

Klaudia Wolniewicz-Slomka

Independent researcher¹

*Design and implementation of family policy
on a local level: example of two cities*

Summary

The article presents an analysis of shaping one of the sectoral public policies—family policy at the local level in Poland on the example of care services addressed to the youngest children.

The author investigates the processes of creation and implementation of the Act of 4 February 2011 on care for children under the age of three² (the so-called “nursery act”) at the local level in two selected cities in Poland—Padłowo and Onuvice.³ She tries to answer the following research questions: how does the socio-political background influence on implementation in the selected cities?; what factors from national and local levels affect the implementation at the local level?; what is the role played by different actors in creating and implementing new regulations?; how the analysed act was evaluated by local actors?; which factors affects implementation success, and which failure from hybrid theory perspective? The research was conducted in the frame of the public policy. The article presents the results of author’s own research carried out in 2017 in Padłowo and Onuvice.

Key words: public policy, local family policy, design, implementation, care for children up to 3 years of age

¹ Author’s email address: k.wolniewiczsloamka@gmail.com.

² Act of 4 February 2011 on Care for Children up to the age of 3 (Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 45, item 235 with later amendments).

³ City names have been changed.

Introduction

Since the transformation of the political system in 1989, the Polish family policy has undergone significant changes. Initially, the State focused primarily on financial assistance for families in difficult circumstances. Over time, however, it began to support families at various stages of their creation and functioning, e.g. by extending maternity and paternity leaves, introducing programmes facilitating the purchase of the first flat, or reforming the system of care for the youngest children. The increased level of state involvement in shaping and financing the system of care for the youngest children expressed through the adoption of the Act of 4 February 2011 on care for children under 3 and the introduction of the accompanying programme “Maluch” (“Toddler”), marked the beginning of paralysis processes in which the state started to play, alongside the family, a significant role in the creation and development of care institutions for children under 3. The solutions adopted in the so-called “nursery act” significantly changed the rules of functioning of nurseries, introduced new and varied forms of care (children’s club and day caretaker), and changed the system of paying contributions for social and health insurance of nannies. As already mentioned, the Act was accompanied by the government programme “Maluch”, which aimed to financially support the development of nursery infrastructure, children’s clubs and day caretakers throughout the country. Taking into account numerous and significant changes in the functioning of the system of care for the youngest children and, as the literature review shows, little attention paid so far to the processes of designing and implementing family policy and the problem of implementing solutions in the field of care for children up to the age of 3, it seems important and interesting to analyse these processes. Especially if one takes into account the fact that the Act in question did not oblige the communes to establish and run care institutions for the youngest children.

Theoretical assumptions

The theoretical assumptions of the field research carried out derive from the achievements of research on public policy, and in particular from the research trend known as *policy analysis*. The main axis is therefore the process of public policy. Two main approaches to how this process proceeds have been shaped in the literature: a linear and a chaotic approach. A linear approach is based on the assumption that there are several consecutive and interdependent stages of public policy making. Moreover, each completed step automatically marks the beginning of the next one. Supporters of this approach include Harold Dwight Lasswell (1956), Michael Howlett (2011), M. Ramesh, and among Polish researchers—Jerzy Woźnicki (2012) and Włodzimierz Cezary Włodarczyk (2010). Most often researchers distinguish between five (Charles O. Jones, Michael Howlett, M. Ramesh) and seven phases of public policy (H.D. Lasswell). The chaotic approach implies that policy-making processes are unpredictable and that it is difficult to identify specific, consecutive and separate phases. Representatives of this approach include Robert Nakamura, Charles Lindblom and Edward J. Woodhouse (Nakamura, 1987; Lindblom,

Woodhouse, 1993). They argue that both design and implementation are unpredictable and that the whole policy-making process has neither a clear beginning nor an end. Despite differences in perception of how public policies are shaped, it can be agreed that public policy is a process consisting of three main stages: design, implementation and evaluation. For the purposes of this article, I adopt a linear⁴ approach to public policy making and focus on two stages of its development, i.e. the design and implementation, and I omit the third one—evaluation.⁵

As already mentioned, linear public policy approaches were based on the existence of several successive phases. The most frequently referred to model is the stadial heuristics by Michael Howlett and M. Ramesh, which assumes five stages of policy making that correspond to the phases of practical problem-solving (Table 1).

Table 1. M. Howlett’s and M. Ramesh’s stadial heuristics model

Phases of practical problem solving	Phases of shaping’ public policies
Problem diagnosis	Agenda setting
Solution proposals	Policy formulation
Choice of solution	Decision-making (<i>adoption/decision making</i>)
Solution implementation	Policy implementation
Monitoring of results	Policy evaluation

Source: Michael Howlett (2011, p. 19).

The first three phases form part of the public policy design phase. It begins with the establishment of an agenda that can be presented in a dynamic way and mean the process of defining a public problem⁶, and in a static way, i.e. as a set of problems to be solved.⁷ The literature on the subject distinguishes many typologies of agendas, which differ from each other according to the adopted criteria: the scope of issues covered

⁴ I have taken a linear approach because, firstly, I think it better reflects the changes in the care system for children under the age of three that first have taken place at a national level and then (or not) at local level, as a result of the construction of the legal act (no requirement to have childcare facilities) and, secondly, it streamlines thinking about the policy-making and implementation processes.

