer, 2011). One of the conclusions of their work was that poverty could be effectively combated by means of tutoring or implementing a broad health promotion programme. This was not an accidental ‘discovery’. These solutions were postulated based on research using an experimental approach and then implemented in the policies, programmes, and regulations of many countries around the world. The Nobel Committee estimated that the awarded research could have had a positive impact on the lives of around 400 million people.

The winners of the Nobel Prize in Economics based their research on field experiments. This approach, which is derived from the natural sciences, consists of conducting research using a randomized controlled trial (RCT), whose results are compared with the results obtained from groups subjected to intervention (Duflo, Glennerster and Kremer, 2007; Dąbrowski, 2014). The point is to check the extent to which factors that are assumed by the researchers (e.g. participation in tutoring) affect the life of an individual or a group (e.g., whether they affect the degree of poverty). Such findings, but also reliable knowledge of real or possible events or risks, can be used in the political decision-making process. The article describes knowledge-based approaches to planning, implementing, and evaluating public policies.

## Essence and origins

Evidence-based policy and evidence-based policymaking (hereinafter, EBP) is a recent paradigm of public governance and an area investigated within the arena of public policy science. The development of theoretical reflection on EBP has had little impact on the popularity of this approach among decision makers (Zybała, 2016), which is part of a broader gap between the social sciences and reality (Brownson, Ewing and McBride, 2006; Sałustowicz, 2003). This situation is not improved by the poor coverage of scientific research in the media

and the lack of teaching of analytical skills in school curricula and at universities.

As an approach, EBP shifts the emphasis from opinion to knowledge, although it should be remembered that generating knowledge does not replace decision-making. Knowledge is merely (or even “as much as”) a tool that can be used to support decision-makers in the application of a specific decision-making model and in becoming familiar with the nature of the premises on which it is based (Pawson, 2006; Davies, Nutley and Smith, 2009). As with many social innovations, EBP first performed this function in the military (Zybała, 2013) and in medicine (Greenhalgh, 2010). The creation of the RAND Corporation in 1948, which was a precursor of American think tanks and a pioneer of R&D institutions, was important for the development of EBP. Although established to address the needs of the army, its great potential for supporting the American government and in creating a space for commercial activities was promptly recognized. The corporation specialized in recommendations that facilitated rational resource management and popularized variant analyses in designing public policies.

In medicine, which is the area most frequently associated with the origins of EBP, this evidence-based approach drew attention to the need to integrate knowledge from three sources: the diagnosis of a specific patient and his clinical situation (e.g. checking the TSH levels in his blood, performing a thyroid ultrasound, etc.), the results of scientific research (in the field of endocrinology), and the patient’s system of values and preferences (e.g. his attitude to taking medications daily, keeping to his diet, etc.). This integration is implemented by doctors when making decisions, which is additionally based on their skills and experience (Gajewski, Jaeschke, and Brożek, 2008). The contribution of medicine to the development of EBP was primarily related to the promotion of an experimental approach. Randomization obtained using RCT is still treated as an element that determines the credibility of research, in and outside of the field of medicine.

After gaining popularity in the military and in medicine, the evidence-based approach was popularized in public management, mainly due to the Labour government of Tony Blair and the technocratic environment he created. Philip Davies, the head of the Government Chief Social Researcher’s Office, defined EBP as “an approach that helps

people make well-informed decisions about policies, programmes, and projects, by putting the best available evidence from research at the heart of policy development and implementation” (Davies, 1999: 1). The evidence here is synonymous with the effectiveness of planned and subsequently implemented public projects. Public programmes were to be evaluated based on the results obtained (the efficiency model), and not because of properly executed procedures (the bureaucratic model) or the resources used (the absorption model). In this system, organisational learning and the necessity to perform evaluation based on monitoring indicators played an important role.

The idea of using the results of scientific research in politics was nothing new (at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, political research was based on statistical data, the results of surveys, and urban analyses), but only at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century did this open up to new possibilities due to two factors. First, it became possible to apply research results from the social sciences (economics, sociology, psychology, etc.), which ceased to be treated as distant relatives of philosophy and law and became autonomous and extremely practical tools for analysing and constructing reality. Second, it was a time of dynamic development of the knowledge-based economy (which became the basis of the EU Lisbon Strategy in 2000) and of its conceptual support in terms of organizational learning, knowledge management, new public management, and the evaluation and analysis of public policies (Józefowski, 2012).

EBP assumes that the best political solutions can be created through the integration of experience, systematic learning, and research. An important aim of this approach is to ensure that public policy-making continuously combines four perspectives: the experiences of its addressees and stakeholders, the voices of experts, the opinions and value systems of policymakers, and evidence derived from research (Davies, 2004). In this sense, this approach can support decision-making at all levels of public management: strategic decisions (formulating the direction of development), operational decisions (implementing objectives and actions), and specific decisions (made by employees in relation to customers).

EBP is a procedure that consists of several steps: defining and diagnosing the issue, conducting variant analyses, preparing action

scenarios, suggesting and justifying which variant to choose, updating the analyses and correcting actions during implementation of the policy, evaluating the implemented policy, and formulating practical recommendations for the future.

These steps do not include the actual decision-making, as this is an element of the process of public policy making that EBP can support but never replace (Parkhurst, 2017).

## Argumentation and legitimacy

There are four main arguments that justify the importance and advantages of EBP over alternative tools supporting the decision-making process. First, EBP encourages a rational (i.e. informed, structured, and controllable) approach to public policies. Taxpayers, who are at the same time beneficiaries of public policies, have the right to be informed of the state of the public sector and to demand solutions that are more likely to improve the quality of their life than those that are based on intuitions, opinions, or simple political whims. Furthermore, these same members of society contribute taxes for and benefit from public funded science, and so have the right to expect that it will be useful to all, not just to a small group of “mad scientists”. This increases the transparency of public undertakings and may ultimately increase the level of trust in state authorities, which is currently at a crisis point across Europe.

Second, EBP is based on the scientific method and analytical tools, i.e. the intersubjective ways of generating, collecting, and applying knowledge that can be falsified, tested, and improved. At each stage, EBP uses a variety of methods and approaches to provide a heterogeneous set of evidence that offers a range of perspectives from which problems can be analysed. There are two analytical tools that play a special role in this respect: systematic review (Matera and Czapska, 2014) and meta-analysis (Walecka and Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2016). Systematic review is a tool used to develop a synthesis of research results and to conduct analyses of various sources by searching, assessing, and analysing data; this is carried out with a view to producing knowledge that can be applied to public policies or action programmes. The purpose of meta-analysis is similar, but its specificity is related to the use of statistical analyses.

By verifying and summing up the conclusions of individual projects and studies, reviews, and meta-analyses, decision-makers gain high-quality knowledge about a given problem and its potential solutions.

Third, EBP is consistent with the requirements of the educated and well-informed public. In an era of open learning and ubiquitous, instantly available data, public policies should be based on knowledge, as this is the basis on which our whole lives are increasingly built.

Fourth, EBP is practical because it is able to use knowledge for political decision-making (Mitton et al., 2007; Weiss, 1979). It can be used directly in concrete solutions and in the implementation of proposals grounded in data and prepared by experts (the technocratic model). Knowledge can also be treated as a basis, as a supplement to premises, and as a resource that can be adapted to specific needs and decision-making circumstances (the pragmatic model). Thanks to knowledge, it is possible to decree pre-approved solutions which preclude the rational arguments of their opponents (the emblematic model). Each of these three models has its pros and cons. The first model is very rational but *de facto* puts power in the hands of people who are detached from the political and institutional context, which is often crucial for the process of implementing decisions. The third model does not have much regard for substantive and methodological complexities but is extremely effective in political terms. The second has the advantage of being moderate but has the disadvantages of any compromise approach in attempting to accommodate the quality of knowledge and the context of decisions.

Thanks to EBP, better public policies are created that lead to better lives that are healthier, longer, and more prosperous. The set of premises, criteria, and arguments that define EBP as a tool used to improve quality of life is based on an axiomatic and even a political foundation. This foundation treats the public sphere as a common good to be cared for by each participant; it places science above common sense; favours rationality over magical, mythical, and religious thinking; cares about community more than about individuals; encourages respect for authority; and sees practice as the crowning of theory. Thus, EBP is not a universal approach, but it is an approach that encourages discussion (including about itself), using arguments that, again, are neither timeless nor neutral.

Even if people make decisions based on various premises (intuitions, emotions, normative beliefs), knowledge increasingly rules the

world today, and those in power still play a vital role in knowledge management. The belief of Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault is not outdated: those with power know, and those who know have a good chance of having power (Bennett, Silva and Warde, 2010). The strategic importance of knowledge has been recognised by the private sector for several decades and by the public sector for more than a decade, but the latter has been far more reluctant to implement the basic principles of a knowledge-based economy, despite the fact that it has been sanctioned by both recent EU development strategies.

## Application

EBP entered into Polish political culture when Poland joined the EU and when OECD guidelines were published. The OECD guidelines recommended that strategic management be based on diagnosis while the legislative process should be based on assessment of the impact of regulations. Furthermore, all publicly funded projects should be subject to meticulous evaluation. The *National Development Strategy 2020 (Strategia Rozwoju Kraju (SRK) 2020)* of 2012 includes an element of the EBP manifesto: “An important condition for highly effective public interventions is to base public policies on evidence, i.e. to make analyses-based decisions at the strategic and the operational levels. This can be done by strengthening and extending the use of evaluation to examine the whole system of development strategy systematically, regardless of the source of financing for the intervention. Considerable support for evidence-based policies can be provided by the appropriate analytical potential of the units responsible for planning and implementing developmental activities and by continuous cooperation with external experts. It is important to stimulate the development of new analytical methods that result from the development of knowledge and measurement techniques (e.g. new sources of data and information obtained thanks to digitisation), as well as the development of knowledge on identifying, researching, and meeting needs” (SRK, 2012, p. 33).

An example of the EBP approach being applied in Poland is the impact assessment system (hereinafter, IA), which is understood as an analytical process that supports decision making within the law-making

process (Kirkpatrick and Parker, 2007). The IA provides reliable knowledge of the various scenarios and options of any planned intervention, which include the estimated costs and benefits of implementing the regulation being assessed (hence, it is often called the regulation impact assessment, hereinafter, RIA). In its overall approach, the IA consists of six steps, broadly corresponding with the EBP steps that were outlined above: analysis of the problem; presenting different ways of solving the problem; determining the results of the various solutions that have been put forward; extensive consultation regarding the alternatives; presenting and justifying the recommendations; and planning the evaluation of the solution that is to be implemented (Górniak, 2015, p. 11).

The general assumptions of the IA were translated into a more specific language in the *Better Regulations 2015 (Lepsze Regulacje 2015)* programme, which was directly based on the aforementioned *National Development Strategy 2020 (Strategia Rozwoju Kraju (SRK) 2020)* (SRK, 2012) and two departmental strategies, *Efficient State 2020 (Sprawne Państwo 2020)* (Ministries of Administration and Digitization) and *Dynamic Poland 2020 (Dynamiczna Polska 2020)* (Ministries of Economy). One of the objectives of the programme was to develop the IA system, based on compliance with the guidelines for performing impact assessments and organizing public consultations (Bienias and Hermann-Pawłowska, 2015). The programme defined three types of documents to be developed for the requirements of law making: the Regulatory Test, a synthesis of the impact assessment taken at the first level (of assumptions) of the draft regulation; *ex ante* Regulatory Impact Assessment, an impact assessment carried out during the drafting process; *ex post* Regulatory Impact Assessment, an impact assessment performed at some point after the adopted solution has been implemented.

