

Chapter 14

Research-Policy Dialogues in Poland

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14.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the attempts to institutionalise the production, exchange and utilisation of knowledge on the issue of immigrant integration in Poland. The chapter analyses three kinds of related actors – non-governmental organisations (NGOs), researchers and public authorities – and takes into account the context of institutional transformation after the fall of communism. Europeanisation is a very important context for this analysis. First of all, migration-related legislation in Poland was shaped by the *acquis communautaire*, i.e. Poland had to introduce legislation related to migration in accordance with legislation developed in the EU, including institutions and instruments for implementation as a condition for accession. Secondly, Europe is not only a source of funds and resources which ‘fuels’ NGOs working with migrants in Poland, but it is also seen as a reference point for best practices and patterns of action in a society defined as ‘catching up’. Thirdly, research in the field has surged, stimulated by material support and ideational inspiration coming from old EU-countries.

Poland has one of the smallest rates of immigration of any EU member state. The phenomenon first appeared after the fall of communism, so Poland does not have much experience with long-lasting processes and consequences of immigration (such as the integration of second-generation children). The issue of immigration is much less visible in the public discourse than the issue of Polish workers migrating to old EU member states. Integration policies thus far have applied to refugees and asylum seekers, while other categories of immigrants are subject solely to

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integration programmes financed by European funds. There is, however, both a will and a growing need to develop a more comprehensive national integration policy: discussions about such a policy are currently taking place.

In this chapter, I will firstly introduce the context of dialogue between relevant actors: the transformation from a communist to a democratic order and a capitalist economy, and its consequences for the welfare system. I will then discuss the specific relations between the actors of the dialogue: public authorities, civil society and social scientists. The next section outlines the development of migration and integration policymaking in Poland thus far. The mechanisms and structure of an emergent dialogue are then illustrated by two cases involving three types of actors: public authorities, NGOs and researchers. In the first case, a scandal is used to exert pressure on policymakers to change the procedures for school admission of refugee children. The second case shows how the institutionalisation of public consultation in the policymaking process also provides new institutional scope for research-policy dialogues in Poland. Finally I draw some conclusions on the specific characteristics of the emergent policy-research-NGO dialogue in Poland.

14.2 The Context for Research-Policy Dialogues on Migration and Integration

14.2.1 Post-1989 Transformations and the Migratory Situation

In 1989, the communist regime in Poland collapsed. The first democratic government of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki began the radical reform of state institutions that had been designed to control society. There was also an urgent need for economic reform as the communist planned economy was in a state of deep crisis. These reforms – dubbed ‘shock therapy’ – were designed by the Minister of Finance, Leszek Balcerowicz, a professor of economics who was very much under the influence of neo-liberal economic thought. Thanks to his reforms, the Polish economy recovered relatively quickly. However, other institutional systems did not undergo such radical changes (Szelenyi and Wilk 2010: 566).

For the last 20 years this transformation has been the main topic of discussion in Polish sociology and other social sciences (for a more detailed discussion see Kolasa-Nowak 2010). Nearly all phenomena in Poland are explained in the context of the transformation of the communist regime, which is seen as an element in the process of modernising the state and society (Morawski 2010).

One point of relevance in the context of Polish integration policy is specifically the structure of the welfare system and the changes therein. As François Bafoil claims, ‘the soviet-style welfare state, based on the promotion of labor, extensive paternalism, and clientelism, remained unchanged in the initial years, whereas financial constraints had tightened fiercely’ (Bafoil 2009: 68). Thus, during the turbulent economic reforms the welfare system changed at a very slow pace in order to maintain social peace and sustain support for reforms that were painful for large portions

of society. Szelenyi and Wilk conclude that there is ‘fundamental inconsistency in the logic of [Central European] economic and welfare institutions. [...] neo-liberal economic institutions coexist with outdated, malfunctioning distributive institutions, which are fundamentally socialist in nature’ (Szelenyi and Wilk 2010: 583).

Democratic institutions were introduced in the welfare systems, such as for example the institution of social dialogue in employer-employee relations. However, the so-called tripartite forums were very often perceived as a ‘talking shop’ and not as a real institution of participation (Bafoil 2009: 75). This is a bad omen for dialogues on the integration of migrants: if the most rudimentary institutions of social dialogue are considered inefficient and weak, the ones for migrants cannot be expected to function better.

Bafoil (2009) proposed to apply a ‘path dependence’ approach to the analysis of the welfare systems in Central Eastern Europe (see Putnam 1993: 179), since continuity is very visible in the social security systems of post-communist states. The Polish scholar Dariusz Zalewski takes a similar approach. In his opinion, the organisations of social policy in Poland have retained important characteristics of the old model (Zalewski 2005: 9). He also believes that the current welfare system in Poland is unsuccessful in helping clients stand on their own feet (which is the recognised aim of integration measures). However, it is able to cope effectively with crisis situations (Zalewski 2005: 142).

The liberalisation of the border regime was one of the first changes in the transformation process in Poland. As a consequence of economic reform, many Polish employees lost their jobs and for many groups in society, emigration became a rational strategy for improving well-being. These emigrants thus profited from this liberalisation. On the other hand, Poland started to develop and the big cities¹ especially began attracting labour from other regions of the country and abroad. The majority of labour immigrants came to Poland from Ukraine, a neighbouring state whose economy seems to be in permanent crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The democratisation of Poland is also evident in the fact that Poland started accepting refugees. The ratification of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (Geneva Convention) in 1991 was one of the instances where Poland was internationally recognised as a democracy. For a long time, accepted obligations towards refugees were the most important reason for the creation of an integration policy targeting this particular category of immigrants (see below).

