

TOMASZ KUKOŁOWICZ
RAFAŁ WIŚNIEWSKI

EMPIRICAL RESEARCH FOR CULTURAL POLICY

A RETROSPECTIVE

TOMASZ KUKOŁOWICZ

Ph.D. in Social Sciences and in Philosophy, specialist in cultural studies. In 2010–2019, he worked in the National Centre for Culture. In 2016–2018, he was the editor-in-chief of the *NCK Research News* (*Nowości Badawcze NCK*) and the *Polish Culture Yearbook* (*Rocznik Kultury Polskiej*). He published the monograph *Raperzy kontra filomaci* (2015), was the supervising editor of *Antologia polskiego rapu* (2014), and co-authored two books: *Kultura na peryferiach* (2018) and *O 11 listopada pewnego roku. Świętowanie stulecia odzyskania niepodległości w ujęciu socjologicznym* (2019). ORCID: 0000-0001-6067-9607.

In 2001, Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska described the experience of Polish cultural studies specialists in socialist times. She underlined a significant distance separating them from the research activities and achievements of their Western colleagues:

Arduous and burdensome search for necessity goods took us even further from the world we knew from works by Western philosophers, sociologists, or cultural studies scholars. (...) To a large degree, we constructed our identity from a sense of lack. We took positive aspects of this construction from the feeling of being a part of tradition and community.¹

The strength of the local research community could only partially substitute for the lack of access to international publications and the possibility to participate in global academic discourse. Systemic transformation, the opening of borders, and, finally, Poland's accession to the European Union brought a change in the forms of international cooperation.

¹ Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska, 'Diagnozy współczesności', *Kultura Współczesna* 28–29 (2–3), 2001, p. 174.

RAFAŁ WIŚNIEWSKI

Ph.D. D.Sc., Professor of Sociology at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, sociologist, academic lecturer, manager of cultural institutions, Director of the National Centre for Culture. Former Vice-President of the Polish Sociological Association (PSA). Previously, a member of the Board of the Council of PSA's Division of Scientific Research and the Board of the Warsaw Branch of PSA). Head of the Division of Cultural Studies in the Institute of Sociology at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University. In 2016–2017, Director of the Institute of Sociology at the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University. ORCID: 0000-0002-7952-8021.

Currently, researchers of culture participate in inter-institutional networks and take advantage of global data systems. In 2006, Zina Jarmoszuk and Anna Wieczorek² identified the need to create a repository of reports on culture. In response, the National Centre for Culture (Narodowe Centrum Kultury, NCK) established the collection that today counts over 450 reports. These reports describe diverse dimensions of cultural life: participation in culture, economic and institutional situation of authors and artists, the economy of culture, the functioning of cultural institutions and informal cultural initiatives, the role and meaning of the virtual world, and many other topics. The database is not only a source of knowledge but also – in line with its founders' and administrators' intentions – a remedy for the confusion caused by excess of information. This is achieved by a systematic review of new publications and the subsequent positioning in the database of high-quality interpretative and applied analyses.

As intended by the editors, the hundredth issue of the *Contemporary Culture (Kultura Współczesna)* journal offers an excellent opportunity to apply retrospection as a method of in-depth reflection on the changing aims and methods in studies on culture. For obvious reasons, we will present only a small part of this research field, putting aside specific features of academic disciplines and various methodological controversies. We will focus on research initiatives that proved to be essential for cultural policy, not only by responding to current needs but also by providing information to the Polish government. They engaged both scholars and non-academic experts. What is important is that they all received funding from public institutions, including the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, MKiDN).

The concept of pragmatic research has accompanied the *Contemporary Culture* quarterly since its inception. The editors always carefully select the

² Zina Jarmoszuk, Anna Wieczorek, 'W stronę Laboratorium kultury', in: *Kultura i przyszłość. Prace ofiarowane prof. Sławowi Krzemieniowi-Ojakowi z okazji 75-lecia urodzin*, ed. Alicja Kisielewska, Natalia Szydłowska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, Białystok 2006.

leading topics in the artistic and scholarly discourse on culture. Their choices often outpace strategic shifts in cultural policy. In this regard, a telling example is the second issue from 2016, titled *Game Research – Critical Approaches* (*Badania gier – podejścia krytyczne*). It analysed contemporary culture in terms of the typical forms in which it was reflected in computer games and the impact exerted on culture by the gaming industry. In the autumn of 2016, MKiDN launched the grant programme ‘Development of Creative Sectors’ (*Rozwój sektorów kreatywnych*). One of its main goals was to support innovative developers of computer games. Other issues of the journal presented an in-depth reflection on the questions tackled by officials shaping the national cultural policy. For instance, the second issue from 2015 discussed the social role of libraries in the local culture. In the last few years, the journal’s section titled ‘Culture Observatory’ (*Obserwatorium kultury*) presented the results of applied research.