The report of the Supreme Audit Office (Najwyższa Izba Kontroli, NIK) of December 2017 revealed that although the IA system is a formal requirement, it is not widely utilized as a tool for improving the law. However, in situations where it has been used in accordance with the guidelines (in 6 out of 20 regulations that were examined), this tool has provided reliable information on the results of planned interventions. According to the NIK, the greatest weaknesses of the assessed system included the late implementation of the IA (often as late as when the regulation has been signed off), the negligible involvement of expert teams,

a failure to comply with the guidelines prepared by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, poor usage of the potential of public consultation, and the too-rare ex-post implementation of the RIA (NIK, 2018, p. 14). However, the most serious shortcoming lies in treating the IA as a 'seal' that legitimises solutions that have been adopted in advance, which not only contradicts the very idea of this tool (whose aim is to provide knowledge about the diverse variants of the action being proposed) but even legitimises rogue actions and lawbreaking.

In Poland, the application of knowledge at the level of public strategic management can be placed somewhere between the pragmatic and the emblematic model (Zwierzdzyński, 2015). In addition to the overall strategic dimension of the EBP, attempts have been taken to consider the evidence-based approach in specific public policies. Due to an extensive international tradition of using EBP in social policy (Fischer, 1976; Smith, 2014), this approach is now often used in social work (Szarfenberg, 2011; Klingemann, 2013), science policy (Jelonek and Karwińska, 2012), educational policy (Kędziński, 2017), health policy (Gajewski, Jaeschke and Brożek, 2008), land policy (Feltynowski, 2018), transport policy (Jackiewicz, Czech and Barcik, 2010), and safety policy (Mazur, 2014). This selection of examples (including the IA) is not accidental as expenditure on education, health care, social assistance, transport, security, and administration consume the lion's share of the Polish budget.

## Controversy and critique

There are several important points of contention in the EBP approach. These include the notion of evidence itself, the omission of the recipients' perspective in the decision-making process, a possible methodological mismatch, and the risk of abuse on the part of the process participants. One of the most frequently criticised and most controversial concepts related to EBP is 'evidence' itself (Marston and Watts, 2003). Advocates of evidence-based policy have to answer the following questions: Why is it important that evidence is trustworthy, valid, and reliable? How to reconcile the results of studies with similar or even contradictory findings? What is good evidence? Why should this evidence be relied upon when designing and implementing public policies? After all, as

Kazimierz W. Frieske observes, “one of typical strategies used by experienced administrators when they try to avoid making any decision is to call a panel of experts and wait unhurriedly for them to agree on their recommendations” (Frieske, 2008, p. 14).

There are two basic sources of knowledge (evidence) that policy makers can utilise: research and the stakeholders of public policies. Scientific knowledge itself also has two sources: quantitative and qualitative research. The former generates numerical, measurable, quantifiable data that can be expressed in units of measurement, while the latter is based on opinions, declarations, narratives, and experiences. Stakeholders or, more broadly, the public policy environment that serves as a source of knowledge, can also be divided into several categories. These are experts, practitioners, employees, partners, entrepreneurs, regulators, and customers themselves, i.e. the recipients of a given policy. It is worth emphasising that even the best scientific knowledge will not guarantee success if the decision-making process does not take into account the perspective of its addressees and their immediate environment. The user experience (UX) approach used by designers of interactive systems may be inspiring here. Public policy makers should be “user-oriented”, know what the users’ needs are, rely on the knowledge that is obtained through research, and be able to apply this knowledge in a specific context.

Each research method has its advantages and limitations. Randomised controlled trials and large-scale sample surveys are well suited to transnational or global public policies where quantitative data and statistical correlations between clearly defined variables are relevant. However, these methods are not appropriate for the collection of data that depend on a specific (e.g. local) context based on the subjective meanings ascribed to that context by individuals or groups (Davies, Nutley and Smith, 2009). The hierarchy of evidence, if applicable, should be established by policy makers and public managers in relation to the particular demand for knowledge in each specific circumstance. The expansion of quantitative methods in the EBP area is not always a positive phenomenon, as exemplified by the ‘fetishisation’ of indicators (Zybała, 2013). Having an extremely rationalistic, positivist, econometric, technocratic, or often simply socio-technical perspective can be counterproductive.

Knowledge is ordered and produced by individuals (and institutions) who hold specific beliefs or sets of norms and values and who

are sometimes financed and controlled by other individuals guided by specific objectives and a keen interest in ensuring that the results of research are consistent with a pre-existing agenda (which is sometimes ironically called policy-based evidence; Hodgkinson, 2012). However, even research that has been conducted as independently and methodologically precisely as possible must then be interpreted. 'Evidence' will not reveal anything by itself, especially to politicians, who are in principle entangled in an ideological dispute. That is why it is so important that evidence is transparent from the perspective of the production process (both its validity and reliability) and in terms of the institutions that commission and control it. Abuse can be a result of pressure groups (and their specific interests), research institutes (which treat public policy as a guarantor of a profitable research subject), 'independent' think tanks (which are often the gateway to a political career), or consulting agencies (which conduct research for profit).

Politics is often one of the main obstacles to achieving the EBP objectives (Young and Mendizabal, 2009). What does 'common good' mean? What is an objective definition of 'justice'? What does the 'optimal solution' of a problem mean? Is it possible to talk about 'solving' any problem in politics at all? (Rittel and Weber, 1973). EBP critics claim that it is impossible to compare politics to medicine, that there is a qualitative difference between them, and that political decision-making does not share anything (except a name) with making clinical or business decisions. Radical critics of EBP even claim that politics is nothing more than a clash of ideas and values that makes the evidence-based approach empty rhetoric and wishful thinking – more a myth than a real tool that is capable of improving the quality of public life (Hammersley, 2013).

There are also purely practical obstacles to applying the EBP approach in politics (De Marchi, Lucertini, and Tsoukias, 2016). Politicians often make decisions quickly (in order to avoid a crisis); they have to satisfy a wide range of interests (in order to ensure they do not lose power); they cannot change their minds too often (in order to remain credible); they often rely on hidden knowledge (in order to improve the accuracy of their decisions); and they are often scientifically ignorant (in order to attract a considerable percentage of the electorate). Conducting scientific research always takes time, is often linked with conclusions

that the majority will find unpopular, can sometimes instigate a sudden change to previous ways of thinking, is by nature intersubjective and overt, and also exposes the mechanisms of (usually populist) power. It takes a lot of good will on both sides of the barricade to bridge this gap and build a stable platform for communication and cooperation.

## Challenges and recommendations

The list of challenges facing EBP in Poland today is long: lack of political will; bureaucratic barriers; poor technical preparation of administrative staff and chronic underfunding; EBP being treated as just another purely formal requirement; the low quality of received analyses; the uncoordinated nature of rationalisation activities; the siloed structure of the Polish administration; and the differing perceptions of EBP according to the level of public management (the closer to the operational level, the more frequently EBP is treated as an empty slogan). To introduce some order into this chaotic catalogue, the recommendations that follow are grouped into four interrelated dimensions: personnel, communication, methodology, and institutions.

The personnel dimension of EBP covers the participants of the public management process and their competences. Knowledge should not be transferred (between active researchers and passive decision-makers) but there should be interaction and exchange between the three EBP actors: researchers, decision-makers, and the target audience of the planned policy or intervention. In order to improve EBP at the operational level, a fourth actor should be added to it which ensures the patency and efficiency of the whole system (Pielke, 2007; Olejniczak, Kupiec and Raimondo, 2014). Innovation agents, knowledge brokers, and public policy analysts with high intellectual capital, a large dose of good social competence, a well-developed analytical imagination, and an excellent methodological toolkit can pursue two basic objectives: to provide policy-makers with reliable and comprehensible research results that are pertinent to the planned policy, and to communicate the demand for such research to scientists.

The communicative dimension of EBP becomes important if we acknowledge that the evidence that feeds the public decision-making

process is more than just a set of good practices. Policy makers should be interested in and receptive to knowledge, while stakeholders should be involved in gathering knowledge and making it available to decision makers. The demand for evidence must be communicated clearly, and the findings of the research must be accessible to both policy makers and the public so that they can be easily interpreted, understood, and translated into action (Pittore, Meeker, and Barker, 2017). The substantive competence and methodological and analytical preparation of all participants of the process of public management is a necessity, but soft competences should not be neglected. These include the ability to cooperate with a difficult client (this refers to both politicians and scientists), communication skills, and language proficiency, as the translation of research results into the language of politicians and officials can sometimes resemble a translation into a foreign language. Another important factor is that of communicating the demand for knowledge and the use of evidence, which should be present in the decision-making process from the very beginning, i.e. at the agenda-setting stage of the process.

The methodological dimension of EBP largely determines the quality of the evidence used. The creation of knowledge that will be useful to public policy makers should be based on the mixed methods research approach and a variety of methods which bring the concept of triangulation to the fore (Nagy Hesse-Biber, 2010). The combination of quantitative and qualitative research provides a better understanding of the issues and a wider range of potential solutions. Due to the dominance of quantitative methods, RCT techniques and qualitative research methods are especially recommended as they complement statistical data and are sometimes better suited to a given problem. Regardless of the method adopted, it is necessary to link analytical and research work with the specific needs of public managers and the possibility of applying recommendations in a given public policy. Analytical work should be carried out based on a long-term research strategy that is linked to national, regional, and local development strategies; it should not be based on occasional ad hoc studies that can hardly be compared with other studies and are impossible to continue.

The institutional dimension of EBP is probably the most important element as it determines the effectiveness of EBP. To quote the conclusions

of the report on the IA system in Poland, it can be stated that “even the best-fitting methodological solutions implemented by the best analysts on the basis of the highest-quality empirical data will not be capable of improving the quality of public policies unless they are part of a wider culture of evidence-based policy-making” (Górniak, 2015, p. 173).

If EBP is to succeed, the state must provide institutional platforms for exchanging what politicians need and what scientists can offer. Otherwise, both groups will exist in their bubbles, against which the most interested parties, i.e. citizens, will bounce back. It is necessary to ensure that EBP is supported by organisational environments (e.g. regional observatories, universities and research units, think tanks, laboratories, and social innovation incubators). Also, it is vital that the whole process is coordinated by a central body (e.g. the Chancellery of the Prime Minister or the Government Centre for Strategic Studies) or by centres operating at different levels of public management. At the same time, there should be analytical departments within public bodies that will feed the decision-making bodies with conclusions from research and put pressure on public managers to use the available knowledge in the decision-making process. The teams of analysts working in these departments must be interdisciplinary, have a strong institutional footing, have sufficient resources, and be adequately remunerated.

## Conclusion

It is not worth deluding oneself that in the era of fake news, “flat earthers”, anti-vaccination slogans, climate deniers, and political populism, scientific knowledge will suddenly exert a widespread and direct impact on public policies. At the same time, one must be aware that scientific knowledge can be used merely as a symbolic tool to legitimize policies invented exclusively by politicians and implemented in isolation from reality. Even if it is difficult to agree that politics can actually be ‘evidence-based’, it is easier for us to accept that it can be shaped (*evidence-influenced policy*) and supported (*evidence-aware policy*) through the use of evidence. For the time being, it is worth focusing on convincing decision-makers about the value of knowledge, on teaching them how to distinguish between more and less valuable knowledge,

and on encouraging them to treat knowledge as a resource to be managed like any other: rationally and responsibly.