14.2.2 State, Civil Society and Science in the New Poland

The centralised character of the Polish state is a legacy of communism, although in the last 20 years much has been done to decentralise it. Municipalities have become

¹Concerning immigrants one has to note that they often take up seasonal jobs in agriculture (Bieniecki and Pawlak 2009).

independent actors, yet they often lack sufficient funds to build up bold policies on their own. In the communist era, all actions of state agencies were 'planned', the 'plan' usually being ignorant of reality, and never based on evidence or scientific expertise. There is no tradition of commissioning research and to add to this, despite ideological declarations stating otherwise, the social sciences themselves are not accustomed to providing applicable research results. The public administration and its officials remain procedure-oriented rather than goal-oriented. All these features of the state may be presented here with a certain dose of simplification and exaggeration, yet these broad brush strokes quite adequately depict the conditions for dialogue on certain issues in Poland.

When it comes to civil society in Central Eastern Europe, there are three factors of weakness (as compared to the West) according to Howard (2003): (1) illegitimacy and distrust towards forms of collective association, which often were obligatory in the communist period; (2) strong bonds of family and groups based on friendship which render formal forms of association less relevant; and (3) increased individualism caused by a disappointment with corrupt and inefficient collective action (Howard 2003). Similarly, Bafoil lists the following features of non-governmental organisations in Central Eastern Europe: 'they are more widespread in urban than in rural areas; they are able to mobilise only a small number of voluntary workers (in comparison with the figures for Western Europe); they are particularly short of funds [. . .]; and their relations with the public authorities are often difficult' (Bafoil 2009:174–5). Non-governmental organisations are not perceived as partners by public authorities, but rather as providers of services. According to Bafoil, mistrust between the state and non-governmental organisations in many sectors has actually risen since the fall of communism, as governments did not wish to share their prerogatives. Howard and Bafoil's observations need to be supplemented with a reference to the Polish historical context that goes further back than communism: the perception of the state as oppressive originates in the nineteenth-century occupation of parts of Poland by the Russian Empire, and in the feudal social systems before that.

The mistrust between public officials and NGO activists hinders constructive dialogue and cooperation. However, such mistrust also seems to institutionalise specific forms of dialogue, such as scandals and symbolic conflict. Non-governmental organisations in Poland have been significantly strengthened recently thanks to the hitherto unknown possibility of acquiring European funds, which provide resources unattainable through private donors or authorities.

As mentioned, social scientists in Poland are generally not familiar with applied research for policymaking, despite occasionally expressed ambitions to advance social engineering. Applied research is perceived by some scholars as less prestigious than 'pure' scientific inquiry. But even scholars interested in social policy often develop indicators that are not applicable by policymakers. Expertise provided to authorities is often perceived as decorative in nature by researchers themselves. In relation to public authorities and non-governmental organisations, social scientists often behave like 'supporters' of NGOs. In the case of research on refugees in Poland it has been shown that authors of publications assume beforehand that NGOs act in favour of refugees, while public organisations are tools of exclusion and discrimination (Pawlak 2012).

Leopold Gluck noted that research quite often was used as a cover and reinforcement for decisions already taken (Gluck 1973: 59): in Boswell's terms, having a symbolic function of substantiating already-decided policies (Boswell 2009: 73). Jerzy Mikułowski-Pomorski has pointed to the problem of communication between decision makers and researchers in similar terms to the metaphor of two communities (Mikułowski-Pomorski 1972).

Władysław Markiewicz and Witold Morawski closely analysed the influence of social sciences on political decisions in Poland in the 1980s. According to the authors, there was only an indirect influence on decision makers. Researchers were informing society and thus shaping public opinion (Markiewicz and Morawski 1991: 209–214). In the 1980s, the authorities launched an enormous project aimed to design a national strategy for Poland's development called 'Polska 2000'. Researchers who were amenable to the communist authorities were invited to provide expertise to feed into the strategy. According to Frieske and Regulski the submitted reports were just opinions from the intellectual elite and were not very grounded in systematic scientific inquiry (Frieske and Regulski 1984: 73).

To sum up the foregoing, one could claim that there is an institutionalisation of very specific research-policy relations. Researchers did not expect that their knowledge was going to be used instrumentally (Boswell 2009: 29), so two modes of research production were developed. The first mode was knowledge that was to be used symbolically as just an intellectual exercise, without needing to be very methodologically grounded. The second mode referred to knowledge addressed to the public and not to the policymakers, which often used exaggeration, the dramatisation of narratives and rhetorical recommendations. Thus, there is a strong tradition of an absence of direct dialogue and a lack trust between policymakers and researchers.

After the fall of communism, significant development occurred in the evaluation research sector in Poland. The European Union's requirements to evaluate policy programmes served as an important catalyst in the growth of the evaluation research industry. However, evaluation research is very often used symbolically.

The most important analyses of relations between research and policymakers in Poland stress the importance of the indirect impact of knowledge on public officials, as in Carole Weiss' enlightenment model (1979). It is claimed that the enlightenment of both public opinion and decision makers is one apparent contribution of Polish social science (Frieske 1990; Kwaśniewski 2002; Markiewicz and Morawski 1991).