⁵ The evaluation of the so-called “nursery act” was omitted by me for theoretical and practical reasons. Firstly, it covers literature other than literature on design and implementation and, secondly, it requires comprehensive and long-term research in order to properly assess the impact of regulations introduced by the so-called “crèche law”.

⁶ The agenda is so defined by Kraft and Furlong (2007, pp. 72–75) as “the process of defining a public problem, the means of its perception, granting it with a particular place in the hierarchy of importance amongst other public problems”. Source: Zybała, 2013, p. 200.

⁷ Birkland (2007, p. 63) considers the agenda a “collection of central problems that attract the attention” (of the society and country authorities).

by the agenda (general, systemic, institutional—the division proposed by T.A. Birkland (cited in Zybala, 2013), entities exercising power and administration, which undertake various issues (president/Prime Minister/King/Parliament/parliamentary committees/political parties—the division proposed by S.N. Soroka (2002, p. 11),⁸ or territorial scope (national, regional, local).

The agenda-setting phase is followed by a policy formulation phase which involves considering different options to address collective problems. Eugene Bardach points here to several subphases of policy formulation, i.e.: “constructing alternatives to solutions for a given problem, choosing criteria that will serve to choose between different concepts of solutions to a given problem, designing the results to be achieved as a result of the actions taken, and confronting compromises that have been worked out during the search for solutions” (cited in Zybala, 2013, p. 232). As Barbara Szatur-Jaworska observes, problems translate into concrete public policies in various ways: “public policy can be stimulated into taking action by the needs of society, which need to be addressed in a timely manner (reactive policy), and by predicted scenarios of future social, economic or demographic changes (proactive policy)” (Szatur-Jaworska, 2016, p. 72).

The stage of designing public policy ends with decision-makers making the decision. The analysis of decision-making processes is not the subject of this article, so I will only stress that I understand this stage as a phase in which concrete actions are selected to solve collective problems, and the actors involved in the implementation of these actions and the instruments for their implementation are indicated. Decisions are made individually or in a team and are the result of a combination of rational selection decisions and disruptions such as conflicts of interest between individual decision-makers. The decisions made may be subject to change, in whole or in part, based on the experience gained from the implementation.

To sum up, the process of designing public policy, including family policy, is a linear process that takes place (also with its individual stages) at various levels of state functioning (central, regional and local), in which participate various entities (public and private) of social policy, especially those that carry out a norm-forming, programmatic and informational function, and important elements of policy design are, among others, debates within decision-making bodies or creating instruments for implementing the decisions (mainly legal and financial). For me, the adoption of the so-called “nursery act” is a fundamental element in the design of family policy on childcare for children up to the age of three at national level.

Moving on to the second of the three stages of creating public policy, namely implementation, I would like to draw attention to three approaches to implementation, which have been developed since the 1970s: the *top-down*, *bottom-up* and *hybrid theories* approach was adopted. The top-down approach assumes that public policy design takes place at the central level and implementation at the local level. National authorities plan their policies by setting their scope, objectives and direction, and local authorities are

⁸ Source: Zybala, 2013, p. 203.

solely responsible for their implementation. It is assumed that clear objectives, clear regulations and a clear division of responsibilities between the actors involved in the design and implementation process are important for the implementation process and its success. The bottom-up approach assumes that design and implementation processes cannot be separated, as they are both national and local, and are difficult to attribute to one of them. The local level, contrary to the top-down approach, takes an active part not only in the implementation, but also in the creation of public policy. The third approach—hybrid—assumes that implementation is a process that is constantly changing, so policy agendas are constantly redefined at both central and local levels. According to this approach it is necessary to combine the assumptions of the two above and assume that the steering can be done at national level, but what policy will ultimately be put in place depends on what local authorities do.

After analysing the literature on the implementation, several factors can be distinguished which stem from the hybrid approach, are local in character and explain the success of the implementation. They include:

- a) type of politics (Adrienne Windhoff-Héritier, Randall B. Ripley and Grace Franklin⁹ and Richard E. Matland wrote about it in the ambiguity-conflict model¹⁰), which in my research refers to the policy of care for children up to the age of 3;
- b) clearly and precisely formulated policy objectives at national level (e.g. by Søren C. Winter);
- c) incentives and restrictions coming from the national and local level (Michael Goggin and his colleagues wrote about it presenting the communication model of intergovernmental implementation¹¹);
- d) lack of routine activities of local level officials (understood as non-standard solutions being the initiative of local entities) (implementation understood as a bureaucratic process in the concept presented by Richard Elmore¹²);

⁹ Adrienne Windhoff-Héritier, Randall B. Ripley and Grace Franklin (cited in Pülzl, Treib, 2007, p. 97) believed that the type of policy that is the subject of the study play an important role in the process of analysis of implementation is played by and pointed to distribution, regulatory and redistribution policies. In their opinion, depending on the type of policy, implementation will take a different course. There are different decision-makers and different levels of conflict associated with each type of policy during implementation. A. Windhoff-Héritier argued that distribution policy is independent of implementation structures and can be implemented regardless of conditions, and that redistribution policy requires a top-down approach.