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Kinga Wojtas

Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2712-4607>

## Local public policies

### Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Public policies are dominated by the state-centred paradigm, and research on local public policies (defined as politics shaped by public authorities that are responsible for a specific geographical area) has appeared only relatively recently.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The aim of the article is to discuss the most important trends in research on local public policies as a sub-discipline of public policy research. The article is based on the premise that a special space exists within which public authorities below the national level have real power to make political decisions that determine local public policy. The more decentralised a country is, the more this premise is actualized. Hence, analyses of the relationship between central government and local self-governments constitute an important area of research on local public policies. The second important area of research covers the process of creating local policies, while the third addresses their content. To address the question of what defines the dimensions of local policies, researchers make use of three classic explanations given within the following approaches: the pluralistic approach, the institutional approach, and the approach that emphasises the role of economic interests. However, the approach that is specific to research within local politics is based on space, which is treated as a factor that explains public processes. The second part of the article describes local public policies in Poland.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Despite there being a relatively large space for local public policies in this country, the Polish model of inconsistent decentralisation

treats local self-governments as local implementers of central public policies, which is best exemplified by educational policy.

**Keywords:** local public policy, urban policy, local self-government, local policy in Poland, decentralisation

## Is there a local public policy?

The conviction that “all politics is local”, which is understood as relating to the need to win the votes of local voters and opinion leaders who reside in a constituency, is so widespread that the authorship of this catchy phrase has been forgotten. This conviction is reflected in research on local politics, which is a recognised sub-discipline of political science.

However, public policy research is dominated by the paradigm of public policy as a nationwide phenomenon whose framework is defined by the state. Not long ago, the very existence of local public policy, which is defined as public policy created by public authorities responsible for a specific geographical area, was questioned. On the other hand, few people question American researchers’ findings that “those government functions that have the greatest impact on citizens’ daily lives” (Oliver, 2001, p. 15) exist at the local level, and that “cities control many of the basic public functions, such as policing, fire protection, spatial planning, and transport, which have a real and often dramatic impact on public health, safety, and quality of life” (Einstein and Kogan, 2016, p. 4). According to Jerzy Bartkowski, since the 1999 reforms in Poland “most of the state’s ‘everyday’ affairs are nowadays handled by local self-governments” (Bartkowski, 2017, p. 157).

This contradiction can be explained by examining the findings of research on local policy. When analysing the rise and fall of the “political machines” that ruled the largest American cities for almost half a century, researchers found that political parties were focused on the specific needs of voters in specific constituencies, because addressing these needs gave power to politicians, and that is why parties lacked broader agendas or programmes, not to mention ideologies (Banfield and Wilson, 1963, p. 277). Besides this clientelistic dimension, local public policy was seen as apolitical and as a more or less effectively organised technical process for distributing the goods and services that are necessary to meet residents’ basic needs.

Challenges to these perceptions of local public policy occurred in two different ways. First, the spread of a more behavioural approach within political science opened the door for research that went beyond political decision-making processes. The observation that different cities conduct surprisingly diverse public policies was a by-product of classic

studies that analysed American cities in a search for answers to the questions of “who governs” and “who gets what kind of benefits, when, and how” (Dahl, 1961). For behaviourists, this was confirmation of the then-dominant pluralist approach to studying the phenomenon of power, but it also made it possible to ask which factors determine the choice of a given local public policy.

Problematising the issue of implementing public policies also led to recognition of the importance of local public policies. The rational concept of public policy treated implementation as being the technical execution of the intentions of policy makers. Growing awareness of the fact that a policy is implemented by various actors (not only the initiators of a given policy) within the framework of a dispersed, multi-stage, decision-making process was accompanied by research into the agency of local authorities. Whereas the long-established top-down trend in research on policy implementation continues to attribute a key role to the legislator, who is supposed to have the tools to limit the ability of those involved in policy implementation to pursue their own interests (Bardach, 1977), the role of local implementers is also recognised. Researchers engaged in comparative political science devoted to policies below the national level conclude that “research [on economic and social policies] confirms that the implementation of national policies depends on local political determinants” (Giraudy, Moncada and Snyder, 2019, p. 14).

At the conceptual level, the existence of local public policies is no longer controversial, but this does not mean that empirical questions concerning the competences of local public policy makers are no longer valid. The majority of researchers believe that the political solutions that are available to cities or regions are determined by forces beyond their control. On the one hand, these may be restrictions stemming from the hierarchical organisation of the state; the more centralised the state is, the less space this leaves for local public policies. On the other hand, restrictions may result from competition with other cities or regions within the context of the unified logic of globalisation (Einstein and Kogan, 2016).

The real power of public authorities below the national level to make policy choices determines the extent of the existence of local public policies, so the space for local public policies varies. However, it is worth noting that the European Charter of Local Self-Government defines this

space as “the right and the ability of local authorities, within the limits of the law, to regulate and manage a substantial share of public affairs under their own responsibility and in the interests of the local population” (European Charter of Local Self-Government, 1985, Article 3). Thus, for the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, local public policies have strong international legitimacy.

Researchers of local authorities and local self-government explain the space for local public policies using the concept of local autonomy, which is understood as the possibility to act outside of the control of higher levels of government. Autonomy “defines the scope of discretionality of the functions, activities, and legitimised behaviours of local authority (...). Discretionality, i.e. the ability of the local authority to pursue its own goals in the way it chooses and in accordance with its own standards of implementation, depends on prior definitions of the scope of local autonomy” (Clark, 1984, pp. 198–199; Ladner et al., 2017).

Thus, it is not surprising that analysis of the relationships that exist between different levels of governance, in particular between central authorities and those below the central level, is a recognised sub-discipline of research on local politics, known as intergovernmental relations. It focuses primarily on the legal tools that enable central authorities to limit the guaranteed independence of local authorities in the creation of local public policies (by means of grants, subsidies, the mandatory outsourcing of tasks, mandatory service standards, the limiting of competences, etc.). Even in federal countries with a constitutionally guaranteed broad regional autonomy, the creation of public policies by central government has been on the rise since at least the 1930s. The actual scope of possibility for the creation of local policies is most often the result of negotiation between both local/regional and central authorities.

## What defines local public policies?

The other two areas of research on local public policies are the process of their creation (who makes public policy decisions, how, and why?) and the content of local public policies. In both of these, the leading research question is what defines – or maybe even determines – local public policies?

The answers most often include standard explanations of political decisions. The pluralistic approach dominates, in which it is assumed that local politics is open to the influence of various actors and their interests. In this case, research has to identify whose interests dominate and why (Hajnal, 2014). Theories that have been influential since the 1990s describe the transformation of public decision-making into networked multi-level governance, which corresponds well with pluralism. In this approach, actors who participate in the decision-making process operate at different levels (from global to European to local), in different forms, and on the basis of different principles. The famous book *If Mayors Ruled the World* (Barber, 2014), which is dedicated to local public policies (with global implications) and increasingly systematic work within the “glocalisation” trend (Bechtel and Urpelainen, 2015; Fahey and Pralle, 2016), are representatives of this approach.

Economic explanations of politics in relation to local public policies rarely mention their Marxist roots but rather invoke the older paradigm of local public policy as a response to the (economic) needs of residents. For example, Boyle and Jacobs (1982) reveal that the poorest districts of New York City received the greatest aid in terms of social assistance, education, and health care. Research conducted in Chicago in the same period suggests that local policy makers were guided by various types of ‘professional’ (including economic) premises in their responses to residents’ changing needs (Mladenka, 1980).

The specificity with which politics is conducted at a local level is also emphasised by the third classic explanation of the determinants of public policy, i.e. the adoption of an institutional perspective. Using this approach, researchers observe that various organisational solutions of local/regional self-governments influence the style of policymaking and, consequently, the solutions that are implemented, e.g. a professional head of municipal administration instead of an elected mayor. Elections that are not dominated by political parties support the approach of politics as a professional way of meeting citizens’ needs. On the other hand, these solutions clearly reduce the probability of political decision-making that responds to the needs of the poorest citizens or minorities (the electoral law system is built on similar premises, e.g. treating the whole city as one constituency or not limiting the number of terms a mayor serves) (Bridges, 1997). The institutional approach

to researching local public policies places the emphasis primarily on institutional constraints, which emanate from outside of local self-government units, as a factor that determines the political choices that are available to decision-makers. This is not only about the political framework but also about the financial and regulatory tools that make local public policies local in name only.

Research into the determinants of local public policies is characterised by a strong tendency which is generally absent in other sub-disciplines of the sciences: emphasising the role of the space in order to understand political phenomena, including public policies. This is based on the observation that many processes do not respect the boundaries of administrative units, which most often determine the spatial framework of political scientists' research. Approaching political phenomena from the perspective of geographical space instead of legal-political space sometimes allows us to grasp the phenomena that political boundaries conceal. It is then possible to notice the differences between different administrative units of the same status, or conversely, the similarities between units that are formally different. The most obvious example here is politics in metropolitan areas, whose boundaries are defined by functional premises relating to space (e.g. the movement of people within a specific area). The creation of policies concerning, for example, the provision of public services in metropolitan areas requires taking into account different functions performed by specific areas within a metropolis, which most often requires crossing the boundaries between the existing administrative divisions.

Acknowledging that geographical space sometimes links the observed cases leads to a better understanding of political phenomena, which can be related to the local context and thus better explains their emergence. A good example of this is the rural communes (*gmina*) in the immediate vicinity of large cities that take advantage of the phenomenon of suburbanisation and often pursue a similar policy to attract new residents. Taking into account geographical data also makes it possible to analyse the spread of policies through imitation or competitive pressure. Berry and Baybeck (2005) described the spread of state lotteries as an example: these lotteries were apparently adopted in states that were under pressure from the residents of "backward" states who travelled across state borders to buy lottery tickets in more progressive states.

Explaining the determinants of the process of creating local public policies translates into an attempt to identify what determines the content of these policies. However, here the picture that emerges from the approaches mentioned above is much less clear. The sheer amount and diversity of the cases analysed makes it impossible to establish more or less general regularities in terms of the dominant factors that influence the choice of public policies. “What is the relative importance of economic constraints, political imperatives, institutional structures, or bureaucratic needs? The problem is that we cannot assume that variables that are relevant in one subset of a policy area are also relevant in others. In short, we lack the broader view” (Hajnal and Trounstein, 2010, p. 1137).

A multitude of case studies might provide a general picture if money spent on particular policies by local self-government units is treated as an indicator of political choices. However, this approach has significant limitations. First, in each country a large part of local self-government spending is covered by money that comes from the central authorities and has to be spent on tasks that are imposed by them. Second, as is the case with central budgets, there is little flexibility in expenditure, and once undertaken, commitments cannot be easily abandoned, and expenditure can only be reduced very slowly. Third, the diversity of budget expenditure patterns is as large as the diversity of the factors that influence the creation of local public policies.

In such a situation, the way data are aggregated is crucial. The division into three basic categories of budget expenditure (redistributive, developmental, and allocative) that has been adopted by American researchers adequately illustrates the essence of the problem, i.e. arbitrariness. Developmental expenditure is expected to stimulate economic growth; hence, this category primarily includes expenditure on technical infrastructure. Education is classified as redistributive expenditure (Hajnal, 2014). In the United States, public education does indeed have a redistributive and equalising dimension, but since the 1990s or even earlier, investment in human capital has been widely recognised as an important – or perhaps the most important – driver of development.

The above overview of research on local public policies proves that this research sub-discipline has developed a set of theoretical approaches (borrowed from political science and political geography) and research

tools that can capture the specificity of public policies conducted on a local scale. This perspective leads to a better understanding of the mechanisms that (local) authorities use to meet citizens' basic needs.

## Public policies of the Polish self-government

Research on local public policies in Poland is very limited and can mainly be found within analyses devoted to local political processes (Nijander-Dudzińska, 2018), local political culture (Kurczewski [ed.], 2007), and local development (Masik, 2010). Important studies investigating specific policies that are implemented at the local level are not interested in the impact of local authorities on a given policy (Sadura, 2017; Kubicki, 2017). A review of the knowledge about local public policies in Poland that is based on existing literature reveals that it merely covers the definition of the space for local policies (local autonomy), the relationships between different levels of governance, and the institutional determinants for creating policies at the local level.