On the institutional level a substantial contribution to cultural policy research is made by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the National Centre for Culture. For many years, this second institution has facilitated the integration of researchers from different disciplines and disseminated knowledge from academic experts to cultural institutions and public administration units responsible for cultural policy. The current management of NCK wants to continue this tradition under the banner of ‘Reaching beyond the present, we cherish the past.’ Following this formula, we will present the history of applied research, focusing on the role of the Centre and the *Contemporary Culture* journal in supporting cultural policy research. We will also present an overview of the collection of reports gathered by the Centre.

In other words, this article’s primary aim is to evaluate the recent research for cultural policy. Approaching this task, we are well aware of the interrelations between power and knowledge. Taking statistics as an example, Alain Desrosières’ excellent analysis of such interrelations points out that ‘description and decision – “there is” and “we must”³ are in constant interaction. Knowledge has a dual nature that depends on its recipients’ intentions: they can approach it either as an element of description or the basis for decision-making. Hence, for some people, statistics is a branch of mathematics, whereas others see in it the instrument on which the modern state is founded. The same mechanism exists in research on culture. On the one hand, such research provides ideologically neutral knowledge. On the other hand, independently from the authors’ intentions, the research results become a part of political processes, adding to their context, serving as arguments in public debates, or becoming decision-making factors.

THE HERITAGE OF THE CULTURAL INSTITUTE

The first issue of the *Contemporary Culture* was published in 1993 by the Cultural Institute (Instytut Kultury) – an interdisciplinary research and innovation centre

³ Alan Desrosières, *The Politics of Large Numbers. A History of Statistical Reasoning*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2002, p. 3.

under the Ministry of Culture and Arts (Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki).⁴ The Institute gathered information about research on culture, compiled quantitative data on the cultural situation in Poland, drafted evaluation methods, conducted research on cultural economy, and prepared reports about cultural policy. Moreover, the Institute was a venue for an in-depth reflection on culture, combining anthropological, sociological, philosophical, and cultural studies perspectives. The Cultural Institute's activities involved many scholars, some of whom in later years moved from the cultural sphere to other research areas.

In the first half of the 1990s, the Institute produced a series of publications, which are valued by specialists also today. Here, we will recall three of them. *Commercialisation in Culture: Challenges and Opportunities* (*Komercjalizacja w kulturze. Szanse i zagrożenia*), edited by Stanisława Golinowska, is a post-conference volume. During the conference, which took place on 30 November and 1 December 1990,⁵ the participants discussed the situation of culture in a free-market context, which was then a new phenomenon in Polish reality. The transformation of the economic system was accompanied by many dilemmas. On the one hand, there was hope that authors and artists would become more independent from political decisions. On the other hand, there were fears about their economic condition and the deterioration in cultural production quality (resulting from the commercialisation, mentioned in the volume's title). Among the questions covered in the volume, some had a novel character. One example is Antonina Kłoskowska's prediction regarding the future of the book industry:

*In Poland, no more than 30 per cent of the population read books regularly, and 40 per cent can recall anything of what they read in the past. Without countermeasures, such as a serious reform of the education system that will support traditional media recognised for their value, we should fear that the book industry will continue to shrink.*⁶

This prediction turned out to be very accurate. Indeed, the Polish book industry is in decay. At the same time, we can observe that it is impacted by the educational system in a way unforeseen by Kłoskowska; namely the decision to offer elementary school handbooks free of charge accelerated the collapse of small, independent bookstores.