¹⁰ Richard E. Matland (1995, pp. 160–170) proposed the ambiguity-conflict model, which makes it possible to distinguish four types of implementation. The two axes of the model are ‘conflict’, which may be of a high or low level, and ‘ambiguity of means and objectives’, which may also be of a high or low level. These four types of implementation are administrative, political, experimental and symbolic.

¹¹ The communication model of intergovernmental implementation assumed that what will be implemented is the result of interpretation of messages coming “top-down”, i.e. from the national level by entities operating “below”, i.e. by those operating at the local level (Zawicki, 2016, p. 102).

¹² Richard Elmore proposed four models of implementation understood as: systems management, bureaucratic process, organizational development and the space of conflict and negotiation. In the

- e) cooperation between all actors involved in the implementation processes (Richard Elmore wrote about it referring to the implementation understood as organizational development and the space of conflict and negotiation) and
- f) the socio-economic environment specific to the municipality (Paul Sabatier, Søren C. Winter) which may favour or hinder implementation.

In conclusion, I assume that what triggers implementation at the national level, apart from the Act itself, is the adoption of regulations to the Act, and at the local level—of resolutions of local government councils after the Act enters into force. Based on the analysed literature from the field of implementation research, I draw on the hybrid approach and assume that family policy design can take place at both national and local level, as local government can have different functions. I also accept that the implementation process may also take place at both these levels, i.e. at national level, as evidenced by the adoption of the government “Maluch” programme, as well as at local level. Moreover, the implementation may also influence the change of public policy by providing feedback (amendment of the law). The thesis of my work assumes that the design and implementation processes are hybrid and take place both at the national and local level, and the implementation of the crèche act, which does not impose on the municipalities the obligation to create a system of care, depends mainly on the situation in local communities, which are the main executors of the act.

Basing on my theoretical assumptions, I formulate the following research questions relating to individual factors at the local level:

- a) socio-economic environment: Which contextual factors occurring at the local level are most important in the process of implementing the provisions of the act?
- b) policy type: In the case of childcare for children up to 3 years of age, what type of policy can we talk about? Can it affect the implementation process?
- c) clarity of policy objectives and provisions contained in the act: Were the provisions of the act and regulations clearly formulated?
- d) central and local level incentives and constraints: What is favourable and what is limiting the implementation of the provisions of the act? Which incentives or barriers are top-down and which are bottom-up?
- e) actions taken by local bureaucrats going beyond the statutory regulations (described as non-routine in theory): What actions, going beyond the scope of the act, have been taken by local officials?
- f) cooperation between the actors involved in the implementation process: What was the cooperation between the actors influencing the shape of the early childhood care system in the examined cities?

I was looking for answers to the above questions by conducting field research in two municipalities in Poland.

case of implementation understood as a bureaucratic process, the emphasis is on the functioning of local administration, first contact administration (a model typical of the bottom-up trend) (Zawicki, 2016, p. 98).

Methodological assumptions

The study of designing and implementing changes in the system of care for children up to the age of 3 at the local level presented in the article was carried out in two cities—Padłowo and Onuvice. The cities were selected for the study in a deliberate manner. On the one hand, they were supposed to differ significantly in the implementation effect measured by the percentage of children in institutionalised care (the so-called “nursingisation”), and on the other hand, they were supposed to be similar in terms of socio-economic characteristics. The difference in the so-called “nursingisation” level between the cities amounted to 7 p.p. In Padłowo, the percentage of children under institutional care was 13% in 2016, and in Onuvice, to 6%. What made the two cities similar were: a) the same legal status; b) the same rights to shape pro-family policy resulting from their legal status; c) culturally similar character in the sense of, for example, the partition heritage (former Russian partition) and family traditions; d) similar percentage of children aged up to 3; e) similar registered unemployment rate; and f) a decrease in the population over the last ten years. The cities selected for the study were supposed to be maximally similar to each other, although, of course, not identical. Two important differences worth noting are the population of both cities (Padłowo—about 100,000 inhabitants, Onuvice—about 50,000 in 2016) and the percentage of economically active women (Padłowo—59.1% in 2016 and Onuvice—52.9%).

Comparative case studies make it possible to trace and explain the processes of designing and implementing statutory changes, to look at the functioning of care facilities and to indicate the factors influencing the formation of a typical childcare system typical of a given city. The analyses presented here are for years 2010–2018.