In conclusion, using the language of Christina Boswell (2009) and Peter Scholten (2011), it could be said that there is an institutionalised symbolic use of knowledge by policymakers and there is also a strong tradition of indirect transmission of this knowledge from researchers to policymakers. In this indirect transmission, the use of scandalising and dramatised narratives is one of the ways to attract attention and achieve assumed goals through 'dialogue'. I would argue that there is no direct institutionalised mechanism for coordinating the two fields of research and policymaking, so one cannot talk about either enlightenment or bureaucratic models (Scholten 2011: 49). The discourses of administration and research are parallel rather than intersecting. These parallel discourses, in my opinion,

make researchers' recommendations useless, because they are incompatible with administrative structures of decision-making. If communication between decision makers and researchers exists, it is informal and very often mediated through the engagement of researchers in non-governmental organisations' activities. The symbolic use of research is achieved by inviting recognised scholars to serve as policy advisors, and more recently by commissioning evaluation research (usually from consulting agencies rather than academic institutions).

14.3 Emerging Migration and Integration Policies: An EU-Dominated, External Project

14.3.1 The Europeanisation of the Legal and Institutional Structure of Migration Policy

The run-up to Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004 was a period of intense modifications to Polish legal acts in order to live up to the *acquis communautaire*, which was a condition for Poland to become a member state. In many ways it was also an occasion to implement changes in the legal and institutional structure of the state, which were not obligatory but perceived by policymakers as needed in order to modernise the state apparatus. These non-obligatory changes were usually also shaped according to so-called 'European' patterns. The Polish policy towards foreigners is one case of this process, which is analysed very well by Agnieszka Weinar (2006). According to her, the implementation of 'European' institutions was a very strong legitimising factor. In 2003 two new acts were enacted: *Ustawa o cudzoziemcach* (Act on Foreigners) and *Ustawa o udzielaniu cudzoziemcom ochrony na terytorium Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (Act on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland). Before 2003 all the issues regarding foreigners in Poland were regulated by one act. Splitting the regulations into two separate acts, one on asylum seekers and one on all other foreigners, was suggested but not requested by the European Commission (Weinar 2006: 97). Also, the Office for Repatriation and Aliens was instituted by the new Act on Foreigners (in 2007 the name of that institution was changed to The Office for Foreigners). The Office for Repatriation and Aliens was shaped along the lines of immigration departments found in the majority of European national administration systems (Weinar 2006: 95).

During the legislation process there were no cases of research-policy dialogues, although actors outside the administration or parliament were consulted about these acts. These consultations took place at the Helsinki Foundation (which also played an advisory role during the proceedings of the Act on Aliens in 1997), and at the local bureau of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The legal expertise of these two actors was based on their experience with advising asylum

seekers, and – according to Weinar – they influenced the final formulation of the Act on granting protection to foreigners within the territory of the Republic of Poland to some extent (Weinar 2006: 97).

It must be noted that the Europeanisation of Polish legal and institutional structures was perceived as an aspect of modernisation and progress; therefore during this period reforming any institution or reformulating a legal act in the name of ‘customisation according to European requirements’ was strongly legitimising.

14.3.2 The Administrative Structure Responsible for Migration and Integration Policies

The responsibility for migration and integration policies is dispersed over different administrative bodies. The Ministry of Interior is responsible for coordinating migration policy, and has a Migration Policy Department to perform these tasks. The Migration Policy Department coordinates the cabinet actions regarding issues of migration and deals especially with issues of citizenship and repatriation policy. Within the Ministry of Interior, there is an Office for Foreigners that deals with admissions, decisions on expulsions and asylum matters. This Office coordinates the centres for asylum seekers and is responsible for providing them housing during the asylum process. Thus, the Ministry of Interior is an important institutional actor in the policy field of migration. The issues connected with the integration of immigrants, however, are a responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which is also responsible for the regulations dealing with labour migration. Within the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy these issues are split between two departments: regulations dealing with labour migration are under the supervision of the Labour Market Department, and integration issues are under the supervision of the Department of Social Assistance and Integration. The Department of Social Assistance and Integration is also the responsible authority for implementing the European Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals (EIF) in Poland.

Two things must be noted when it comes to the significance of immigrant integration in this institutional setting. Firstly, the Department of Social Assistance and Integration is responsible for all issues regarding the social assistance system in Poland and for counteracting social exclusion. The system of social assistance in Poland has an estimated two million clients. Among them immigrants (specifically refugees) constitute a relatively small group of less than 10,000 clients. Policies targeting these latter clients are proportionally a lesser priority for the Department.

Secondly, since 2005 the ministers of Labour and Social Policy have been members of a smaller party (with minor exceptions) in the cabinet coalitions. Such ministers have less power. Furthermore, the reform of the social assistance system is relatively low on the agenda of policymakers in Poland. These two factors support the statements quoted above from Szelenyi and Wilk (2010) on the relations between the economy and social assistance in Central Eastern Europe.

Another important actor is the Implementing Authority for European Programmes, which runs the European Refugee Fund (ERF) and European Fund for Integration of Third-country Nationals (EIF). As a delegated authority it cooperates with the different ministries responsible. In the case of integration of immigrants it cooperates with the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and in the case of refugees it cooperates with the Ministry of Interior.