The second publication that remains surprisingly fresh today is *The Barometer of Culture* (*Barometr kultury*), edited by Mirosława Grabowska.⁷ The book contains a detailed analysis of two empirical studies: a survey on cultural participation conducted by the Public Opinion Research Centre (Centrum Badań Opinii Publicznej, OBOP) on a representative group of 1,500 Polish people, and questionnaire research in 2,454 (more than 95 per cent of all existing) territorial communities

4 Teresa Kostyrko, 'Działalność Instytutu Kultury w latach 1974–2001', *Kultura Współczesna* 33–34 (3–4), 2002.

5 *Komercjalizacja w kulturze. Szanse i zagrożenia*, ed. Stanisława Golinowska, Instytut Kultury, Warszawa 1992.

6 Antonina Kłoskowska, 'O komercjalizacji w kulturze historycznie', in: *Komercjalizacja w kulturze. Szanse i zagrożenia*, p. 14.

7 *Barometr kultury*, ed. Mirosława Grabowska, Instytut Kultury, Warszawa 1992.

(*gmina*)⁸ in Poland. The collected data offer a clear picture of social moods at the early stage of the country's political and economic transformation. The book remains a model of academic work in terms of empirical data and the sophistication of analysis. We return to this publication on various occasions, including the NCK's evaluations of local governments' spending on culture⁹ and our research on the amateur theatre movement.¹⁰

The third publication is *The Atlas of Culture in Poland, 1946–1980 (Atlas Kultury Polski 1946–1980)*.¹¹ Almost completed in 1983, this monumental work by Aleksander Wallis was published posthumously only in 1994. It presents a novel approach, in which a vast scope of statistical data is presented by means of geo-spatial analyses. The idea to present information in the form of maps was applied again by Barbara Fatyga and her research team. In 2009, they started to construct a database of indexes of culture presented in spatial configurations. This project was conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the website *Moja Polis*. Currently, cultural data presented on maps are provided by Statistics Poland (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny*, GUS) as a part of its Geostatistics Portal.¹²

Frequent changes in research financing and operation of research and innovation centres limited the Institute's scope of activities. New regulations, implemented at the end of 1991, obliged such units to self-finance their activities. The lack of commercial potential of research on culture made it impossible for the Institute to survive in free market conditions. The Institute had to reduce its staff, change location, and pay for commercial rent of office space. Finally, it closed down at the turn of 2002 and 2003.

THE RESEARCH OF THE NATIONAL CENTRE OF CULTURE

The *Contemporary Culture* journal was inherited by the National Centre of Culture, created in 2002. Continuing traditions of the Cultural Institute, the Centre took over some of its research responsibilities. From today's perspective, one can see parallels between activities of the Cultural Institute and of the National Centre of Culture. These include the interdisciplinary character of research, the focus on practical outcomes, and cooperation with leading figures in the academic sphere. Such analogies result from a similar context of operation of the two institutions, in which both institutions have operated. Furthermore, the National Centre of Culture intentionally draws on solutions created by the Cultural Institute. In particular, the research of the Institute and the Centre have been linked together by the idea to reactivate the Culture Observatory.

8 *Gmina* is the principal unit of the administrative division of Poland (translator's note).

9 Tomasz Kukołowicz, Marlena Modzelewska, Paweł Siechowicz, Aleksandra Wiśniewska, 'Rola samorządu terytorialnego w finansowaniu polityki kulturalnej w Polsce w latach 1990–2015', *Studia BAS* 2, 2016.

10 Anna Kozak, Marcin Zarzecki, *Amatorski znaczy 'miłośniczy': Raport z jakościowego badania amatorskiego ruchu teatralnego*, <https://www.nck.pl/badania/projekty-badawcze/raport-z-jakosciowego-badania-amatorskiego-ruchu-teatralnego> (accessed 20.11.2020).

11 Aleksander Wallis, *Atlas kultury Polski 1946–1980*, Eco, Międzyzichód 1994.

12 GUS, Portal Geostatystyczny, <https://geo.stat.gov.pl/> (accessed 15.10.2018).

The concept of the Polish Culture Observatory was developed in 1999 by Andrzej Siciński and Zina Jarmoszuk for the Ministry of Culture and Arts.¹³ The Observatory was to monitor the transformation of cultural life in Poland and gather information on the most significant cultural phenomena in Europe. The Observatory was to respond in this regard to the needs of the Ministry, local authorities, cultural institutions, non-governmental organisations, and individual researchers. The authors of the project identified data gathering and processing followed by the preparation of analyses and reports as the primary objectives of the Observatory. The declared main spheres of interests were cultural education, participation in culture, and cultural economy.