Poland is known as a “champion of decentralisation” in Central and Eastern Europe as it most resembles the northern European model of local autonomy (Swianiewicz, 2014, p. 303). In empirical research into all the dimensions that make up the local autonomy index, Poland is ranked in the top quarter of the most decentralized countries in Europe. Regarding the indicators that are most relevant to local public policies, at the bottom end of the scale of the criteria of the “institutional depth” of autonomy is “local authorities can only perform mandated tasks” (score 0/0 points); at the top there is “local authorities are free to take on any new tasks (residual competences) not assigned to other levels of government” (score 3/3 points). In the period 1990–2014, Polish communes (*gmina*) scored 2.88 points, which placed them within the top three countries for these criteria. In terms of the scope of public policies conducted (at least formally) by local authorities (measured by their full or partial responsibility for eight selected sectoral policies), Poland ranks seventh, with 3.05 points, in comparison to 3.67 for Norway, which heads the list. In the dimension of “effective political discretion”, which describes the extent to which local authorities have real influence over the implementation of sectoral policies (real decision-making

capacity), Polish local self-governments are located just behind the top ten European countries with a score of 2.45 points, compared to 2.98 for Finland, which tops the list. The economic dimension of independence is described by indicators of fiscal autonomy, financial self-reliance, and borrowing autonomy. Based on these indicators, Poland is located between ninth and thirteenth place, although in this respect it is farther behind the leading European countries. Thus, it can be claimed that the space for local public policies in Poland is institutionally well secured, especially because the indicators mentioned above have improved over the quarter of a century of self-governance in Poland, or they have at least remained stable (Ladner et al., 2017).

On the other hand, an extensive report that covers a similar period and examines the functioning of Polish local self-government mentions “statist dysfunction” as one of its basic dysfunctions, which amounts to “treating local self-government as a decentralised state administration” (Hausner et al., 2013, p. 20). The constitutional principle of the general competence of communes (*gmina*) to undertake all kinds of activities in order to meet residents’ needs is ignored by the supervisory authorities (i.e. voivodes, Regional Accounting Chambers, administrative courts); as a result, local self-governments are required to limit themselves to act in accordance with explicit statutory powers. What is more, successive governments increasingly delegate various tasks to be undertaken by communes (*gmina*), but with strictly defined standards of performance and *modus operandi*. This was the case in the following examples: the payment of housing allowances (2001), permanent allowances (2004), and the “500+” benefits (2016). As a result, a typical feature of Polish public policies is the dilution of responsibility. Each public policy remains, to some extent, at the discretion of both the government and (most frequently) the several tiers of self-government, but there are no effective mechanisms for coordinating and enforcing their cooperation.

This is exacerbated by permanent under-funding of the policies for which local governments are responsible, at least in practice, and which constitute the majority of their budgets (education, municipal services, and public transport).

Table 1: Structure of communes' spending (in per cent)

Department	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Education and upbringing	37.2	35.8	37.2	32.9	30.8	29.4
Social assistance	16.4	15.8	16	28.8	24.7*	22
Public administration	10.3	10.1	10.3	9.2	8.9	8.5
Municipal services and environmental protection	8.4	9.4	10	7.4	8.2	9.6
Transport and communications	7.7	8.7	7.7	7	7.3	9.2
Agriculture and hunting	3.4	3.2	3.2	1.9	2	2.7
Physical culture	2.6	2.7	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.6
Others	14.1	14.3	13.2	10.6	15.7	15.9

\* In 2017, the department was renamed "family".

Own study based on the data published by the Central Statistical Office.

In the period 2014–2019, the income of all local self-government units increased by almost 38%; in rural communes located near large cities it was as much as 70%. However, from the point of view of the commune's budget, expenditure on key tasks such as education exceeded the sums local self-governments received from central government in the same period. When all local self-government units are taken into consideration, the difference between the government subsidies received for education and real expenditure increased from 14.4% in 2014 to 20.6% in 2018. In most local self-governments, the amount they had to supplement from their own funds in order to finance education was almost 1/3 of the total government subsidy (Swianiewicz and Łukomska, 2020; Sześciło, 2020).

Local self-governments' funds largely depend not only on the economic situation but also on the government, the bulk of whose funds are derived from shares in central taxes, mainly PIT. Thus, any change in the government's tax policy automatically affects the budgets of local self-governments and their ability to implement local policies. Decisions such as the introduction of a flat-rate PIT for people who run their own businesses (2005), PIT child relief (2007), the introduction of two PIT rate schemes (2009), and relief for people starting work (2019), have all reduced the income of local self-governments, at least in the short term, and they have not been compensated for by the creation of new sources of financing for local public policies.

Self-governments try to avoid being burdened with additional tasks without being provided with adequate funds by resorting to the judicial process in the courts. However, this strategy is not often successful. Judicial outcomes are often based on the premise that the principle of adequacy between responsibilities and the funds for their implementation does not refer to a specific responsibility and the source of financing it but to the whole situation of a given local self-government. Reducing the amount of income from one source of income or imposing new tasks without changes in financing is not contradictory to the Constitution, provided that other funds make it possible to finance the implementation of tasks imposed on local self-governments. Therefore, despite the formal creation of guaranteed autonomy, “local self-governments are not able to defend themselves effectively against the imbalance between the funds that are available to them and all their tasks” (Bartkowski, 2017, p. 156).

Generally, the revenue of local self-governments is rising, although this growth is largely made up of funds from the central budget in order to finance tasks (mainly within social policy) which are beyond the control of local self-governments in terms of both objectives and implementation. From the point of view of the budget structure, this means a decrease in the share of their own revenue and an increase in designated subsidies, which translates into decreased funds for local public policies and a reduction of the role of local self-government to that of merely an implementer of central policies. In 2018, the share of subsidies to the communes’ budgets exceeded 1/3, while in 2013 it was about 1/5. In communes with up to 5,000 inhabitants, this share was 39% in 2018, and in 2019 it exceeded 40% (Swianiewicz and Łukomska, 2020).

After the 2015 elections, this tendency to limit the space for local public policies is also evident in the limiting of the competences of local self-governments; here education can serve as a perfect example. Communes (*gmina*) took on the task of running primary schools in the years 1990–1995, and counties (*powiat*) started running secondary schools in 1999. At that time, the adopted principle was that local self-governments were responsible for running schools (their maintenance and investments) and central authorities were responsible for supervising the quality of teaching (textbooks, curricula, the rules for hiring teachers and their professional advancement). This structure was put to the test

in 2015, when the central authorities decided to change the organisation of the education system (including the liquidation of lower secondary schools, and new solutions in the vocational education system). The change was introduced whilst ignoring the critical voices of local self-governments, which were particularly concerned with the unprepared, chaotic management of this change. As a result, there was a serious increase in the burden on the budgets of local self-government units, which soon had to rebuild their infrastructure or hire new teachers.

The changes in the education law also limited the independence of the communes and their ability to make decisions concerning local education. Before 2016, the commune council had been responsible for planning the network of public primary and lower secondary schools and defining the boundaries of school districts. After 2016, these decisions could be blocked by the school superintendent (the head of the regional education authority, in Polish *kuratorium*). The selection committee for hiring a new school headmaster includes representatives of the regional education authority. Until 2016, there were two representatives on the board (so they did not have a majority), but since 2016 there have been three representatives on the board, so their number is equal to the number of representatives of the authority running the school. In practice, this means that the regional education authority can block a candidate who is supported by the commune authorities. The procedure through which these changes were introduced is also significant. As the projects were parliamentary initiatives, they did not undergo the regulatory impact assessment that is required for government projects, nor were they consulted with local self-governments. Thus, the rules governing the division of competences to conduct education policy that were established after 1990 were broken, and “local self-governments were deprived of one of the key competences in conducting local education policy, and the challenges related to the financing of local education were deepened” (Sześciło, 2018, p. 14).

At the same time, voivodes increased their supervisory activity over the law-making activities of local self-governments. The number of supervisory decisions and supplementary orders issued by voivodes in which they annulled or enforced local self-government policy increased from 1,849 in 2014 to 2,886 in 2018 and 2,907 in 2019. The clearly political nature of voivodes’ actions is evidenced by the increase in

the percentage of their decisions that were rejected by the administrative courts. In 2014, more than 80 per cent of the decisions taken by voivodes that were brought to court by local self-governments were deemed valid, while in 2019 voivodes lost more than half of the cases brought against them. For comparison, the court quality indicator for the Regional Accounting Chambers remains stable at 85–90 per cent (Sześciło, 2020).

The picture that emerges from the above analysis of the actual determinants of conducting local public policies in Poland is much more nuanced than it would appear from comparative studies of the local autonomy of other communes in Europe. In Poland, decentralisation also covered services, which was very well received by citizens. According to the Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) survey of March 2020, 74% of respondents assess the activity of their local self-governments positively, which is the highest level of trust in local self-government in Polish history (CBOS, 2020). On the other hand, the conviction that it is the government that sets the directions of the country's development (which is the same for all of Poland) and defines the objectives of structural policy, which it then implements through a system of departments/ministries (mainly through financial transfers rather than through a territorial system), gives local public policies very fragile foundations. Local self-governments lack the funds for these policies, their competences can be (and are) arbitrarily limited, and court protection of their autonomy is very limited (Gańczarz and Bartkowski, 2012; Wołek, 2017). There is also a third aspect of Polish decentralization that is inconsistent: lack of coordination. The government has the right to take away competences from local self-governments and force them to provide public services that they are unable to cope with, but it is not able to enforce cooperation in the implementation of broader development strategies (this also relates to cooperation between local self-governments). Polish administrative culture facilitates an escape into formalism and mutual blocking between the government and local self-governments. As a result, rather than strategically pursuing local public policies, local self-governments use adaptation strategies. They focus on survival and thus marginalise pro-development activities; if these are to be implemented, they must rely on subsidies from the centre and support funds from the European Union. "Long-term underfunding

and the deprivation of organisational needs that enable institutions to operate” (Bartkowski, 2017, p. 150) have resulted in low-quality staff in local public institutions and a reduction in their professional morale, which further limits the possibility of conducting local public policies.

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Artur Wołek

Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3872-2925>

# Learning, copying, and transfer in public policies

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** Policy transfer is an approach that focuses on analysing the process by which solutions used to address public problems in a given geographical and time setting are used to address public problems in a different geographical and time setting. It responds to the need for a better understanding of the policy-making process.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article presents the historical context of the emergence of systematic reflection on borrowing in public policy, conceptual differentiations within this approach, as well as different methods of transfer and the factors that influence its intensity and effectiveness. The last section is devoted to Europeanisation, understood as the 'wholesale' process of policy transfer within the EU.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** Analysis of studies that investigate the practices of institutions that were established as a result of policy transfer reveal that those conducted within mainstream Europeanisation studies overlook the fact that the formal adoption of European rules may conceal massive failures at the basic level of policymaking. The usefulness of the approach described in the article is confirmed by reflections on the crisis of democracy and the development of populist movements in Central and Eastern Europe, which can be understood as being the outcome of and/or a reaction to the ineffective transfer of institutions from Western Europe.