The institutional setting is recognised as quite complicated (for a deeper analysis see: Lesińska et al. 2010) and what is most striking is that the responsibilities are dispersed. The Ministry of Interior strongly emphasises that although it coordinates migration policy, the integration issue is beyond its competence. For the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the integration of immigrants is low on the agenda. The Department of Labour in the same ministry also emphasises that its competence is restricted to labour regulations. The issue of integration of immigrants can therefore be characterised as a ‘hot potato’ – units of central government try not to have it included among their tasks.

14.3.3 The Strategic Shaping of Policies in Poland

In recent years, we can observe a turn to more goal-oriented and strategy-driven policymaking in Poland. This is surely connected with the Europeanisation of the Polish administration, which since EU accession, has tried to shape its actions according to strategic documents aimed at modernising the state. In recent years, all of the ministries and the cabinet have launched an enormous effort to create a large body of strategic documents (around 300). In many domains, the strategies were designed to fit EU requirements, such as the Lisbon Strategy, or its successor, the Europe 2020 Strategy, or to create a larger scope of opportunities to absorb European Funds by different types of actors (central administration, local and regional administration, non-governmental organisations, enterprises).

One might hypothesise that the logic behind creating strategic documents is changing: from being a means of achieving certain goals to becoming an end of administration in itself (March and Olsen 2006). The way in which the final document ‘Polish Migration Policy – current situation and postulated actions’ was created illustrates that process. It was initiated at a time of massive production of strategic policy documents. The Department of Migration Policy in the Ministry of Interior (then the Ministry of Interior and Administration) was responsible for coordinating the work and took the lead in the Inter-ministerial Team on Migration, which was working on the document. The Department of Social Assistance and Integration in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, which according to the division of competences should have been responsible for the chapter on integration (one of ten chapters), played a subordinate role. External actors, such as non-governmental organisations and also researchers who were calling for an explicit statement on Polish migration policy (Lesińska et al. 2010: 201–209), were marginalised during the production of the document. The process of document creation was closed to the

broader public. A few scholars from the Centre of Migration Research were invited as advisors but they were not specialists on integration issues (but rather were more experienced in economic processes of labour migration) and they did not have any influence on the integration chapter.

14.3.4 Institutionalisation of Public Consultation

Nonetheless, NGOs and researchers did get a somewhat unexpected chance thanks to the public consultation process. Regulations on public consultations in the policy process and on the assessment of the consequences of regulations do not regard strategic documents as objects for consultation: only acts or ordinances are subject to such regulations. Consulting or commissioning ex-ante evaluations of strategic documents is only recommended by the government but is not an obligation. Nevertheless, the government decided to have consultations on this policy document. As one of the officials from the Ministry of Interior commented: 'There was no legal basis for the consultation – we were just driven by a desire to know [non-governmental organisations' and researchers'] opinion.' So the mode of consulting about the 'Polish Migration Policy' strategy was discretionary.

On the other hand, there was a considerable pressure on the government to run consultations, and not doing so would have met with strong criticism. And even officials working on the document openly admitted that the integration chapter especially needed to be consulted upon because there was 'simply no good idea how to design it' (informal interview with an official from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy). The result of all this was that consultations were launched for a 30-day period according to the procedure for public consultations on normative acts.

14.4 Migration Research After 1989

The fall of communism in Poland totally changed the migratory situation of the country. Under the communist regime, certain groups of foreigners settled in Poland, such as Greek communists in the 1940s, students from so-called 'developing countries' (especially Vietnam), as well as waves of immigration by ethnic Poles (just after World War II and in 1956). The transition to democracy (implying liberalisation of the border regime) and to a capitalist economy (increasing the attractiveness of its labour market) significantly increased the influx of foreigners to Poland.

In their discussion of the relations between politics and migration policies in Poland, Kępińska and Stola concluded that in general migration to Poland was not a big political issue and that the relevant legislation caused few controversies (Kępińska and Stola 2004: 162). That said, they did point out three exceptions: (1) the legislation on repatriation; (2) the case of introducing visas for Ukrainians in

2003; and (3) the engagement of NGOs in the consultations on the 1997 Alien Act. Although these issues do not pertain to integration directly, they are illustrative of the development of migration policies in Poland.

Firstly, legislation on repatriation was introduced in order to aid the ‘return’ of ethnic Poles living in Central Asia.² The solutions adopted in Poland were very similar to the *Aussiedler* policies in Germany (Kępińska and Stola 2004: 170). However, as time passed they failed to meet ethnic Poles’ expectations: unlike the situation in Germany, local municipalities were not able to finance the resettlement of these repatriates.

Secondly, in the case of introducing visas for former USSR states (a condition for Poland’s accession into the EU), Polish public opinion was reluctant to introduce visa controls. While positive sentiments – especially towards Ukrainians – were strong, pressure from the EU proved stronger (Kępińska and Stola 2004: 171). Visas were introduced, but Ukrainian citizens could acquire them without much trouble.

Thirdly, Kępińska and Stola highlight the role of legal experts from the Helsinki Foundation in providing advice in view of the proposed Alien Act in 1997 (Kępińska and Stola 2004: 162). The authors add, however, that this is in fact the only example of a successful dialogue between civil society and public bodies on issues connected to migration.