The case study consists of a *desk research* analysis and individual in-depth interviews with stakeholders involved in shaping the care system for children under 3 at the local level. The examination of existing data included the analysis of statistical data (Central Statistical Office—CSO, Social Insurance Institution), reports of the Council of Ministers for 2011 on the implementation of the so-called “nursery act”, local programs and strategies financed from both communal and EU funds, resolutions of councils of the surveyed cities, committees dealing with social policy, agendas and transcripts of meetings, budget resolutions, information available in public information bulletins and information available on city councils’ websites, mainly to present socio-economic and political situations of these cities and any other information facilitating their characteristics. The in-depth individual interviews, in turn, were conducted with thirteen interviewees, who were selected for the study in a targeted manner because of their knowledge and experience related to their functions in creating a local system of early childhood care. Among the interviewees were the directors of public and private nurseries, officials from the departments of the city office dealing with childcare for children under 3, chairmen of the committees dealing with this issue and vice-chancellors and city mayors. The questions asked during the interviews were open-ended and divided into five parts. The interviewees were asked what was the then pro-family policy of the cities, what were the needs of the inhabitants in this respect, what actions were taken by the city authorities to respond to

these needs, how the demand changed, how the decision-making processes in the scope of introducing changes resulting from the new regulations were conducted. In addition, they were asked to evaluate the so-called crèche law, to indicate the role of local actors in the implementation of statutory provisions and the creation of their own solutions, to indicate the factors facilitating and hindering the implementation. Finally, they were asked to share their action plans for early childhood care in the coming years.

Characteristics of cities selected for the survey

The cities selected for the study—Padłowo and Onuvice—are located at a distance of about one hundred kilometres from a large city. They both have the same legal status, which gives them the same powers to conduct family policy. Both Padłowo and Onuvice cooperate with partner cities, mainly from Europe. The Council of Europe has awarded Padłowo many times for its actions in the international arena. In addition, the city has also been awarded a distinction to municipalities that are friendly to investors and residents.

In the last ten years, the number of inhabitants in both cities has decreased and according to the forecasts of the CSO for the next decades, this trend will continue until 2050. A negative natural growth and a negative internal migration rate are responsible for the loss of Padłowo residents, while in Onuvice the reasons are internal and external migration. Apart from the changes in the number of population, there are also changes in its structure, which are typical for the changes observed in the country—the percentage of people in the post-working age bracket is growing and the share of people in the working age bracket is decreasing.

In Padłowo, there are large companies from the fuel and chemical industries, and in Onuvice—packaging and energy. Among the largest companies based in Padłowo, as many as two are the largest employers in Mazovia. One of them employs as many as 3.5 thousand workers in Padłowo alone. The “Strategy for Solving Social Problems of the City for 2014–2020” demonstrates that at least four companies from Padłowo employed over 1,000 people in 2012. In Onuvice, there are also several large production plants, the largest of which employed over 1,000 people in 2017. In both cities, the largest number of people worked in the service sector in the period under review. The percentage of women and men in the labour force remained at a similar level (about 49% for women in Padłowo, 53% for women in Onuvice and about 64% for men in both cities). The unemployment rate in 2013 was 13% in Padłowo and 16% in Onuvice.

Since 2010, Padłowo has been under the continuous rule of mayor on behalf of the Civic Platform. During the period of my research, Onuvice was ruled by a mayor from the Law and Justice Party, who held the office from 2006 to 2018.

The review of resolutions of city councils concerning the issues of childcare for children under 3 years of age shows that most of the resolutions adopted in the 2010–2014 and 2014–2018¹³ terms of office concerned organizational and administrative issues of the

¹³ The analysis of the resolutions for the 2014–2018 term ends on 27 May 2017.

functioning of the system of childcare for children under 3 years of age in Padłowo and Onuvice. Particularly noteworthy is the resolution on a targeted subsidy to private care institutions operating in Padłowo. According to the review of municipal documents, the Padłowo authorities sought to support private institutions offering places for caring for the youngest children with grants.¹⁴ Onuvice did not adopt any other resolutions on childcare for the youngest children in the years 2010–2018, going beyond what was required by the so-called “nursery act”.

The number of children aged 0–3 has changed in the last twenty years in both cities. The percentage of children at this age in institutional care has also changed. According to the CSO data, it amounted to 13% in Padłowo in 2016 (7.6% for Poland), and before the entry of the so-called “nursery act” into force it was higher (5%) than the average for the whole country (2.6%). In turn, in Onuvice it amounted to 6% in 2016 and 2.3% in 2010. During my research, there were four city nurseries, five private nurseries, including one company nursery and one children’s club in Padłowo. They offered a total of 470 places (320 places were offered by public nurseries). In Onuvice, there was one town nursery with 40 places and one private nursery with 45 places. There was no children’s club in the city. Neither Padłowo nor Onuvice employed a day caretaker at that time.

The City of Padłowo and non-municipal entities benefited from funds from the government’s “Maluch” programme for places where the youngest children were cared for. The amount of co-financing they received in 2013–2017 amounted to nearly PLN 3 million. Thanks to these funds, the city opened a new municipal nursery and modernised one of the existing ones. The funds were also granted to a company nursery located next to a large workplace. Expenditures on nursery services significantly increased in Padłowo—from PLN 2 million to PLN 5 million in 2010–2017. In contrast to Padłowo, neither the city of Onuvice nor the municipal entities from the city received funding from the government “Maluch” programme in 2011–2017. Expenditures for nursery services in this period were maintained at a similar level—about PLN 800 thousand per year. The difference between cities in current spending on crèche services for one child aged 0–3 is significant—Padłowo spends twice as much money on this purpose as Onuvice.