**Keywords:** policy transfer, transfer of institutions, Europeanisation, populism, crisis of democracy



## Transfer as an approach to policymaking

The notion of copying or (in more subtle terms) borrowing, learning, or the transfer of public policies refers to a phenomenon that became the subject of systematic scientific analyses half a century ago but which is actually the foundation of civilization. The classic researcher of twentieth-century sociology, Thorstein Veblen, noted that “the tendency to imitate is probably the strongest, the most vivid, and the most durable economic incentive, second only to the instinct for self-preservation” (Veblen, 1971, p. 83). Reflection on this phenomenon dates back to the beginnings of scientific thought. Aristotle, who is considered one of the very first political scientists, collected and studied the constitutions of the many city-states in ancient Greece in order to determine which of them were well governed and why. Identifying the factors that ensured the stability of political systems and those that destabilized them enabled the Greeks to create better, more stable political orders in their *poleis*.

Systematic analyses of the phenomenon of borrowing solutions implemented within public policy appeared in research on public policy in the late 1960s. To this day, this phenomenon is still contested by researchers who claim that “it is difficult to imagine any form of rational policy-making that does not involve, to some extent, the use of knowledge about political solutions from other times or other places and drawing positive or negative conclusions from them” (James and Lodge, 2003, p. 181). In their view, the additional notion of policy transfer, sometimes called lesson-drawing, adds nothing to the apparatus of public policy analyses.

However, it seems that the notion of policy transfer responds to the need for a better conceptualisation of the policy-making process and for going beyond the perception that dominated up until the 1980s, which treated countries as closed systems whose policies are explained almost exclusively by discussing internal factors (Marsh and Sharman, 2015). The approach based on the concept of borrowing can be applied if a) it is impossible to prove that the adoption of a given policy is explained only by internal factors; b) it is impossible to conclude that it is a manifestation of supranational forces that influence diverse countries (convergence); c) it is possible to prove that policy makers were aware of the existence

of foreign solutions and that they discussed them (James and Lodge, 2003, p. 190).

Using the word 'approach' is justified here because it covers not only differing terms for describing similar phenomena but also various concepts whose meanings are similar but not identical. The roots of research on policy transfer can be traced back to literature on modernisation. One of the manifestations (or perhaps the results) of modernisation was supposed to be the convergence of political solutions or even institutions. Under the influence of the rationalising logic of modernisation, it was expected that different political solutions would converge over time into the form of the most effective solution, regardless of the intentions of the political actors involved. When empirical observations did not confirm this hypothesis, the search for factors that were responsible for weakening modernisation began, which initially focused on "cultural resistance", i.e. the existence of pre-modern cultural codes that prevented the development of attitudes necessary for modern institutions (Jacoby, 2001, p. 5).

The second trend in this approach focuses on analysing diffusion, i.e. the spread of political solutions. This trend is also rooted in a rationalistic belief that innovations that are more effective will be adopted by more and more policy actors. Empirical material was mainly provided by subject literature that tracked the spread of innovative solutions between individual states in the USA. Thus, whereas the convergence theory was undermined by empirical research, researchers who investigated diffusion managed not only to identify those factors that hinder and support the spread of innovation but were also able to capture modifications of the adopted solutions, although this approach also acknowledged structural factors in the spread of innovation.

Researchers who use the terms 'drawing a lesson', 'policy learning', or (most frequently) 'policy transfer' emphasise the role of political actors in the process of adopting the solutions of others to a much greater extent than other researchers. Policies do not spread by themselves due to the power of rationality, but they must be familiar to and accepted by those actors involved in policymaking. Hence, the definition most frequently quoted in the context of this approach assumes that policy transfer is a process in which "knowledge about policies, administrative solutions, institutions, and ideas occurring in one political arena (in the present or in the past) is applied to the creation of policies, administrative solutions,

institutions, and ideas in another political arena” (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000, p. 5).

Thus, the following can all be transferred: policy tools (ways of delivering public services); policy content (ways of solving public problems); and, probably the least frequently, policy objectives (fundamental paradigms of perceiving public problems). Each of these dimensions has its own ideological and institutional dimensions (Marsh and Sharman, 2015, p. 42).

## Dimensions and contexts of policy transfer

Within the notion of policy transfer, learning is treated as an essential mechanism for political change, although other compatible mechanisms also exist. One is competitive pressure, namely the desire to meet the challenges of countries or regions perceived as competitive. Here, policy transfer is seen as a tool used to gain a competitive advantage or at least to avoid being left behind. Another is the mechanism of mimicry, in which change is seen as a symbolic act through which politicians are more interested in strengthening their legitimacy or position in relation to external actors (who are perceived as stronger) rather than actually changing local political solutions. Politicians imitate in order to convince the international environment that they have been properly socialized, and the policy change itself is secondary to this concern. Finally, learning directed at change can be the result of coercion, which can be direct, e.g. when a country is politically dependent on an external hegemony (for example, in the case of colonies), and indirectly (which is much more frequent today). International organisations or regional powers often offer their assistance on condition that certain solutions which are considered standard will be adopted. This is called conditionality. A weaker partner may, of course, not accept such conditional support, but since the end of the Cold War the Washington Consensus has been the basis of the operation of the vast majority of actors who have been ready to provide development aid over the past two decades (Marsh and Sharman, 2015; Stone, 2017).

The mechanism or method of policy transfer does not determine the degree of similarity between the ‘original’ and the borrowed, but it certainly has some connection with it. Each case is different and requires

a separate analysis. The phenomenon being analysed here consists of the whole continuum, from 'carbon copies' of institutions and policies to inspirations. While 'carbon copies' (exact copying of legal and institutional solutions placed within a different geographical and political context) are rare, imitation is the form of policy transfer that most frequently draws the attention of researchers. Imitation is understood as the design of political solutions in which a foreign solution is considered as the standard or as a reference point for own actions, but this design will then also consider the local context. Another method can be called hybridisation. Here, when designing policies, policy makers combine elements borrowed from several different contexts. Finally, inspiration is an activity that is focused on local needs and conditions, but freshness in solving local problems is ensured by using ideas and solutions from other contexts (Evans, 2015).

The actual degree of similarity between the original and the borrowed is not always the result of the intentions of those who initiated the policy transfer. Researchers of this phenomenon list a number of factors that make such transfers difficult or problematic. These factors often lead to transfer failure, which can be defined as inefficiency (the goals set by policy makers have not been achieved); ineffectiveness (an unacceptably high cost of achieving the goals); and impermanence (a lack of resistance to the changes caused by external factors). These factors can also lead to a situation in which an institution that was supposed to be a faithful copy of the original only faintly resembles it.

The factors hindering transfer are twofold. The first is that they may originate from the cognitive barriers of the advocates of change, which limit rationality in the initial stages of any decision being taken. For example, a dominant organisational culture may dictate a search for solutions of only a certain type, or solutions that are specific to a particular cultural environment. In this scenario, those responsible for the transfer process may possess incomplete knowledge about the institution or policy being transferred or may ignore elements that are relevant to the success of the transfer. A second source of obstacles appears at the implementation stage of policy transfer and comes from the environment of the new institution or policy. Thus, ignoring structural constraints results in a situation in which even institutions that are planned in the best possible way will not function effectively (e.g. a civil service in

a country without well-educated officials). Poor mobilisation and a lack of interest in the success of an institution will result in the institution failing to take root and, even if it formally starts operating, it will not be included in the institutional bloodstream of the new environment and will thus be ineffective (Evans, 2019).

The factors that facilitate policy transfer include a high level of dissatisfaction with the situation in question; a small number of entities that are in a position to block the introduction of the change (veto players); the bureaucracy's support for the change; and the fact that the transfer takes place at an early stage in the electoral cycle so that the institution or policy that is being transferred can take root before the next election. Researchers have observed that changes that have been introduced since the 1990s in the way in which developed Western countries are governed have facilitated the implementation of changes based on external transfer. Processes that have been described as "a hollowing out of the state", "an openness to be guided by the logic of the market", and "globalisation" all lead political elites to accept the patterns of other countries or the private sector more willingly. This is especially the case when accompanied by the justification of proven effectiveness or evidence-based policy, which is another trend that has been increasingly altering state governance for a quarter of a century.

In the 1990s, the strong impact of numerous factors that facilitate policy transfer, which was accompanied by widespread access to knowledge about foreign policy alternatives (the revolution in information technologies), meant that borrowing became a fundamental tool in politicians' hands (Bulmer, 2007). They believed that transplanting institutions and policies that were successful in another country was an opportunity for faster development that could be achieved at a lower cost. Moreover, politicians received support from a network of institutions that offer solutions to public policy issues, such as think tanks, institutions from the knowledge sector, and organisations related to interest groups. Not surprisingly, researching the phenomenon of borrowing policies and institutions has become popular, and "policy transfer" has been quite widely recognized as a "useful heuristic model", which, while not aspiring to be a general theory of policy change, reveals a lot about the mechanisms of organizational learning and the conditions under which it takes place (Evans, 2015, p. 158; Evans, 2004).

## Europeanisation and its limitations

The rapid increase in the popularity of policy transfer is especially noticeable in European Union countries. This organisation has even been called the “wholesale transfer platform” (Radaelli, 2000). The European Union has the right to impose institutional solutions on its Member States, although the details of its decisions and thus the scope of freedom enjoyed by the member states varies: from directly applicable orders, through the Commission’s quasi-judicial mandate to enforce general standards (e.g. in the field of competition law that regulates anti-competitive conduct), to directives setting mandatory targets (where the means of achieving them are left to the States).

Imitation that results from implementing European Union law is only a small part of policy transfer within the EU. Ideas, policies, and institutions are transferred not only under coercion, but also because certain solutions are considered effective. As a result of permanent working cooperation within the EU, politicians and officials who have no reason to look for foreign solutions to domestic problems on a daily basis can not only learn about foreign solutions but can also gain trust in them. Thus, the EU reduces the risk of importing a solution that is considered effective and legitimised by its origin. This is the aim behind the introduction of centralised supervision of the financial markets, strong anti-monopoly offices, and the independent regulatory agencies that have been commonplace in Europe since the 1990s.

Sometimes institutions are imitated because a group of experts or professionals in a given area come to believe that this is the standard to be followed. Examples that best illustrate this include externally evaluated secondary school leaving exams or lowering the school starting age.

Research on Europeanisation has also provided a wealth of material on the longer-term effects of the transfer of an institution or policy once it has bedded into its new environment. This has shown that an institution or policy that has apparently been successfully transferred may trigger such strong and permanent resistance that it will not be able to operate effectively or will end up being merely a legal document that will be never put into practice (De Jong and Mamadouh, 2002). This is because the import of institutions or policies always takes place in the context of a complex network of interactions between existing institutions and practices,

and new solutions “must be introduced into a political environment that is densely populated by past commitments” (Dolowitz and Marsh, 1996, p. 353). In this context, it is also possible that a new institution will be transformed by the existing informal rules in the environment in which it operates in such a way that it will operate in a completely different way from the original version, and it will run contrary to the purpose of the transfer (Dimitrova, 2010; Falkner and Treib, 2008).

The above observations triggered a strong revisionist trend in the literature on Europeanisation. Criticising the functionalism of research on Europeanisation and the assumption of the asymmetry of power relations within this process has become quite common. Portraying Europeanisation as knowledge and rules “descending from what is supranational to «subordinate» actors/organizations at the national level” forces us to think in terms of diffusion, linearity, and treating national scenes of Europeanisation as a passive background (Clark and Jones, 2009, p. 195). The focus of researchers of Europeanisation on the mezzo level, i.e., sectoral policies, allowed them to approach the whole process from a technical perspective and omit the political context. This approach allowed them to learn from the experts what works and what does not work and to understand the process. However, this omitted all political and structural dynamics at the macro level and lost the micro analysis, i.e. the workings of individual institutions or policy tools, even though these levels are crucial for understanding Europeanisation and especially for understanding any objections that may be raised against it (Lendvai and Stubbs, 2015). As a result, many researchers of Europeanisation overlooked the fact that data on the formal adoption of European rules “may conceal mass failures at the basic level” of the functioning of policies, and these institutions and tools may be a dead letter or even an empty shell (Batory, Cartwright and Stone, 2018, p. 17; Falkner and Treib, 2008).