Several years passed from the conceptualisation to the institutionalisation of the Observatory. Formally, it was created in 2009 within the MKiDN's grant project 'Cultural Education and the Diagnosis of Culture' (*Edukacja kulturalna i diagnoza kultury*). During these several years of preparations¹⁴ and diagnosis in cultural sphere, the *Reports, Analyses, and Opinions* (*Raporty, analizy, opinie*) series was launched. The series presents expert works on the labour market, the dynamics and spatial configurations of cultural participation, as well as on similar cultural observatories in other European countries. Applied and practical aspects of research on culture were also continuously discussed in the *Contemporary Culture* journal. In the editor's introduction to the first issue published by the National Centre of Culture, Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska wrote:

From the next issue, the journal will slightly change its title: we are going to replace 'critique' with 'practice' (this change will not eliminate the critical character of the journal but will significantly increase the scope of our interests and our potential audience).¹⁵ Already in the short presentation of our goals, published in the journal's first issue, we stressed the importance of relations between theoretical-interpretative reflection and the practice of promoting cultural participation. We claimed that we must look beyond 'narrow academic circles' and reach all readers who want to consciously and reflexively shape their cultural participation.¹⁶

Following these declarations, the selection of topics of the journal included cultural issues in the context of European integration (*Contemporary Culture*, 1–2, 2003), cultural education (*Contemporary Culture*, 3, 2003), alternative culture (*Contemporary Culture*, 3, 2004), and local culture (*Contemporary Culture*, 4, 2004).

A significant point in the timeline of cultural policy research was the publication of a series of reports on the preparation work for the 2009 Congress of Polish Culture (Kongres Kultury Polskiej). In total, fifteen reports were produced,

13 See, Zina Jarmoszuk, 'Informacja o kulturze – Obserwatorium Życia Kulturalnego w Polsce', *Kultura Współczesna* 31–32 (1–2), 2002.

14 See, Małgorzata Kisilowska, *Obserwatorium kultury jako ośrodek zarządzania wiedzą*, 'Raporty, analizy, opinie' series, Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, Warszawa 2005; Z. Jarmoszuk, A. Wieczorek, 'W stronę Laboratorium kultury'.

15 The journal's full title is *Contemporary Culture: Theory, Interpretation, and Practice* (translator's note).

16 Anna Zeidler-Janiszewska, 'Od redakcji', *Kultura Współczesna* 33–34 (3–4), 2002.

including expert opinions, problem analyses based on pre-existing data, and studies drawing on empirical research.¹⁷ In most cases, the selection of subjects was done according to different disciplines (reports on museums, books, audiovisual media, and so on). Together, these publications presented a multidimensional picture of cultural policy in Poland.

The 'Culture Observatory' grant programme contributed significantly to our knowledge about cultural policy. The National Centre of Culture supervised grant competitions in 2010–2011 and 2015; the competitions in 2009 and 2012–2014 were overseen directly by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage¹⁸ The programme priorities changed from year to year, but most of the 200 accepted proposals were research projects.¹⁹ Their thematic scope was extensive, and grant receivers varied from cultural institutions conducting research activities to non-governmental organisations, universities, and private companies. Included among them were the following observatories of culture: the Lived Culture Observatory Research Network Foundation (Fundacja Obserwatorium Żywej Kultury – Sieć Badawcza), the ROK AMU Culture Observatory (Regionalne Obserwatorium Kultury UAM), the Observatory of the Regional Institute of Culture in Katowice (Obserwatorium Regionalnego Instytutu Kultury w Katowicach), and the Observatory of the Institute of Urban Culture in Gdańsk (Obserwatorium Instytutu Kultury Miejskiej w Gdańsku).

The National Centre of Culture not only initiated and financed research projects but also gathered and disseminated their results. In 2010, Anna Ciecierska started to publish information about current projects by the NCK's Research Unit on the website of the Centre and on Facebook. Based on responses on Facebook, she began to collect and describe research activities by NCK, MKiDN, and other Polish and foreign institutions. With time, a 'Research Database' subpage was added to the NCK website and equipped with search and thematic filter functions.