¹⁴ The town passed a resolution which provided for a special donation for children from Padłowo who attended private care institutions. However, it was challenged by the Regional Chambers of Auditors because it did not comply with other regulations. The so-called “nursery act” provides for a targeted subsidy, which is to cover all children attending a nursing home with no distinction between their place of residence, and private homes receive children from Padłowo and the surrounding area. The city, on the other hand, wanted to subsidise only the children from the Padłowo commune. In turn, the Act on Municipal Self-Government obliges municipalities to spend funds on the inhabitants of their own municipality.

***Results of analysing the family policy design processes at the local level
and implementation of the so-called “nursery law”
in Padłowo and Onuvice***

The assumptions underlying the conducted research, resulting from the analysis of literature on the theory of public policy, assumed that the course of the design and implementation processes and the success or failure of implementation depend on six factors, i.e. the socio-economic environment, the type of policy, clarity of objectives and transparency of the provisions of the analysed legal act, incentives and restrictions flowing “top-down” and “bottom-up”, non-routine activities of local officials and cooperation of actors involved in the creation and implementation of changes in the scope of care for the youngest children.

With reference to the first one, the socio-economic environment, my analyses have shown that an important aspect of local policy-making in the field of early childhood care are the resources of the cities surveyed. It appears that the financial, material, human and informational resources at their disposal have had a significant impact on the development of the early childhood care system. Padłowo benefited from significant financial resources both from outside (from the government “Maluch” programme) and inside (from the city budget), while Onuvice had only small funds from the city budget at its disposal. In addition, the city did not seek external financing. Some differences could also be seen in human resources. While it is possible to speak of competent and committed staff in both cities, in Padłowo, the interest of officials in this subject and the desire to develop care infrastructure for the youngest children as well as support for the development of an in-company nursery was greater. The differences in the material and information resources of both communes were not so great—both cities had similar facilities in the form of available buildings and both provided the interested parties with the necessary information on childcare services. An important factor influencing the changes in the system was the willingness of local authorities to introduce them, which could be related to the resources available, but also to the views on this issue. Officials from Padłowo were more supportive of institutionalised forms of care for the youngest children, while officials from Onuvice preferred parental care.

“Classically, I’d see it that way that a dad should earn enough to provide for both mother and children”.

official from Onuvice

The second factor, which, in the assumptions made at the beginning of the study, was important for the course of implementation was the type of policy. Referring to the key categories in this respect—policy makers and the level of conflict in terms of policy objectives—it can be concluded that the level of conflict in terms of policy objectives for care facilities for children up to the age of 3 years seems to be low in relation to policy objectives. If it exists at all, it is not about the objectives of the solutions adopted, but rather about financial issues. My interlocutors mostly agreed on the objectives of the Act, i.e. the

development of various forms of care to make it easier for parents to combine work with childcare and for mothers to return to the labour market. What made them different was the view on the amount and form of funds transferred by the government to local governments and by local governments to private institutions. In relation to the type of decision-makers involved in the implementation process, these are the municipal authorities setting the direction for the development of care institutions in the city and private individuals coming up with their own initiative. Therefore, in the case of the system of care for children up to 3 years of age, the analysed system is most in line with the regulatory policy, which is characterised by: (a) shaping the framework of this system by a superior act (in this case, the so-called “nursery act”), (b) giving benefits to larger social groups (such as parents and children) and (c) regulating a specific way of proceeding in the area of care for the youngest children (national and local authorities are obliged to act on the basis of certain provisions, both top-down and bottom-up). Therefore, the type of policy is important for the process of implementing the solutions adopted in the so-called “nursery act”.

The third factor that is also relevant in the implementation process are the policy objectives, which should be clear and understandable to the policy recipients. The research in Padłowo and Onuvice showed that the adopted act is generally understood by local actors, and its provisions are clear and transparent, which can be attributed to its rather general form, but after reading its provisions and when it is necessary to use them, it turns out that they are not so obvious and some issues have not been either specified or have not been regulated at all, such as the issues of screening or psychological tests of candidates for employees of these institutions.

“With regard to the provisions concerning the premises and the requirements for the premises themselves, at first glance everything seemed clear, but when we met with a fire brigade representative and the health authority representative, I can’t deny they were up to the task. They explained to us clearly and legibly, in fact, everything that had some kind of a, you know, it raised some doubts for us”.

director of a nursery school in Padłowo

“No one prepares the local government for new tasks. The law comes in and you have to read it, interpret it”.

official from Padłowo

The fourth factor verified in the field study was the incentives and constraints from the national (“top-down”) and local (“bottom-up”) levels. According to my interviewees, the most important restrictions on the development of a care system for the youngest children in the examined cities included financial, housing and legal barriers, as well as a high level of responsibility related to the care of often very young children. In both cities, the same pattern of attitudes towards the financing of the childcare system for children up to the age of 3 was observed: private nurseries expect financial support from local governments, which in turn expect financial support from the central government.