An indirect effect of discussions concerning the limitations of the Europeanisation research paradigm was that they popularized the hitherto marginalised concept of policy transfer as a multidimensional, dynamic, and non-linear process of policy translation. This assumes that in order to understand the transfer of policies, the views and interests of the actors of the host country are more important than the origin or the dissemination mechanisms of transfer, as it is here that external influences

are filtered and interpreted. The whole process of policy change originates from disputes between local actors who seek to define and solve public problems, and thus the outcome of a transfer depends primarily on their activity. Furthermore, it is national players who actively search for political solutions that can be borrowed, creatively interpreted and modified, with the result that collages and hybrids are created from fragments of different origins. Thus, the local context is important, as creative modifications of borrowed policies are made in accordance with pre-existing practices and beliefs (Lendvai and Stubbs, 2007; Dimitrova, 2010; Falkner and Treib, 2008).

This approach offers effective tools to help understand why the local reinterpretation of a borrowed policy will frequently come into conflict with the logic of the original policy, why the transplanted institutions are unrecognisable within a new context, and why new formal and old informal rules compete with one another. This in turn allows researchers to go beyond the teleological paradigm of marauder countries, the return to old addictions, the limited potential for implementing European solutions, and the “automatic conceptualization of resistance in the implementation of policies as dysfunctional behaviour rather than as a widespread general phenomenon” (Saurugger, 2014, p. 183; Meyer-Sahling, 2011). This is especially true for Central and Eastern European countries after their accession to the European Union

## Imitation and populism in Central and Eastern Europe

The situation in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 is a good example of the practical application of the transfer of policies and institutions on a massive scale. The main motto of the Autumn of Nations was a return to normality, and normality was understood as encompassing the freedom and prosperity of Western countries. The elites and voters believed that the best and fastest way to counter half a century of abnormality under communist rule would be to import institutions and political solutions from the West, just as consumer goods are imported. Many Western thinkers from the left, who had hoped that the Central European velvet revolutions would trigger changes in democracy and

capitalism in Western countries, even talked with some disappointment about an “imitative revolution” which was aimed merely at extending the boundaries of their existing version of the modern world (Habermas, 1990; Ziolkowski, 1999).

This spontaneous process of imitation was strengthened by the integration strategy that was applied by the European Union in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe during the pre-accession period and during the process of admitting new EU members. In the case of the EEC’s enlargement due to the addition of the countries of southern Europe, Brussels focused on encouraging and shaping the motivation of local elites to achieve integration, whereas with regard to post-communist countries, membership was conditional on their adoption of a concrete package of institutions and practices. Emphasis was placed on building precisely defined institutions, while negotiations, if any, covered only the pace of transfer. The EU offered technical assistance and at the same time closely supervised the implementation of commitments by countries aspiring to EU membership (Bruszt and Vukov, 2015).

Researchers who studied Central and Eastern European policies quickly noticed that the formal introduction of EU policies and institutions in the countries from these regions did not result in making their policies similar to those of Germany, France, or Belgium. In the context of a weak state (and this is what most of the new members of the Union deserve to be called to varying degrees), the actual operation of imported institutions depends on the outcome of the interactions between local political actors, and EU policies are creatively “stretched” far beyond the boundaries of their internal logic. Examples include the Polish National Broadcasting Council, which has become a tool for party control over public media, and the use of EU development policy by Viktor Orbán’s government to finance the Hungarian national minority in Ukraine (Wołek, 2012; Lendvai and Stubbs, 2015).

These findings allowed researchers to formulate more precise explanations for the gulf that exists between the frequently repeated success story achieved by countries from Eastern and Central Europe after 1989 in a political and economic context and the (also frequently repeated) observations that testified to the lack of consolidation of democracy, the quality of democracy, or the state authorities’ agency in these countries. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for example, Zdzisław Krasnodębski

stated that the main aim of the entire transformation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe was to become the periphery of a new centre, i.e. Europe. Only after achieving this aim could they possibly improve their position by getting closer to the centre. This view was based on Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Theory. The total convergence of the interests of the centre and the periphery was assumed, and thus imitation obtained the status of a higher, even moral, norm. However, copying a model without copying the path that led to the creation of Western institutions is like copying a facade without building its supporting structure. In this case, the role of the supporting structure is played by the rule of law (also called the legal state or the state of justice). Copying only selected Western achievements led to a weakening of the position of the state and replacement of the ties that had existed previously with a political vacuum and tenders from interested pressure groups (Krasnodębski, 2003).

Jadwiga Staniszkis also used the notion of peripheries when she wrote about Central and Eastern Europe, although she focused on the impact globalisation has had on these countries. According to Staniszkis, globalisation "imposes on those at the periphery the abandonment of standards, procedures, and local advantages which are rational in their scale and historical time, in favour of adopting others which are characteristic of more advanced development" (Staniszkis, 2003, p. 23). Thus, it imposes institutional compatibility, without which it is impossible to function in the global economic cycle. However, without the institutional consolidation of capitalism and in the context of the weakness of the state, this compatibility is merely a pastiche. On the surface, imitated institutions look the same, but they mean something different and act differently. At the same time, they block the self-organization of society and reduce the chances of integration with the globalizing world (Staniszkis, 2003).

Several years later, Stephen Holmes and Ivan Krastev (2020) described imitation as the basic category that explained the crisis of Central European democracies at the end of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They called the entire period after 1989 the "Age of Imitation", i.e. a continuous attempt to imitate the West which was presented as the only viable model. It was not about simply learning what the solutions to public problems were or borrowing tools: it was about imitating

goals and actualizing a true cultural conversion. However, imitation feeds on resentment, and after 2008, once the internal dysfunctions of Western countries had become fully apparent, resistance to Westernisation became the main driving force of the populist revolts that took place in countries such as Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia. Decades of renouncing one's own identity in the name of non-alternative modernisation triggered the reaction of an explosion of particularism with the slogan "they will not impose on us, in foreign languages, what kind of system we should have in Poland and how Polish affairs are to be handled" (Duda, 2020).

The works of Krasnodębski, Staniszkis, and Holmes and Krastev demonstrate that policy transfer is an approach that is compatible with various theoretical approaches ranging from institutionalism through international political economics to political psychology (Benson and Jordan, 2011). It has become a standard feature of the public policy researchers' toolkit, and it allows them to better understand the policy-making process and its content.

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Piotr Musiewicz

Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8725-7412>

# Public policies inspired by religion

## Summary

**DEFINITION OF THE TERM:** The definition of public policies inspired by religion adopted in this article is very broad: these are political and legal solutions – namely constitutional law, acts, and court rulings – that have a religious idea at its root.

**DISCUSSION OF THE TERM:** The article discusses the thesis that public policies inspired by religion exist in spite of separation of church and state in the Western world. This section outlines selected examples of these policies.

**SYSTEMATIC REFLECTION WITH CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:** The article lists certain reservations related to this innovative subject, confirms that this phenomenon exists, and offers an explanation of its nature, causes, and determinants, some of which are of natural origins (as they concern religion itself), while others are social, political, or economic.

**Keywords:** public policies, religion, religion and politics, state – church relationships



The aim of the article is to encourage discussion concerning religiously inspired public policies by an attempt to present these policies from the perspective of Judeo-Christian culture. Due to the different political and religious specificities of traditions and cultures in which the relationship between the political and religious spheres have been shaped differently, the contexts and determinants of such policies and their realisation may differ accordingly. The article describes and verifies present and past religious inspirations for public policies that come from Catholicism and various forms of Protestantism and Judaism. These are based on literal or allegorical understandings of the Bible and Catholic social teaching in selected European countries, the United States, Israel, and South Africa.

In contemporary Western countries, which are based on the principle of the separation of church and state, the norms that are proclaimed by churches do not hold legal status but only serve to regulate the internal discipline of religious associations and their members (this also applies to countries with state religions). Thus, only state norms are commonly binding for members of a political community; religious norms only apply within religious communities, and membership in these communities is voluntary (Szlachta, 2004, pp. 845–846). In Western countries, there is no religious justification that is applicable for state law. For example, a draft bill that is submitted to parliament cannot have a justification that contains a direct reference to religious content, which means that the legitimacy of a given solution cannot be justified on the basis of, for example, a revealed text or the teachings of a given church. The political culture of the Western world is based on democratic liberalism, with an emphasis on individualism and rationalism.

Individualism, associated with personal and political freedom, emphasises the distinctiveness and originality of an individual in relation to groups, associations, and communities, including those of the state or a religious organisation. The concept of a political community is based on the theories of social contract that are characteristic of liberalism (as expounded by Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau). According to these theories, the universality of state norms is grounded in the primary and voluntary agreement of individuals to observe them, which is understood as an unspoken contract. The individual and the state have become fundamental concepts within the doctrine of liberalism. The state's task is to

protect human individuality against, among other things, norms that do not originate from the will of individuals; in the past such norms were primarily established by absolute rulers and the heads of churches. Under the influence of liberalism, and in order to emphasize the individuality and primacy of the individual in relation to communities, churches and religious associations have been placed in the private sphere in the same way as other associations, which means that they have been deprived of the privilege of influencing or shaping the political norms of the community. In practice, however, it is possible for religious associations to exert some influence on these norms, especially in liberal models concerning the relationship between the state and the church that are not based on hostile separatism, which is embodied within the model of total separation (in which churches function as legal entities of private law) and in the model of coordinated separation (in which there are areas of cooperation between the Church and the state that are defined by bilateral agreements (e.g. concordat agreements); however, these areas do not include legislation or public policymaking).

Rationalism may be understood in different ways, but within the framework of liberal-democratic culture it is generally understood as the assumption that human reason, which possesses great cognitive capacity, should be used to solve problems (including socio-political ones). This means that content that is considered rationally unverifiable (including religious content that comes, for example, from revelation) is excluded when creating solutions to socio-political problems unless it can be categorized as rational and given a rational justification that is not related to religious content. The latter is possible because religion does not just have a spiritual dimension that concerns an individual and his inner life, but also a social dimension that belongs to temporal reality but has its sources in the spiritual dimension.

In contemporary Western countries with their liberal-democratic legal culture, the possibility that there could be a religious justification for a law that is being passed has been formally ruled out, but some contemporary public policies are probably shaped by religious content to the extent that it is possible to speak of their religious inspiration (even if this inspiration is not directly noticeable in the language used to justify a given project going through the legislative process). It seems that the principle of the separation of church and state (which is one of

the basic principles of any liberal democracy) does not, in practice, lead to the separation of religion from politics when creating public policies in modern democracies (Driessen, 2016, pp. 500–502). Francis J. Beckwith argues that the creation of state law is intended, among other things, to accommodate “the reality of human nature”, and if “a significant proportion of citizens are convinced that there are such things as sacred duties and divine sanctions”. It is natural – especially in societies where such beliefs are widespread – that some people would want to put them into the public, including political, sphere, regardless of which model of relationship between religion and politics these societies operate under. In other words – if Beckwith is right – the assumption that the separation of church and state relegates religion to the private sphere and prevents it from influencing the political sphere (including public policies) seems counterfactual, since religion belongs to “the reality of human nature” and “it is impossible to draw a sharp line between faith and reason” (Beckwith, 2018, p. 279 and 282). Exceptions may be found in those political systems in which religion is removed from public life systemically and its manifestation is associated with significant sanctions. However, even this approach to the relationship between religion and politics does not eliminate religious aspirations from human nature, along with the desire to uphold one’s beliefs (at least, to some extent) within the public sphere. Hence, even in liberal-democratic countries, recurring initiatives can be found that postulate that a given policy should correspond with expectations from the religious sphere. It should be remembered that such a policy will usually not be expressed directly through religious language due to the principle of the separation of church and state; the smaller the role that religion plays in a given society, the less the desire to inspire public policies with religion. Moreover, contrary to Beckwith’s suggestion, not all religious people in a liberal-democratic society will strive to adopt and implement their religious beliefs in the political sphere.