The gathering and dissemination of reports was a natural and logical response of the Centre to the problem of knowledge availability. Herbert A. Simon was among the first to identify this issue. As he wrote already in 1971, 'in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients.'²⁰ The so-called excess problem reached Poland as one of the results of systemic transformation. The idea of culture observatory, developed since the end of the 1990s,

17 See, Kongres Kultury Polskiej, http://www.kongreskultury.pl/title,Raporty_o_stanie_kultury,pid,135.html (accessed 15.10.2018).

18 In most projects supervised by the Ministry, the application process starts in the year preceding the project's realisation. In turn, the Centre calls for research that should take place in the same year. As a result, MKiDN supervised grant programmes in 2013–2015.

19 See, Grant Programs, the National Centre of Culture, <http://www.nck.pl/badania/archiwum-projektow/obserwatorium-kultury/programy-dotacyjne> (accessed 15.10.2018).

20 Herbert A. Simon, 'Designing Organizations for an Information-Rich World', in: *Computers, Communications, and the Public Interest*, ed. Martin Greenberger, Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore 1971, p. 40.

was envisioned as a modern solution for information management. In 2006, Zina Jarmoszuik and Anna Wieczorek characterised the situation in the following way:

*The ease with which we can process information, combined with a lack of control over the quality of this information, is among the factors responsible for its overproduction, which can lead to information 'fog.' Today, the classification and quick access to the information is becoming a problem.*²¹

In recent years, cultural institutions paid particular attention to information excess in cultural policy. Tomasz Szlendak wrote about 'the culture of excess in the times of deficiency.'²² Based on the analysis of reports and their use by cultural institutions, he concluded that when these institutions construct solutions for the cultural sphere, they completely ignore factual data ('When we looked at the life cycles of reports, we realised that the publication of a report is usually also the moment of its death.'²³) The authors of two reports on the influence of research on cultural policy in Lesser Poland reached similar conclusions.²⁴

The National Centre of Culture continuously monitors the needs of decision-makers responsible for cultural policy in Poland. It supported the 'Report on Reports' (*Raport o raportach*) and 'Local Cultural Centres: Activities and Diagnoses' (*Lokalne centra kultury: działania a diagnozy*) projects. In the autumn of 2014, the Centre studied the statistical needs of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. This research was linked to the activities of the Inter-Ministerial Methodological Group on Cultural Statistics. Moreover, for the sake of more in-depth exploration, the heads and staff of eight ministerial departments took part in semi-structured in-depth interviews. This research revealed a paradoxical situation in which some critical data are missing, but, at the same time, available information is used in a fragmentary and haphazard way.

The practical result of research on the Ministry's statistical needs was the launch of the *NCK Research News* (*Nowości Badawcze NCK*) quarterly in Spring 2015.²⁵ The journal publishes overviews of recent reports. These short texts present a broad scope of information and analysis. Currently, the quarterly consists of the following sections: 'From the NCK Research Program' (*Z programu badawczego NCK*), 'New Dictionary of Cultural Policy' (*Nowy słownik polityki kulturalnej*), 'Polish

21 Z. Jarmoszuik, A. Wieczorek, 'W stronę Laboratorium kultury', p. 151.

22 Tomasz Szlendak, 'Kultura nadmiaru w czasach niedomiaru', *Kultura Współczesna* 76 (1), 2013.

23 'Wybuch raportowego wulkanu. Raport z raportu o raportach o stanie kultury', a conversation of M. Roszkowska with K. Olechnicki and T. Szlendak, *Notes na 6 Tygodni* 100, 2015, p. IX.

24 Jagoda Komusińska, Wojciech Kowalik, Judyta Lubacha-Sember, Łukasz Maźnica, Dawid Sobolak, Jan Stycharz, *Lokalne centra kultury: działania a diagnozy*, Warsztat Innowacji Społecznych, Agencja Artystyczna GAP, Kraków 2016, http://www.nck.pl/upload/attachments/318755/lokalne_centra_kultury_raport_2016.pdf (accessed 15.10.2018); Piotr Knaś, Maria Piątkowska, Dawid Hoinkis, *Diagnozy w kulturze. Badania i analizy w projektowaniu i wdrażaniu samorządowych polityk kulturalnych*, FRDL Małopolski Instytut Samorządu Terytorialnego i Administracji, Kraków 2017, http://www.mistia.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/1_Raport_koncowy_Diagnozy-w-kulturze-Badania-i-analizy-w-projektowaniu-i-wdra%C5%BCaniu-samorz%C4%85dowych.pdf (accessed 15.10.2018).