The above points, argue Kępińska and Stola, give support to their thesis that Polish migration policies were often an outcome of the priorities of other governments (Kępińska and Stola 2004: 162). In their view, ‘the emerging migratory regime has lacked clear objectives; migration policies have been reactive and lack long-term goals and guidelines’ (Kępińska and Stola 2004:173).

Kicinger & Weinar, in their ‘State of the Art of Migration Research in Poland’ (2007), state that in the 1990s, migration research in Poland was in an exploratory phase – new phenomena were described by researchers of different backgrounds, interested in different scientific problems and research issues. In the twenty-first century, research became more explanatory, analysing the general situation and statistical data on the daily lives of specific groups of migrants, at macro- and micro-levels (Kicinger and Weinar 2007: 38). Kicinger & Weinar also stress – and it is difficult to disagree – that the research agenda for migration studies in Poland was mostly set by western scholars seeking comparative data (Kicinger and Weinar 2007: 38). Polish research was influenced by theories developed in the West, and the inclusion of Polish researchers in research proposals and funded projects was thanks mainly to western scholars.

In Poland there is a strong tradition of studying emigration: without much exaggeration it may be stated that emigration was at the heart of the development of sociology in Poland, such as the seminal works of Thomas and Znaniecki (1918). Emigration studies became institutionalised, an example of which is the Institute of Polish Diaspora and Ethnic Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. By contrast, the studies on immigration mentioned above were the products of

²Their ancestors were deported there during the Stalinist era.

individual scholars, not an effort by institutionalised research centres. The Centre of Migration Research (CMR) at the University of Warsaw, the most recognised and strongest scientific institution on migration in Poland, is the result of Professor Marek Okólski's efforts and leadership in the field of migration research in Poland to build a team of scholars and create an institute. Its institutionalisation in 1993 was a result of the support of international agencies and research grants seeking data from Central Eastern Europe (Okólski 2008: 1). Another centre worth mentioning is the Central European Forum for Migration and Population Research (CEFMPR) established in 2002, financially supported by the Swiss Foundation for Population, Migration and Environment. Recently, a new institute was established at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań: the Centre for Migration Studies (CeBaM). CeBaM also became active thanks to European financial resources. Kicinger and Weinar underline that Polish research on migration policy did not aim to provide a basis for policymaking (Kicinger and Weinar 2007: 59) and that 'the dynamic development of migration policy research in Europe, with many international research projects in the field, proved to be the most important accelerator for migration policy research in Poland' (Kicinger and Weinar 2007: 61). Ironically, this is also the case with this chapter.

As Kicinger & Weinar contend in their 'State of the Art', studies about the issue of integration have treated this notion as self-explanatory and seldom discussed the meaning of or measures for the process of integration. They express doubts about whether it is possible to examine integration in Poland, as immigrants reside in Poland for only a short period of time and suggest the term 'adjustment' of immigrants in Poland as more applicable (Kicinger and Weinar 2007: 44).

Since the publication of Kicinger & Weinar's 'State of the Art' in 2007, two significant books have appeared: a collection of theoretical papers on integration (Grzymała-Kazłowska and Łodziński 2008) and a multi-dimensional analysis of the integration policy towards refugees in Poland (Frelak et al. 2007). The former work discussed the theoretical aspects of research on integration of immigrants. The latter research focuses on the so-called 'programmes of individual integration for refugees' and more generally evaluated the system of integration of refugees in Poland put in place in 2000 thanks to changes to the Social Assistance Act. The general conclusion of the study by Frelak and colleagues is that the evaluation of integration policy is difficult, as most of its target audience do not wish to reside long-term in Poland and plan to eventually migrate to Western Europe. At the same time the volume provided several detailed recommendations for policymakers: one of the most important was the inclusion in integration programmes of forced migrants who had not acquired Geneva refugee status, but instead had been granted so-called 'tolerated stay' status (similar to German 'Duldung'). Soon after the book's publication, the Social Assistance Act was rewritten and broader categories of forced migrants were included in the integration programmes. One should note, however, that for this particular change in legislation the voice of the researchers was just one among many: social workers from local social assistance centres, representatives of NGOs, and officials of The Office for Repatriation and Aliens also supported it. The necessity for change seemed obvious to all actors and required no additional discussion.

Another conclusion drawn from the research was that the individual programmes of integration did not have any aims or goals set. Social workers assisted refugees in increasing their knowledge of the Polish language, aided in job seeking and encouraged contact with the local community, but the programme was terminated after 1 year, regardless of its outcomes. Thus, it could be concluded that the mean ('to integrate') is the aim of the policy, not a particular end (to achieve some sort of level of integration or at least adjustment of a refugee). This could be called the logics of appropriateness, because actions are taken not because the ends are needed, but because it is appropriate (or legitimised) to apply the mean (March and Olsen (2006).

Frelak and colleagues' study of integration policies (2007) is illustrative with regard to dialogues involving NGOs, researchers and policymakers in Poland. The research project was conducted by the Institute of Public Affairs (an independent think-tank) in cooperation with a *pro-bono* organisation of lawyers, financed by the European Social Fund. The Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (responsible for the integration of immigrants in Poland) was also invited to be a partner. This scenario is typical in the Polish setting – civil society initiates, European funds facilitate, and public institutions are co-opted. However, the latter seldom use the resulting recommendations.