“I would say that if the nurseries were included in the education system and if we received a subsidy for this, the problem with the nurseries would be solved (...). We get a subsidy for

kindergartens, not for nurseries. It's where the problem is. Many communes, especially small ones, do not even think about nurseries at all".

official from Padłowo

In order to cope with the costs, many institutions ran nurseries combined with kindergartens, which allow them to support themselves. It was also accompanied by unofficial practices of accepting younger children—from the age of 1 year and 8 months to kindergarten and the development of the so-called grey market of nannies.

In the case of housing barriers, respondents mainly talked about the difficulty of finding a place that meets the requirements of the law or can be adapted, where the needs are not yet sufficiently met and where the price is affordable. While pointing to legal barriers, the interviewees emphasized frequent changes in regulations, lack of involvement of national authorities in training local governments in new legal solutions.

What in turn contributed to the development of institutions of care for small children were: financial support from outside (e.g. from the "Maluch" programme) or inside (e.g. a targeted subsidy provided by Padłowo to private institutions), support from the authorities and willingness to cooperate. In Padłowo, it is the city that is the actor who takes the initiative to develop a local childcare system for children up to the age of 3 and is supported by private individuals who create childcare facilities. In Onuvice, however, there is one municipal nursery, which has not increased the number of places since the entry into force of the so-called crèche law, although the authorities declare the creation of another group in the next two years and one private institution, which has been constantly developing since its establishment in 2011. In the absence of competition, it can be said that the private nursery in Onuvice has a monopoly on crèche services.

The fifth factor, whether or not conducive to implementation, was the non-standard activities of local officials, understood as activities going beyond what is required by national authorities. The research I have carried out has confirmed that there are initiatives of this kind in local communities. Apart from the implementation of the provisions of the so-called crèche act, local communities were also the authors of new solutions, which was possible thanks to the construction of the act itself and the lack of obligation to have care institutions in the communes. Such solutions may on the one hand develop a system of care for small children adapted to the needs of a given commune, but on the other hand they may also limit its creation and development. The entities that created the new solutions were, in my research, both individuals and local authorities, as well as care institution directors and managers. For example, in Padłowo a company nursery was established, financed from the funds of this company, and run by one of its institutions. Another initiative also observed in the city, was to receive funding from a private company for a public nursery. In Onuvice, in turn, the director of a private nursery tried to finance the activities of her establishment with EU funds.

The last factor I examined was the cooperation between local actors involved in the process of implementing the provisions of the so-called "nursery act". As it appears, in the case of my research, it was a factor of minor importance. My interviewees' reports show that of course the support from the municipal authorities is conducive to and may

accelerate the establishment of the facility (as was the case with the company nursery in Padłowo), but it will not have a negative impact on its establishment (establishment of a private nursery in Padłowo). Most of the private institutions I surveyed in both cities worked well, despite occasional contacts with other actors in the local early childhood policy. In Padłowo, in contrast to Onuwice, the competition between the institutions was smaller, probably due to their size (9 establishments), although the division between private and public institutions was still noticeable. In Onuwice, on the other hand, the directors directly referred to their facilities as competitive facilities (there is one public and one private nursery in the city).

- Sometimes they come to put up the flyers.
- There's no wider cooperation?
- No. Not between private and municipal ones".

director of a nursery school in Padłowo

- You were there to visit [the nursery—researcher's note]?
- It's hard to say. I tried to find something out there once. Director on leave, deputy not interested".

director of a nursery in Onuwice

The process of implementation of the so-called "nursery act" which I have analysed leads to the conclusion that here, we are dealing, firstly, with a hybrid implementation and, secondly, in the case of both cities, with an administrative implementation mixed with experimental administration, with Padłowo being an example of a city with a focus on the administrative¹⁵ and Onuwice—with a focus on experimental.¹⁶

In summary, the factors identified for the study have shaped the local childcare system for children under 3 in different ways in both cities, as summarised in a short summary in Table 2. In my opinion, the key to success in implementation is the attitude of the city authorities, behind which there are often defined views on the way of providing care for the youngest children, the need for care, the form of a superior act regulating a given policy and its type, the 'incentives' flowing mainly from national level and the socio-

¹⁵ The administrative nature of the implementation in Padłowo is evidenced by: a low level of conflict around childcare for children up to the age of 3; a low level of ambiguity in the objectives and resources allocated to this system in the city; sufficient resources of the city to develop care infrastructure; a clear division of tasks between individual entities. What was still noticeable in Padłowo and is characteristic for the experimental implementation is: an important role of contextual factors; the emergence of new entities, e.g. a company that runs a crèche at the company's request, thus influencing the changes proposed by many entities.