In countries that have been shaped by Judeo-Christian culture, the presence of religious inspiration in public policy may also result from the mission of the Christian Churches to transform the social and political order in the spirit of those values they consider important. For example, Protestant Churches draw their values from direct or indirect interpretation of biblical texts. Because of the multiplicity of Churches and the lack

of a common social doctrine, different values are considered important by different Churches. For example, some churches object to same-sex marriages, citing St. Paul's remark that same-sex marriage is unnatural and incompatible with nature (Romans 1:26–27), while others accept such relationships, claiming that St. Paul's words have to be placed within their cultural context. Some Churches encourage their members to make decisive efforts to enact laws or other public policies that provide for the full protection of human life (from the moment of conception) by interpreting the fifth commandment of the Decalogue to fit their agenda, whilst other Churches interpret in a way that allows for some exceptions. The influence of Protestant Churches (especially those of an Evangelical profile) on public policies can especially be seen in the United States today.

The Catholic Church also encourages its followers to influence social issues, including the shape of public policies. This is due to its mission to be the “guardian of world order” (...) “because of the mission to proclaim the word of God to men and women” and of the duty to “awaken in the consciences of all men and women, including those in power in the state and society, an awareness of God's commandments and of the impassable ethical standards” (Böckenförde, 1994, p. 40). Being aware of this mission does not allow the Catholic Church to confine its preaching to the private sphere or to “withdraw from politics”, apart from to prohibit the direct political involvement of their clergy. Inspiration to shape policies that take into account the teachings of the Catholic Church is therefore part of its mission, regardless of the current practices in individual countries.

The Catholic Church has been voicing its views on social matters (Catholic social teaching) for over a century, and this teaching is based on the Bible, the traditions of the Catholic Church, and human reason. Contrary to many Protestant Churches, what is taught is often expressed in the language of the philosophical and social sciences, which is usually easier for modern states to assimilate rather than categories and justifications derived directly from the Bible.

The references to God and Revelation within Catholic social teaching, but also to reason, natural law (nowadays more often understood as human rights), and the good of man, makes it difficult to call public policies inspired by Catholic social teaching strictly religiously inspired;

it seems that in this case one can speak of indirect religious inspiration. Analysis of public policies inspired by Catholic social teaching is further complicated by the methodological difficulty of distinguishing whether a given public policy has in fact been inspired by this teaching or by something that has no religious references. There may be a convergence of socio-political solutions that have both secular and religious inspiration; concerning the solutions themselves, it is often impossible to tell whether they are religiously inspired or not. An example of this is the postulate contained in John Paul II's encyclical *Laborem exercens* (1981) to involve the state in pro-family policies by, for example, providing state subsidies to families to ensure a decent standard of living (19). This postulate is also implemented in public policies in countries where the influence of the Catholic Church is negligible (e.g. the Scandinavian countries). On the other hand, Catholic social teaching also contains postulates which are either totally absent in the contemporary secular world, or which are marginalised (e.g. a critical approach to contraception, derived from human dignity and God's command to reproduce), as well as postulates which the Catholic Church shares with other Christian denominations (e.g. the protection of human life from conception to natural death). In these cases, it seems easier to identify religious inspiration within public policies, although here too it should not be automatic. It is necessary to take into account other factors, especially the cultural, religious, and political contexts of a given country, as well as policy-makers' religious beliefs, their statements, and political programmes.

Regardless of the specific religious content that inspires public policies, there is often an ultimate justification behind them that refers to a sacred duty, God's commandment, or God's will. Such justifications were and still are rather rare within the Catholic tradition, in which proposals for public policies often refer to natural law, which is not a religious category but derives from classical philosophy. This category did not originally have a theistic dimension, although it took on this dimension in Christian thought. In the teaching of the Catholic Church in the period after the Second Vatican Council, the notion of natural law gave way to a category of human rights, which is widespread and understandable in the secular world and which potentially makes it easier for Catholic social teaching to provide proposals for public policies. However, in a liberal democracy justifying public policies referring to God's command or to a natural law

of which God is the creator is very problematic and is formally excluded because of the separation of church and state. This has become a problem especially for those citizens of liberal-democratic countries for whom thinking in religious terms remains an important component of their worldview. Justifying their actions by God's command would seem to them to be both convincing and natural, and they are often willing to pursue such policies, even without formally exposing their religious justification. On the other hand, proposing religiously inspired public policies in liberal democracies, even whilst using non-religious justifications, can be problematic for non-religious members of a community who do not share the religious beliefs on which a given public policy is based.

In the process of creating religiously inspired public policies, the religious factor plays an important and often crucial role in the first stages of their creation. Churches (religious organizations) usually hold distinct social views that serve their mission and have a religious justification. From the perspective of the process of public policymaking, churches propose a solution to a problem which they then try to convince decision-makers to implement at the state level. Such influence may be exerted "from the outside" through lobbying, i.e. direct contact of church representatives with politicians to convince them of the legitimacy of working on a given issue, or "from the inside" by parliamentarians or members of the government who are also church members and wish to create public policies consistent with their church's teaching. In both cases, if the state implements a given policy, the church, being an external actor, does not bear the legal responsibility for its shape, and remains merely a 'spokesperson' of a certain section of society. Whether or not religious proposals actually inspire the process of policymaking depends in particular on the social position of the church that advocates them, on the cultural and social factors that influence how far a proposal coincides with the culture of a given country and is socially acceptable, and on the political factor that determines the structure of the political actors, including those who oppose religiously inspired solutions.

It is worth illustrating the issue of creating and implementing religiously inspired public policies with examples of possible solutions to significant public problems that have sharply divided societies. In these examples, public policies are understood more broadly than as merely planned public actions created and implemented in a given area by

the executive authority or public administration. Understanding public policies as being the solution to significant public problems that are implemented by state authorities may not be an adequate assumption to make. Statutory decisions that are not part of planned public actions (including court rulings) must be factored in as they create a normative framework for laws and public actions in a given area. On the other hand, such a broad approach to the subject makes it possible to find examples of the infiltration of religion into the political sphere and is sometimes used in the subject literature (e.g. by the authors of *The Palgrave Handbook of Philosophy and Public Policy*, 2018).

The impact of religious inspiration is clearly visible when it comes to protecting life from the moment of conception or limiting the termination of a pregnancy. In 2019, under Republican rule, the state legislature of the southern states of the USA (Georgia, Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio) adopted laws prohibiting the termination of a pregnancy after the end of the sixth week, except in the circumstance of a threat to the mother's life (the so-called *Heartbeat Bills*). Such laws are repeatedly appealed to the Supreme Court by two organizations in particular, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, but they have (so far) been repealed on the grounds of their inconsistency with the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, interpreted from the perspective of the *Roe vs Wade* ruling (1973), as a result of which the state legislature is obliged to ensure that citizens have the right to have their first trimester pregnancies terminated, and any restrictions in this respect can apply only to the second and third trimester. The authors of the repealed laws hope that eventually there will be a majority of judges in the Supreme Court ready to break the precedent of *Roe vs Wade*, which in a sense creates a normative framework in the United States for all public policies concerning the greater protection of conceived life. Although supporters of the prohibition of the termination of pregnancy often resort to economic arguments (financing abortion from the state budget places an unnecessary burden on all citizens), and although there are organizations seeking to fully protect human life on a secular basis, it is in fact religious appeals that most often inspire "pro-life" policies. These policies are initiated and supported primarily (though not exclusively) by members of the two largest religious denominations in the USA, the Catholic Church (about

68 million members), and the Southern Baptist Convention (about 16 million). The latter's resolutions on the sanctity of life in Atlanta (1991) and Columbus (2015) introduced a biblically inspired ban on the taking of an unborn life (except when saving the mother's life) and called on its members to work on the adoption of a ban in state law. Alabama's governor, Key Ivey, admitted that her "pro-life" views stemmed from the fact that God created man and taught him to love life. While signing the *Alabama Human Life Protection Act* of 2019, she said that for numerous supporters of this act it is a testimony that every life is something priceless and sacred because it is given by God.

Some religious inspirations that stem from the teaching of the Catholic Church can be found in the Polish Act on family planning, protection of the human foetus, and the conditions under which termination of a pregnancy is permissible (1993). These inspirations can be seen in its adoption of part of the draft bill submitted several years earlier, which was explicitly religiously inspired and guaranteed legal protection to human life from the moment of conception, regardless of the circumstances. The authors of this earlier draft bill (the Christian-National Union) declared that their party would strive "to fully protect human life, as indicated by the Holy Father and the Polish Episcopate, during the further legislative process" (Chalubiński, 1994, p. 147). At that time, justifications for the policy of protection of the conceived child's life (in this and several other projects) almost always directly or indirectly referred to Catholic social teaching, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the words of John Paul II, and the statements of the Polish Episcopate. The homilies of John Paul II delivered during his pilgrimage to Poland in 1991 (specifically that of 4 June in Radom, which was devoted directly to the threat to human life) also provided direct inspiration for attempts to obtain a legal guarantee of protection of the conceived child's life. The opponents of this act opposed its religious sources by referring not only to the argument of women's freedom of choice, but also by arguing that it violates the principle of the separation of church and state.

Faced with the lack of widespread support for a total ban on abortion, in January 1993 the Polish Parliament passed a law with an amendment permitting the termination of pregnancy if it constitutes "a threat to the life or health of a pregnant woman", if "prenatal tests or other medical indications reveal a high probability of a serious and irreversible

impairment of the foetus or an incurable disease threatening its life”, and if “there is a justified suspicion that the pregnancy was caused by a prohibited act” (Article 4a).

A strong religious impulse was behind the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920, which introduced a ban on the production, sale, and transportation of alcohol throughout the country. The justifications for prohibition that were given in the debates at that time were primarily natural and political reasons, including the need to provide security for families, the need to raise the level of morality, and patriotism (prohibition was intended to weaken German businesses in the USA and to help win the war against Germany, as the grain that was saved would be given to the allies). It should be noted, however, that the key role in the adoption of prohibition was played by the Anti-Saloon League, which was supported almost exclusively by the Protestant Churches and was considered a political tool in their hands. The Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, Congregational, and Mennonite Churches (as well as Mormons and the followers of the Christian Science called “scientists”) provided the League with political activists and financial support, and they organised Sunday fundraising for the organization. The justification used by these Churches was that prohibition as a political project stemmed from the Christians’ mission, which prevented many Americans from becoming addicted to alcohol. The proponents of prohibition also quoted biblical passages that recommended that the faithful be filled with the Spirit rather than with wine (Ephesians 5:18), warned that drunkards will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9–11), discouraged drinking wine if it would cause their brother or sister to fall (Romans 14:21), and cited examples from the Old Testament of the problems experienced by Noah (Genesis 9:21–25) or Belshazzar (Daniel 5:30) after drinking wine. Andrew Sinclair, the author of a monograph devoted to prohibition (1962, p. 81), admits that the roots of prohibition, which lay primarily in the desire for greater social and civic assimilation, especially of Afro-Americans and Catholics and in “a concrete view of God and man in society”, were only then transformed into political categories through the democratic process. The campaign for prohibition and its implementation and justification were portrayed by its opponents as the introduction of the Eleventh Commandment at the level of the American Federation. Opponents also noted that the

ecclesiastical rootedness of the Anti-Saloon League made it possible to implement the political demands of many Protestant Churches (Catholics and Episcopalians did not support prohibition), which contradicted the principle of the separation of church and state. Walter Lippmann stated, “the Eighteenth Amendment is a rock upon which the evangelical church militant is founded, and with it are involved a whole way of life and an ancient tradition” (Lippmann, 1927, p. 31). The Eighteenth Amendment was abolished in 1933 by the passing of the Twenty-first Amendment, and the main arguments accompanying the withdrawal of the ban were the low effectiveness of the regulation, the flourishing of illegal sources of alcohol, as well as the proliferation of mafia groups involved in its distribution.