Polish migration policymaking is viewed as a product of the pressures of the Europeanisation process. This is the case for the legislation created to meet the requirements of the *acquis communautaire* (Weinar 2006; Kicingier et al. 2007). It is also expressed by the support of norms and institutions recognised as 'western' by practitioners (Pawlak 2011; Łodziński and Grzymała-Kazłowska 2011). Yet Kicingier disagrees with this view, arguing that there are certain fields of migration policy that are 'more Poland-oriented' (Kicingier 2009: 80). In her opinion these areas include: the visa policy for Eastern neighbours (noted above), the 'policy of silent tolerance towards the irregular employment of foreigners in Poland', repatriation policy (also noted above), and emigration. In Kicingier's opinion the tolerance of irregular employment of Ukrainians in Poland (mostly in agriculture, construction and domestic work) is deliberate (Kicingier 2009: 87). On the other hand, she believes that the refugee protection regime in Poland is the most Europeanised, since what was most at stake here was to prove that Poland was a liberal democracy (Kicingier 2009: 91).

In the case of refugee protection, especially the policies concerning the integration of refugees in Polish society, one could claim (although there is not sufficient conclusive evidence) that elements of this policy are deliberately weak. Referring to the concept of strategic decoupling (Hirsch and Bermiss 2009: 265), one can interpret the deliberate ineffectiveness of refugee integration policies (noted by NGOs) as a means to avoid attracting greater numbers of asylum seekers. According to this interpretation, the Polish state would be achieving two contradictory goals: (1) running the refugee protection regime according to western standards (legitimation); and (2) discouraging the arrival of new asylum seekers and settlement of those already present (the interest of the Polish state).

Some studies include policy recommendations as part of their conclusions. It seems, however, that they often serve a rather superficial, cosmetic function: researchers express their views (which are often critical towards the current situation) but the ‘recommendations’ are not compatible with policymakers’ logics of action.

14.5 Processes of Research-Policy Dialogue: Two Examples

14.5.1 NGO-Initiated Research as a Lever for Dialogue: Refugee Children and Education

In 2005 and 2006 the Association for Legal Intervention (SIP) conducted a survey in centres for asylum seekers regarding school enrolment of refugee children. SIP’s primary field of operation is non-profit legal advice, but the organisation also comments on legal acts and lobbies for changes in legislation, favouring individuals in danger of exclusion or marginalisation. Although refugees and migrants are not SIP’s only clients, they are one of the most important and the lawyers from this NGO specialise in immigration law, especially the application procedures in order to attain refugee status.

SIP activists sent questionnaires to all refugee centres in Poland – nearly 20 at the time. The officials from the centres were supposed to provide the number of children living in the centre, the number of children attending school, and a description of the results of tests assessing children’s knowledge of Polish, as well as their educational attainment. This was important in the case of children who did not possess school certificates or those who had been educated in incomparable education systems.

The results confirmed the NGO’s suspicions that a very large group of refugee children was not even enrolled in schools. Half of the children had not sat the educational attainment test and, as a consequence, did not attend school at all. Also, some children who according to the test results had poor command of Polish did not attend school as well. In the SIP report the authors stressed that the organisation of such tests was required by regulations (Jasiakiewicz and Klaus 2006). However, as in some locations such tests were organised only once a year, many children who arrived after the beginning of the school year were simply excluded from the education system, which – as the authors stressed – is in fact illegal. In many cases social workers from the refugee centres explained the low attendance among refugee children by pointing to parents’ lack of interest in school enrolment. This stance is in breach of regulations on compulsory education in Poland. The report also makes note of the low evaluation of the level of Polish language classes and educational support for children provided in the refugee centres. Many of these problems have been revealed previously, for example in the first Polish edition of the annual ‘Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming’ survey conducted by the regional UNHCR office for Central Europe (UNHCR 2005).

The outcomes of the SIP research were strongly publicised: the final report was published in full on the Internet, and a shorter version appeared as a policy paper. Furthermore, a conference on the topic of the education of refugee children was organised. This case is therefore illustrative of a specific form of dialogue between civil society and public institutions in Poland. The evidence gathered by the NGO by means of a simple but accurate methodology was used to put pressure both on the Office for Repatriation and Aliens (which at the time managed the centres for asylum seekers and ruled on asylum applications) and on local educational authorities to improve their practices. The situation was presented as scandalous and the need for finding quick solutions was highlighted.

Measures were swiftly taken after the publication of the report: in particular, the practices regarding the educational attainment test were changed (they are presently organised more frequently), and more attention was devoted to assisting refugee pupils in the centres for asylum seekers. The biggest problem for the Office for Repatriation and Aliens was to create effective incentives for parents to send their children to schools, particularly for Chechen parents.³ As many of them had plans to leave Poland soon, they did not see much point in their children pursuing education in Poland. The solution that was finally implemented was to pay a sum of money directly to parents: this sum was equivalent to the meal costs saved by asylum seeker centres when children were away in school. This solution revealed the dual purpose of the measure. The first is direct and obvious: refugee parents need money to feed their children. The second one is indirect, but silently accepted by both refugees and the Office for Repatriation and Aliens: the money is perceived by many as a source of income and thus even the ones not willing to stay in Poland become interested in enrolling their children in school.