¹⁶ The recognition that the implementation in Onuwice was closer to the experimental was supported by: inadequate resources; high importance of contextual factors that dominate the policy implementation; effects of the implementation depending on the activity of individual entities, e.g. the director of a private crèche, significantly improved the accessibility of care institutions by establishing a private institution. What is typical for the administrative implementation in Onuwice is: a low level of conflict around the care of children up to the age of 3; a low level of ambiguity of goals and resources; a clear division of responsibilities among the participants of the process.

Table 2. Comparison of Padlowo and Onuvice

“Nurserisation” level	Padlowo’s specificity	Onuvice specificity
	high	low
Socio-economic environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • large enterprises influencing the development of the city and the care system for children up to 3 years of age • high demand for care services for children up to the age of 3, declared by the city • the impact of other policy measures on the design of the care system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small demand for care services for children up to the age of 3, declared by the city • the impact of other policy measures on the design of the care system
Ideas on child care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the state takes responsibility for the family and supports the development of care institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preferred parental care
The attitude of city authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the city takes responsibility for the family and invests in a childcare system for children up to the age of 3 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the city does not take responsibility for the family, at least in the part concerning the care for children up to 3 years of age
Policy type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mixed, regulatory (here, rather a general reference to the whole policy, national level) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mixed, regulatory (here, rather a general reference to the whole policy, national level)
The form of the act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • optionality, but still development of institutions, implementation of many provisions, which were not required by the law from local governments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • optionality, lack of development of care institutions, implementation of basic provisions required by law
Implementation type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrative and experimental with an administrative focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • administrative and experimental with an experimental focus
Clearly formulated provisions of the Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • city authorities: not necessarily, interpretation difficulties, no aid from the Ministry • headmistresses of the nurseries: not necessarily, a lot of unspecified issues • varying provisions interpretation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • city authorities: rather yes • the director of the nurseries: not necessarily • varying provisions interpretation

<p>Incentives “top-down”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the “Maluch” programme and the multiple use of its financial resources 	
<p>Incentives “bottom-up”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • targeted grant for private institutions (immediately after the law came into force) • friendly attitude towards care on the part of the office • the city budget enabling the development of institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • friendly attitude towards care on the part of the office
<p>Constraints “top-down”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defined, uncertain amounts of funding from the “Maluch” programme • no fixed grant for nurseries • high level of responsibility and difficulties in running a nursery arising from national legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defined, uncertain amounts of funding from the “Maluch” programme • no fixed grant for nurseries • high level of responsibility and difficulties in running a nursery arising from national legislation
<p>Constraints “bottom-up”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no targeted subsidy from the city to private institutions • premise barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of willingness of the city to develop care institutions resulting from lack of financial resources • no targeted subsidy from the city to private institutions • premise barriers • the city budget limiting the investment in nurseries
<p>Cooperation of local actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation city council–municipal nurseries • cooperation city council–private nurseries, usually at the beginning of their operation • occasional cooperation between municipal and private establishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cooperation city council–municipal nurseries • cooperation city council–private nurseries, usually at the beginning of their operation • lack of cooperation between municipal and private establishments
<p>Dynamics of local care for children up to 3 years old system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • both municipal and private nurseries are developing • a constantly growing base of care institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one private nursery developed • no development of the municipal nursery • unchangeable base of care institutions

Source: own analysis of the results analysis of the contents of interviews conducted in Padlowo and Onuvice.

economic environment accompanying the changes introduced. I observed the mechanisms behind this thesis in Państwo. The following factors co-existed and mutually reinforced: politicians' orientation, widespread position on the tasks of social policy in relation to the family, greater demand for crèche services, the shape of the crèche law, which left some freedom to the municipal authorities, the specificity of the policy of childcare for children up to the age of 3, the use of external financial resources and a large city budget. In addition, I believe that the original and most important are the views of the city authorities on institutional care for the youngest child and the shape of the superior act and the encouragement from above and below.

Conclusion

Results of my research have theoretical, cognitive, and practical character. Among the theoretical conclusions, I conclude that, first of all, the hybrid approach is an accurate theoretical concept of research on implementation. Secondly, some of the analysed factors determining the implementation success are of a different nature than I assumed at the beginning on the basis of the state-of-the-art. Thirdly, I have observed the selectivity of the implementation with regard to forms of care for children up to the age of 3.

The first conclusion means that the hybrid approach is confirmed by empirical research.

The second conclusion is that further research should focus on what affects implementation and guarantees its success. As I discovered, only some of the factors examined by me were relevant in the implementation I was investigating. These factors which appeared to be important in ensuring the implementation success, were: socio-economic factors, type of policy, attitude of the city authorities (political support/willingness), incentives and restrictions “top-down” and “bottom-up”. A factor which turned out to be of little importance was the cooperation between the care system for children aged up to 3 years.

The third conclusion means that despite the diversity of forms of care guaranteed by the so-called “nursery act”, the entities I examined concentrated mainly on the development of one form—nurseries.¹⁷ This resembles the concept of path dependence, which is typical of the attachment to certain structures, in this case, nurseries, which results, among others, from the historical formation of these forms.