While it would be absurd to claim that the U.S. Supreme Court is inspired by religious ideas in its judgments, some researchers (J.A. Sekulow, K.D. Wald) have attempted to demonstrate the relationship between certain judges’ religious affiliation and their stance on some of their cases. This relationship, if it does exist, certainly does not work automatically since, for example, Catholic judges declared laws banning same sex marriage unconstitutional (in specific 2013 and 2015 rulings). Hence, it is necessary to consider each judge and his rulings on an individual basis. If one believes Wald’s findings (2016, pp. 443–444), Catholic judges’ religious beliefs influenced their defence of a city council’s right to begin session meetings with a prayer led by invited Christian clergy (see *Greece vs. Galloway*, 2014); religious secondary schools were financed from state funds (*Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization vs. Winn*, 2011); and company heads were allowed to not reimburse employees for contraception provided under a health insurance policy if it was against their religion (*Burwell vs. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 2014).

For almost half a century after 1948, religious justification was frequently utilised by the creators of apartheid policy in South Africa. During this time, a number of laws were passed or amended to differentiate citizens (both socially and politically) on the basis of their skin colour, and significant differences in mentality and behaviour resulted from this policy, especially concerning culture, religion, and socio-political life. These laws included restricting voting rights in the national parliament (both passive and then active) to only the white population, separate zones of residence and public institutions for different races,

the prohibition of racially mixed marriages, sexual intercourse between white and non-white races, different educational standards, and the prohibition of trade union membership for non-white races.

The theory of the superiority of the white race and the conviction of the inability of non-white races to make rapid civilizational progress or to organize socio-political life efficiently was supported by a specific interpretation of the Bible and served as the justification for apartheid. The religious justification of the superiority of the white race could be convincing for many Boers, who believed in predestination and heavily relied on the Bible, especially through the prism of Calvinist doctrine and their principles for the organization of social and political life. This provided fertile ground for the belief that the fate of Israel and that the Boers were convergent, as both nations had settled in a new promised land among native tribes after a long journey. Unlike the Boers, the natives were not chosen by God for salvation, but were destined to be “woodcutters and water carriers” (Joshua 9:20–21). The Boers’ mission towards God and other nations was to preserve and develop Christian civilization in Africa, just as the Puritan settlers had done in North America. This religious-political concept of the Boers is sometimes called “Neo-Calvinism” because of their application of the idea of the absolute sovereignty of God not so much over individuals as over the nation as a whole. This doctrine was proclaimed and interpreted by South African theologians, including “the Potchefstroom Theological School”. It can also be found in the statements of leading South African politicians, including Prime Minister D.F. Malan, who claimed that the Boers nation was not created by people but by God and suggested that racial division also comes from God. Although it was acknowledged that the white race had specific duties towards others, especially the duties of justice and Christian care and assistance, in fact religion (or rather its problematic interpretation) within apartheid served as a justification for the policy of favouring the white race. Thus, apartheid can be considered religiously inspired only if religious inspiration is to cover religious justification for public policy; this, however, seems too broad a definition of inspiration.

Religious beliefs can also be found in policies that work in direct opposition to apartheid, namely in the civil rights movement in the United States. This movement, initiated by Martin Luther King, led to the abolition of racial segregation, the introduction of equal rights for

black Americans, the passing of the the Civil Rights Act (1964), and the same electoral rights for citizens regardless of their colour (1965). In his public speeches, Martin Luther King, who was the son of a pastor, a pastor himself, and the chairman of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, regularly repeated the religious idea that before God the Creator all people are equal and should therefore enjoy equal rights regardless of their skin colour. The demand for state acceptance of these rights, treated by King as a reflection of God's law, was accompanied by emphasizing the commandment to love your neighbour and your enemy (Matthew 5:43–45), which he translated into an attitude of passive resistance (inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's Civil Disobedience Movement) and the recommendation to also love those who harm black Americans. In many of his speeches, not only did King refer to the vision of the founding fathers of the USA, to the Constitution, and to human dignity, but he also referenced biblical passages. For example, he compared the civil rights movement to Joshua and the Battle of Jericho using biblical rhetoric in which he depicted the results of the movement's actions: "Justice will roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream" Amos 5:24; "The rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain, and the glory of the Lord will be revealed", Isaiah 40:4–5.

In the field of foreign policy, the continued support by the United States for Israel in its conflict with the Arab states following the Six-Day War (1967) may seem like an example of a religiously inspired public policy, but this conclusion is not entirely accurate. This support is primarily motivated by American interests in the Middle East, although outwardly it is justified by the slogans of historical justice (providing the Jews with their own state following the Holocaust) and their religious beliefs. These beliefs derive from Puritanism and are popular among Evangelical Christians who make up a quarter of the American population. A literal, Millenarianist reading of the Bible emphasizes the perception of Israel as God's chosen peoples alongside the belief that the modern Israeli nation has inherited the promises made to Israel in the Old Testament. Such a reading also questions any theology that seeks to replace Israel in its original mission with the Church and highlights the need to wait for the Messiah to come again to Jerusalem, where He will establish the Millennial Kingdom. Suffice to say, one television station has permanently placed cameras on the Mount of Olives in order to broadcast these events

live. The second coming of the Messiah is to be preceded by the “fullness” of Jews (Romans 11:11), which is understood as their belief in the Messiah. In this context, the establishment of the State of Israel is often considered by Evangelical Christians as a stage in God’s plan to bring the people of Israel back to faith, to become a “light to the nations”, but also to realise God’s political scenario as described in chapter 14 of the Book of Zechariah. It heralds a fight of “all nations” against Jerusalem, the direct intervention of God, who defeats its enemies and saves and blesses those who stand by Israel. The Arab war with Israel is sometimes interpreted in terms of this scenario. Therefore, in order to preserve “God’s plan” and help to carry it out, Evangelical Christians (much more so than politicians) want their country to support Israel and help the Jews, being convinced that they help to fulfil God’s plan for the world. In order to gain the support of this electorate, some American politicians, especially Republicans, present US–Israeli policy precisely in terms of implementing God’s plan. This narrative has become especially popular among Evangelical Christians who have formed the core of the American “Christian right” during the presidencies of George W. Bush and Donald Trump (Glazier, 2016, pp. 485–486), but here the religious factor has been more of a “marketing” tool rather than being of a “real” nature within public policymaking. As with apartheid, it would be more appropriate to call this policy religiously justified rather than religiously inspired.

Religiously inspired public policies are present in contemporary Israel. Although the country was built on secular foundations, researchers emphasize that the influence of religious factors on politics intensified in Israel after the victorious Six-Day War with the Arab states in 1967, as the territory that was controlled by Israel began to resemble the borders of Israel described in the Hebrew Bible. In rabbinical Jewish circles, there is a strong belief that the boundaries of the modern state are defined by the Bible and that God expects such boundaries for the State of Israel. These arguments have also been raised by less religious Jewish settlers in response to the proposals of governments which were guided by more secular inspirations (such as those of Ariel Sharon’s government) to withdraw Jewish settlements from Gaza. Although these arguments certainly justify Israel’s politics, some highly religious political groups see them as being direct religious inspiration for their policies.

To sum up, it can be concluded that in the Western world, despite the institutionalisation of liberal doctrine (including individualism, rationalism, the separation of state and church, with the church's role being reduced to the private sphere), religiously inspired public policies exist and new ones continue to emerge (public policies being broadly defined). The causes of this phenomenon include the existence of an inalienable social dimension of religion; the difficulty in precisely delineating rational justifications and faith; and the functioning of groups of believers of various Churches who attempt to reflect religious and social doctrine within the social-political order. In practice, the doctrine of liberal democracy does not exclude religiously motivated public policy initiatives (with the exception of its model of a hostile separation of church and state), although it places certain limitations on them. First, the justification and aims of the policy must remain rational, so directly religious justification is unacceptable. Second, churches and religious associations do not have the right to a formal legislative initiative and thus must act either through informal lobbying or through members of their communities who are also members of parliament or government. Third, it is the state authorities that decide whether to implement public policies (including those inspired by religion), and they also bear legal responsibility for them since the norms set by Churches do not have the binding power of state law. Fourth, religiously inspired state public policies are different in nature to religious doctrine (in which they are natural, revealed, and unchanging principles), and are subject to verification and change due to political, economic, or social reasons. Maintaining political support for parties that favour (or do not favour) religiously inspired public policies remains a particularly sensitive constraint and condition for the creation of such policies; in practice, this support can be a decisive factor.

The author of the article is fully aware that this attempt to outline the phenomenon of religiously inspired public policies is far from being exhaustive and may be controversial for at least several reasons. First, the examples given in the text are based on a broad understanding of public policy, which is not widely accepted in science today. Treating governmental acts and court rulings as elements of public policy seems a particularly debatable aspect in this respect. Second, some examples turn out to be the religious justification for a policy rather than its real religious inspiration, which does not confirm the thesis of the existence

of the phenomenon. Third, the article does not provide precise criteria for religious inspiration, although the author hopes to contribute to the development of such criteria in some way. Fourth, the arguments that support the existence of religious inspiration in public policies can hardly be regarded as exhaustive and irrefutable. The examples described in the article (and the many numerous examples that are available but not mentioned here) undoubtedly call for broader investigation, including of a polemical nature. Fifth, the very thesis of the existence of religiously inspired public policies may be subject to polemics, which is the hope of the author.

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## List of authors

**Maciej Frączek**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0003-0601-3585

**Tomasz Geodecki**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0002-7028-0162

**Tomasz Grzegorz Grosse**, University of Warsaw

ORCID: 0000-0002-7270-8900

**Maciej Jakubowski**, Evidence Institute Science Foundation,

University of Warsaw, ORCID: 0000-0002-2512-3133

**Jacek Klich**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0002-1860-9178

**Marcin Kędzierski**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0003-3950-9384

**Seweryn Krupnik**, Jagiellonian University

ORCID: 0000-0003-2486-0702

**Norbert Laurisz**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0003-2079-1041

**Rafał Matyja**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0002-7170-4692

**Paweł Musiałek**, Jagiellonian Club

ORCID: 0000-0001-9765-6230

**Piotr Musiewicz**, Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

ORCID: 0000-0001-8725-7412

**Marek Rymza**, University of Warsaw

ORCID: 0000-0002-8419-8813

**Aleksander Surdej**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0001-5653-4261

**Kazimierz M. Ujazdowski**, University of Lodz

ORCID: 0000-0002-3156-1842

**Kinga Wojtas**, Cardinal Wyszyński University in Warsaw

ORCID: 0000-0002-2712-4607

**Artur Wołek**, Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow

ORCID: 0000-0003-3872-2925

**Marcin Zawicki**, Cracow University of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0002-3724-2658

**Marcin K. Zwierzdzyński**, AGH University of Science and Technology  
in Krakow, ORCID: 0000-0003-4248-5897

**Andrzej Zybala**, Warsaw School of Economics

ORCID: 0000-0002-1030-8792