Since 2006 all children residing in centres for asylum seekers have been enrolled in schools, but the real problems with their education and further integration into the school system remain unresolved. Refugee children are in danger of exclusion, and while the enrolment rate is easily assessed from raw data, it is much harder to monitor the process of their integration. Owing to the research and engagement of NGOs in 2006, a first step was made and the school system was effectively opened for refugee children. However, their educational achievements and participation in school life remain a problem.

In summary, in this case we see that local educational authorities and the public institution responsible for refugees (The Office for Repatriation and Aliens) did not take any action to monitor the school enrolment of children residing in centres for refugees. Action was started by an NGO in the form of a survey to expose this situation. The survey could not have been completed, however, without full cooperation from social workers and officials from the centres that are run by the state agency: they provided detailed data. The results were publicised by the NGO, which was strongly critical of the current situation, resulting in the quick

³In the 2000s, Chechens constituted the majority of asylum seekers in Poland.

implementation of (somewhat ambiguous) measures to formally solve the problem. This was recognised as a mutual success, but was also just the first step in facilitating integration in schools. Other aspects of the process remained problematic.

14.5.2 The European Integration Fund as a Lever for Future Policy?

Poland's migrant integration policy has so far focused exclusively on refugees and asylum seekers. In 2009, however, Poland became eligible for accessing the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals (EIF). This situation is paradoxical because the projects granted by the Fund should complement actions taken on a national level, according to a Decision of the Council of the European Union, (article 6, 2007/435/EC). However in the case of Poland and some other Eastern European countries (i.e. Hungary), such actions cannot complement any national integration policy, because no such policy exists.⁴

Since the beginning of 2009 over 40 organisations in Poland have received financial support for their projects from the EIF. This has resulted in a boom in activities by NGOs in the field of migrant integration. It is worth noting that, in the case of Poland as a new EU state, the Fund could cover up to 75 % of a project's budget. Additionally, organisations may apply for national support for another 10 %. As a result, even small organisations with limited resources could launch activities for immigrants.

In the eyes of experts and practitioners in the field, neither the authority implementing the programme (Władza Wdrażająca Programy Europejskie) nor the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (which is responsible for migrant integration) are qualified to manage the EIF (Bieniecki and Pawlak 2010). As the field in Poland is relatively small, the amount of money claimed in proposals filed for 2009 was smaller than the total funding available.⁵ As a consequence of this absence of competition, and the implementing authority's lack of capacity to evaluate project proposals, the actions that were financed were extremely incoherent. They often overlapped with or duplicated existing actions, as in the case of handbooks for immigrants, while other issues were not covered at all.

One of the EIF's priorities was research on the situation of third-country nationals and their integration needs. Several research projects were carried out, but only one was conducted by an academic institution, plus a few others which were coordinated by independent research institutes with appropriate research experience. However the majority were conducted by NGOs lacking sufficient

⁴National integration policy might exist without being institutionalised (a lack of policy is also a policy), but the European Fund is supposed to be complementary to *institutionalised* and *explicit* policy.

⁵In 2009 organisations could apply for the 2007 and 2008 EIF allocations.

methodological and professional expertise. Academic institutions faced great difficulty in applying for research grants from the EIF, since EIF's procedures and requirements as well as academic bureaucracy were highly incompatible. In the EIF's defence, the Polish implementing authority lacked sufficient knowledge to review research proposals: decisions were made by officials based on their own reasoning rather than on peer review.

Research reports from the projects financed by the EIF were supposed to provide policy recommendations, but this requirement is highly problematic in the absence of explicit national policies. Evaluation studies and surveys show that NGO-run projects often displayed a lot of enthusiasm, yet – hindered by lack of research experience – did not provide useful data. Many of their recommendations are not realistic as the activists do not fully understand the mechanisms of the administrative implementation of policies, or overestimate the funds available to national and local authorities for dealing with issues that are not recognised as important in public discourse. On a more positive note, one might expect that this body of knowledge might be used in the near future to develop policy recommendations from civil society.

In terms of content, it is to be noted that the requirements of the EIF, and its definitions and practices, shape the views of practitioners from the field of migrant integration. Symptoms of both coercive and normative isomorphism can be observed (DiMaggio and Powell 1983: 150): firstly, organisations apply structures and reproduce practices that are set by the bureaucratic standards of the fund; and secondly, both activists and employees of organisations are in a process of professionalisation. 'Integration' becomes their professional ideology and this is a source of pressure for normative isomorphism (Pawlak 2011). These phenomena shape expectations for future Polish integration policies.

In the near future, integration policy appears certain to be extended to cover more than forced migrants. While the scope of the actions outlined in the official document on 'Polish migration policy' prepared by the government is very general, it seems that it is going to be 'reactive' to the actions financed by the EIF during the past years.

The debate on the integration issue has only recently started in Poland. Thanks to the fact that immigration is not a politicised topic, it is not influenced by democratic impatience (Penninx 2009)⁶; instead it is shaped by the EIF's agenda and categorisations, which are in many respects linked with the problems recognised in western countries with longer immigration traditions. This caused the above-mentioned pressures for coercive and normative isomorphism regarding actions to integrate immigrants, which in turn shaped the expectations of participants in the debate regarding national integration policy. This process – along with legal changes connected to EU accession and the requirements of the *acquis communautaire* – is yet another aspect of Europeanisation of Polish integration policy.