25 Available at: <http://nck.pl/badania/publikacje>. Until the second issue of 2016, the journal's title was *Culture Observatory Research News* (*Nowości Badawcze Obserwatorium Kultury*).

Reports' (*Polskie raporty*), 'Heritage and Memory' (*Dziedzictwo i pamięć*), 'Foreign Reports' (*Zagraniczne raporty*), 'Scientific Articles' (*Artykuły naukowe*), and 'Books' (*Książki*). The editorial team focuses on empirical research on the condition of and processes in the cultural sector. The 'New Dictionary of Cultural Policy' section presents reports containing significant cultural policy concepts, which do not necessarily stem from systematic and measurable research-based observation of cultural reality. The section devoted to academic articles does not strive to offer an exhaustive review of research done in Poland. Instead, the editor, Aleksandra Wiśniewska, devotes particular attention to two key academic journals in the field of cultural policy: *The International Journal of Cultural Policy* and *The Journal of Cultural Economics*. Until today,²⁶ NCK published fourteen issues of the quarterly.

Besides the quarterly, the National Centre for Culture undertook the task of creating a yearbook that presents a synthesis of knowledge from dispersed sources. The quarterly widens our understanding of the current situation by introducing new research and analyses produced in Poland and abroad. In turn, the yearbook's primary goal is to present current knowledge by selecting the most up-to-date and reliable domestic and foreign sources. The scale of this enterprise turned out to be so large that the initial concept of the yearbook prepared solely by NCK was replaced with more effective inter-institutional cooperation. Within it, the Centre is responsible for content editing, task coordination, and publishing. The first issue of the *Polish Culture Yearbook (Rocznik Kultury Polskiej)* went to print at the turn of 2016 and 2017. The 250-page-long publication included works by representatives of fifteen institutions doing research for cultural policy (and supervised mainly by MKiDN). Professor Piotr Gliński, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Culture and National Heritage, penned the introduction to the issue. Following the suggestion of Piotr Łysoń from Statistics Poland, the publication counted as a pilot issue. In the next year, the number of authors increased thanks to the cooperation of twenty institutions. The 2017 issue counted 300 pages, including introductions by the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the head of the National Centre of Culture. The journal appears in two languages, Polish and English.

Another area where the Centre intensified its activities is empirical research. All results are presented on the NCK's website, followed by in-depth scientific analyses published in *Contemporary Culture*. From the cultural policy perspective, the most significant research projects have included *Between Play and Art: Cultural Choices of Children's Guardians (Między zabawą a sztuką. Wybory kulturalne opiekunów dzieci)*, *A Passion for the Past: A Report from Qualitative Research of History Enthusiasts (Przeszłość jako pasja. Raport z jakościowego badania pasjonatów historii)*, and *History, Culture, and Polish-Ukrainian Relations from the Ukrainian Perspective (Ukraińcy o historii, kulturze i stosunkach polsko-ukraińskich)*. We encourage all interested readers to refer to the reports on the NCK's website (<http://nck.pl/badania/projekty-badawcze>) and articles in the *Contemporary Culture* quarterly.

²⁶ I.e. until 2018, when the Polish version of this issue was published (translator's note).

NCK'S REPOSITORY OF REPORTS

Since 2010, the collection of the Centre (www.nck.pl/badania/raporty) has grown to over 450 research and statistical reports. Today, it is the largest Polish repository of reports on cultural policy. Over the last years, the collection has been supervised by Anna Ciecierska, Natalia Nowińska, Katarzyna Zarzycka, and Natalia Szeligowska. The information needed for the purposes of the database has been prepared by the Research and Analyses Unit staff and NCK interns. The catalogue of the repository allows the users to filter and find reports by phrase search or to browse them by subject, language (Polish or foreign), and the publication year. In addition to the title, information about the author and the link to download the full version of the report, each record includes an abstract of the publication.