The analyses carried out also bring a number of practical conclusions. Firstly, greater and more secure financial support for local authorities and private entities will accelerate the development of care infrastructure aimed at the youngest children. Secondly, clear and comprehensible provisions of the law, accompanied by the promotion of all forms of care, will contribute to their balanced development. Thirdly, the cooperation of national and local authorities in the design and implementation process will have a positive impact on implementation. Fourthly, the provisions relating to the functioning of local authorities

¹⁷ The adoption of the common name for the act, i.e. the “nursery act”, is also an example of omitting other forms of care at the linguistic level.

should be consistent, so that they are not mutually exclusive. Fifthly, legislation on early childhood care should regulate, among other things, issues such as screening of children, support for children with dysfunctions and psychological tests for potential employees. Sixthly, measures should be taken to encourage employers to set up company-based care facilities.

References

- Act of 4 February 2011 on Care for Children up to the age of 3 (Journal of Laws of 2011, No. 45, item 235 with later amendments).
- Birkland, T.A. (2007). Agenda Setting in Public Policy. In: F. Fischer, G.J. Miller, M.S. Sidney (ed.), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*. (63–78). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press Taylor and Francis Group.
- Howlett, M. (2011). *Designing Public Policies. Principles and Instruments*. Abingdon, Oxon, New York: Routledge.
- Kraft, M.E., Furlong, S.R. (2007). *Public Policy. Politics, Analysis, and Alternatives*. Washington, DC: CQ Press.
- Lasswell, H.D. (1956). *The Decision Process*. College Park, MD: University of Maryland Press.
- Lindblom, C., Woodhouse, E.J. (1993). *The Policy-making Process*, 3rd ed., Englewood Cliff: Prentice Hall.
- Matland, R.E. (1995). Synthesizing the Implementation Literature: The Ambiguity-Conflict Model of Policy Implementation. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory: J-PART*, April, vol. 5, no. 2, pp. 145–174. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.jpart.a037242>.
- Nakamura, R.T. (1987). The Textbook Policy Process and Implementation Research, *Policy Studies Research*, vol. 7, iss. 1, pp. 142–154.
- Püzl, H., Treib, O. (2007). Implementing Public Policy. In: F. Fischer, G.J. Miller, M.S. Sidney (eds.), *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory Politics, and Methods*. (89–108). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press Taylor and Francis Group.
- Soroka, S.N. (2002). *Agenda-Setting Dynamics in Canada*. Vancouver, Toronto: UBC Press.
- Szatur-Jaworska, B. (2016). *Polska polityka społeczna wobec starzenia się ludności w latach 1971–2013*. Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA.
- Włodarczyk, W.C. (2010). *Wprowadzenie do polityki zdrowotnej*. Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer.
- Woźnicki, J. (2012). Nowa dyscyplina—„nauki o polityce publicznej” usytuowana w dziedzinie nauk społecznych. *Nauka*, vol. 1, pp. 133–151.
- Zawicki, M. (2016). *Koncepcje teoretyczne implementacji polityki publicznej*. Zeszyty Naukowe. Seria Specjalna. Monografie no 246. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego w Krakowie.
- Zybała, A. (2013). *Państwo i społeczeństwo w działaniu. Polityki publiczne wobec potrzeb modernizacji państwa i społeczeństwa*. Warszawa: Difin.

Projektowanie i implementacja polityki rodzinnej na poziomie lokalnym na przykładzie dwóch miast

Streszczenie

Artykuł prezentuje wyniki analiz procesu kształtowania jednej z sektorowych polityk publicznych – polityki rodzinnej na poziomie lokalnym w Polsce na przykładzie systemu opieki nad najmłodszymi dziećmi. Autorka analizuje proces projektowania i wdrażania rozwiązań zawartych w ustawie z dnia 4 lutego 2011 roku o opiece nad dziećmi w wieku do lat 3 (tzw. ustawie żłobkowej) w dwóch wybranych do badania miastach – Padłowie i Onuwicach¹⁸. Autorka odpowiada na następujące pytania badawcze: jak kontekst społeczno-polityczny przebadanych miast przyczynia się do charakteru implementacji w tych miastach?; co wpływa na przebieg implementacji na poziomie lokalnym, tzn. jakie czynniki z poziomu krajowego, a jakie z poziomu lokalnego?; jacy aktorzy uczestniczyli w procesach projektowania i wdrażania zmian zawartych w tzw. ustawie żłobkowej i jaka była ich rola?; jak analizowana ustawa została oceniona przez lokalnych aktorów?; co gwarantuje sukces, a co wpływa na porażkę implementacyjną w świetle założeń teorii hybrydowej? Artykuł wpisuje się w nurt badań nad polityką publiczną. Przedstawia wyniki badań własnych przeprowadzonych w 2017 roku w Padłowie i Onuwicach.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka publiczna, lokalna polityka rodzinna, projektowanie, implementacja, opieka nad dzieckiem w wieku do lat 3

¹⁸ Nazwy miast zostały zmienione.