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## Editorial: Social and Public Policy Challenges in the City-and-Health Context

Conditions appearing in our society due to problems related with the COVID-19 pandemic limit the existing phenomena regarding social, spatial, and economic challenges, which eventually modify the way how the public policies are implemented. The use of new technology for monitoring citizens; the need for younger people to replace older people at work more quickly; harmonising the implementation of directives, recommendations, and guidelines for handling the pandemic at the national level and at the international level; the spread of fake news – all of these recent actions impose the necessity for governments to adapt (Anderson, Mckee, & Mossialos, 2020). These tasks deal with transferring data and using data stored online due to social distancing (Subbian et al., 2021). Responses to challenges posted by COVID-19 also impact the need for research to help to deliver solutions for public policies.

The reactions towards stopping a virus diffusion require agility and resilience (Mazzucato & Kattel, 2020). One way to deal with the consequences of the pandemic is to recognise problems faced by public servants (Schuster et al., 2020), but also social entrepreneurs (Ćwiklicki & Sienkiewicz-Małyjurek, 2020). Studies in some of CEE countries pointed to a late response related to the above-mentioned capacity (Nemec, Drechsler, & Hajnal, 2020). Understanding what is happening in different public services enables one to prepare for the next unexpected crisis. In this volume, the following

public sector areas refer to health care and urban studies.

What needs to be mastered can be demonstrated around the key topics of public policy (Dunlop, Ongaro, & Baker, 2020). The first one refers to policy design and instruments. As different countries applied different countermeasures, the question about their effectiveness arises. The suggestions regarding the choice of criteria as to which intervention is the best in a given situation are expected (Kędzierski et al., 2020).

The next topic deals with policy learning and evaluation. The results of undertaken actions should be implemented in the next public interventions (Powell & King-Hill, 2020). However, the understanding of delivering feedback and of the impact of learnt lessons learnt for decision-makers is still required.

The theme of public service and street-level bureaucrats (SLBs) constitutes another theme. SLBs are directly involved in delivering public services, which impacts their current practices (Alcadipani et al., 2020). Knowledge about their daily adaptation is necessary for serving the public in a better way. It also calls for other forms of public service delivery, such as co-creation (Ratten, 2020).

The next subject concerns organisational capacity. The implementation of public interventions must be matched with the existing resources and possibilities of public administration. However, as Dunlop, Ongaro and Baker (2020) point out, it is also about possessing the new capacities

and linking them with the final results of public intervention (success vs. failure). Consequently, public governance appears as a way of transferring plans into actions. The different mode of governance can be associated with the efficiency of public interventions related to COVID-19. Institutional setting expressed by collaboration with different organisations calls for a new co-creation (Anafo, Owusu-Addo, & Takyi, 2021). However, governance modes are not neutral. They are also connected with the next topic, namely administration traditions.

Administration-related traditions are about aligning public intervention with national culture (M. Gupta, Shoja, & Mikalef, 2021) and administrative regime. At the level of inter-institutional coordination mechanism, a multi-level governance is considered, which is the final issue listed by Dunlop, Ongaro and Baker (2020). This is a theme more applicable to the European Union, but also, to some extent, to the USA. The relations among institutions from different levels shows the configuration of diversified public administration decentralisation, which can be linked to intergovernmental relations.

The exploration of the issues presented above can be found in the papers included in this issue of *Public Governance*.

In the first article, Dwijendra Nath Dwivedi and Abhishek Anand present the key topics covered in government documents regarding the COVID-19 response in two Arabic countries. The text-mining of public policy documents has demonstrated that Latent Semantic Analysis reveals key clusters centred around themes such as ‘digital’, ‘international travel’, ‘vaccine trial’, ‘economic recovery’, and ‘precautionary guidelines’. Applied methodology allowed the authors to spot the difference in the public policies pattern in a large amount of data existing in different government announcements, updates, guidelines, etc.

Maciej Nowak discusses the Polish spatial management system and concludes that the relationship between research and practice regarding inclusions from international experiences is weak. Spatial management system can be linked with

responses towards COVID-19, especially at the local government level (Nowak & Blaszkę, 2020). As spatial statistics were used to implement restrictions, this system constitutes a substantial part of health geography (Franch-Pardo et al., 2020).

In the third paper, Dominika Dusza, Maciej Furman, Małgorzata Gałazka-Sobotka, and Iwona Kowalska-Bobko examine the Hospital-Based Health Technology Assessment. The evaluation of new technology adaptation is crucial for the dissemination of health-related innovation. However, since special units for such an assessment do not function in Polish hospitals, the approaches differ and some common best practices are required.

Michał Kudłacz and Anna Karwińska demonstrate the trends of urban sprawl in Poland, pointing to its key features, but also presenting their similarities to the USA’s and the UK’s experiences. This goes in line with the spatial management system covered in Maciej Nowak’s paper. Metropolisation leads to the integration of disjointed urbanised regions (Cardoso & Meijers, 2021). A study in urbanised states in India showed their impact on escalating the COVID-19 pandemic (R. Gupta et al., 2020).

Papers in this issue refer to two different, although interconnected, matters, namely city and health. These intermingle in the urban health system. Such a system has a bigger potential for mobilisation and undertaking countermeasures. Urban strategies against COVID-19 increase city resilience (Capolongo et al., 2020), and as such affect the whole society.

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