As for June 2018, the collection included 47 reports published prior to 2009, i.e. before the first version of the database was established, 168 reports from 2010–2015, when they were gathered solely for the purposes of the collection, and 261 reports from 2015–2018, when the *NCK Research News* quarterly was published. The last period is also the shortest one (it covers three and a half years), but the number of reports is the highest. This dynamic is the result of a more systematic approach to collecting reports and statistical accounts.

In terms of language, a dominant group of 271 reports deals with Polish culture. The rest are foreign publications, mainly in English. In a global context, cultural phenomena and processes in different parts of the world are interrelated and thus important from the cultural policy perspective. The transfer of knowledge has become more dynamic. The solutions created in the West are immediately noticed and, in some cases, implemented in the policy of other countries. The collection's scope is limited by its focus on British, American, as well as international organisations' and global foundations' reports (for example, by UNESCO). The experience of our region, where most reports on cultural policy are published in national languages, remains underrepresented in the repository.

Each report in the collection is classified by subject. The list of subjects, which has evolved over the years, makes the collection more useful for a wide range of readers. The number of reports under a given subject roughly indicates how much attention in cultural policy the subject receives.

The most popular subject is 'cultural participation' (89 reports). This leading position dovetails with global trends in public policy.²⁷ In Polish cultural policy, the significance of cultural participation is confirmed, most notably, by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland (Art. 6, Par. 1): 'The Republic of Poland shall provide conditions for the people's equal access to the products of culture which are the source of the Nation's identity, continuity and development.'²⁸ Other popular subjects include 'cultural institutions' (59 reports) and 'cultural heritage' (49 reports). In the former case, this popularity indicates a vital role of such institutions

²⁷ See, Tal Feder, Tally Katz-Gerro, 'Who Benefits from Public Funding of the Performing Arts? Comparing the Art Provision and the Hegemony-Distinction Approaches', *Poetics* 40 (4), 2012.

²⁸ *The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of 2nd April, 1997, as published in Dziennik Ustaw No. 78, item 483*, <https://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/angielski/kon1.htm> (accessed 20.11.2020).

in cultural policy: they act as intermediaries between the public administration and participants in culture.

The special focus on national heritage is not only confirmed by the Constitution (Art. 5), but also results from a particular research tradition in Poland. In recent years, cultural heritage and historical policy are among the subjects that experience the most dynamic development, require most 'saturation' with empirical data, and need continuous control of internal shifts. Museums rapidly expand their infrastructure and scope of activities. We observe new forms of participation, such as historical reenactment. The digitalisation of archival resources and their publication on the Internet influence the perception of the past. Another popular subject in the repository is 'cultural policy' (63 reports). This is a strategic subject because the collection's main objective is to facilitate access to relevant knowledge for people who shape and study this policy. The subject covers publications that deal with cultural policy in general, rather than with particular questions within it.

CONCLUSIONS

Since its inception, the *Contemporary Culture* journal has offered a space for academic and expert discourse, where theoreticians can meet with practitioners of culture. The National Centre of Culture has supported the journal in this task for the last fifteen years.

Staying true to the main principles of *Contemporary Culture* and supporting research for cultural policy, we created an experiential platform that integrates good practical solutions with research-based analyses. The one hundred published issues make the journal a vital voice in the discussion about the key issues for Polish cultural policy. In turn, 450 reports gathered in the repository of the Centre form an essential factual data collection for this policy. In the cultural sphere, the durability of initiatives is a good indicator of their value. NCK's digital resources are among the key regional and interregional tools supporting research on culture. The processual approach in the analysis of cultural policy implies application and close integration of various data sources and research perspectives. For this reason, access to digital resources guarantees both that the policy-makers' decisions are based on proper foundations and that the subsequent steps of policy making are logically interconnected.

Translated by Konrad Siekierski

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ABSTRACT: Following the logic of diachronic analysis, the article discusses systematic diagnoses intended to shape and develop cultural policy, while presenting the evolution of research that has been conducted for the purposes of cultural policy ever since the early 1990s, with a particular focus on the strategic role of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, National Centre for Culture (NCK) and quarterly *Kultura Współczesna*. The starting point for the discussion are the actions of the Institute of Culture, the first publisher of *Kultura Współczesna*, followed by the research activity of the National Centre for Culture continued for the purposes of cultural policy and including for example the NCK Culture Observatory and NCK Repository of Reports.

KEY WORDS: cultural policy, attention economics, the culture of excess, database of reports