⁶It can be said however that the integration policy introduced thus far, with the help of the EIF, suffers from 'project impatience': actions are not sustainable, and finish when funding stops at the end of a project.

The discussions over the ‘Polish Migration Policy’ document (especially with regard to its chapters on integration) can be viewed as a preliminary attempt to set (new) standards in the Polish dialogue between civil society and policymakers. Caritas Poland (one of the biggest charities in Poland connected to the Catholic Church and active in assistance to immigrants) has taken the lead in trying to organise actors in the NGO and research fields into putting pressure on governmental agencies to improve integration policy. The first means to do this is Caritas’ initiative to review EIF projects and their outcomes in Poland, in order to identify which knowledge could be included in integration policies, and also to scrutinise the standards of NGO services. Caritas, recognising its lack of authority to evaluate other NGOs or public bodies, facilitated the creation of a team of experts with backgrounds in public administration (local and national), NGOs and research institutions. Representatives from the field then discussed the analysis of completed integration projects provided by this expert team. The second means by which to exert pressure on government is to organise conferences and bring practitioners and experts together to lobby for better integration policies.

The 30-day period of public consultation on the ‘Polish Migration Policy’ document was a time of mobilisation for civil society. NGO activists wanted to provide evidence-based provisions for the document – not only to improve policy, but also to prove their accountability to governmental officials. Governmental officials needed to listen to civil society partners, knowing that after the shortcomings in utilisation of EIF money thus far this was the only way to gain legitimisation for future policy. There were 19 submissions during the consultation period: one by the leading migration research institute (the Centre of Migration Research), five by governmental institutions (not included previously during the document’s preparation), two by leading trade-unions, two by international organisations (UNHCR and IOM), and eight by NGOs plus the submission by the expert team formed by Caritas Poland (some of the representatives of the eight NGOs were also members of this coalition but wanted to also send their separate official opinions). Specifically regarding the integration chapter, more than 40 corrections proposed during the consultation period were inserted in the final version of the document adopted by the Prime Minister in July 2012. One of the Ministry of Interior officials admitted that the team of experts formed by Caritas Poland could be regarded as a co-author of the chapter (informal interview with Interior Ministry official).

14.6 Conclusions

To conclude, the government is not an active participant in shaping migrant integration policy: its approach is rather reactive. The most important reason for this state of affairs is that the immigration issue is not a topic of wide public debate, so there is no pressure from the political parties to design an integration policy. Instead, the institutional framework was shaped by pressure from outside. Poland had to accept the *acquis communautaire* as a condition of EU accession in 2004,

and the availability of EIF funding opened up opportunities for the mobilisation of the civil sector. At the same time, the research agenda of scholars was shaped by European research interests and theories. Introducing the European framework for the policy was not just obligatory, but also perceived as appropriate. Drawing and borrowing from institutions and structures that have a longer experience with immigration legitimised Polish policymakers. For the Polish actors, the European framework seemed to be 'the most rational' model to be adopted.

The consequences for actual policy practices can be considered in a positive light. If it were not for the external pressures and financial resources described above, integration policies in Poland would not have developed. Nonetheless, there is a risk that structures and institutions will be adopted superficially in order to gain legitimacy, without much impact on daily practice in administrative agencies or in social welfare organisations. In organisational sociology, such an effect is termed 'decoupling' (Meyer and Rowan 1977). However, this will not occur if a strong set of professional norms emerges among those who implement integration policies.

Research-policy dialogues in Poland are not institutionalised. This chapter has instead shown that currently it is more accurate to speak of policy-research-NGO dialogues. This means that the transmission of knowledge is rather indirect, and the forms of this transmission often contain scandalising, exaggeration or purely rhetorical policy recommendations. NGOs use research and research methods to legitimise their authority in the dispute over the future direction of integration policy. When dialoguing with policymakers, they often join forces with researchers. The most important constraint encountered in developing dialogues is distrust between policymakers on one side and civil society and researchers on the other. There is no tradition of evidence-based policymaking in Poland and a public debate on integration in Poland is largely absent: the issue is not perceived as important. Finally, evidence and recommendations provided by researchers are often not compatible with the logics of action of public institutions. The dialogue, as far as it exists, is facilitated by the forces of Europeanisation at many levels: legislative; organisational standards and procedures; political legitimisation; and normative attitudes held by participants in policy-research-NGO dialogues.

NGOs and researchers are becoming a stronger party in dialogues thanks to external forces like EU funds and frameworks for integration practices. Furthermore, the models of civic participation in policymaking and use of expertise that already exist in the EU also influence the perception of how dialogues should be guided. The growing trend in Poland for government to initiate strategy documents and public consultations, and to commission evaluation studies, will certainly influence the institutionalisation of future dialogues. Yet the possibility exists that this is going to have only a symbolic character.

The first case study showed that in a context of relatively less institutionalised relations, scandalising the integration issue is one way of exerting pressure on policymakers. However, it appears that this mode of dialoguing between policymakers and researchers is unlikely to be effective on an institutionalised, day-to-day basis. The second case study indicated that there is a possibility to adjust research-policy dialogues to fit institutional channels of communication through mechanisms like

public consultations. It should be noted that in the case of the ‘Polish Migration Policy’ document, launching the public consultation was a discretionary decision of policymakers. However, the pressure to initiate a consultation on the document came both from new trends in government practice and from the expectations of non-governmental organisations.

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