International Labour Organization | Open Library of Humanities

Mrozowicki, Adam, Juliusz Gardawski, Jacek Burski, and Ryszard Rapacki. 2025. "Patchwork Capitalism and the Management of Interlinked Crises by Essential Public Services in Poland". *International Labour Review* 164 (1): 1–19. https://doi.org/10.16995/ilr.18832.

International Labour Review

Patchwork capitalism and the management of interlinked crises by essential public services in Poland

Adam Mrozowicki, Institute of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wrocław, adam.mrozowicki@uwr.edu.pl (corresponding author)

Juliusz Gardawski, Institute of Philosophy, Sociology and Economic Sociology, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, jgarda@sgh.waw.pl

Jacek Burski, Institute of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Wrocław, jacek.burski@uwr.edu.pl

Ryszard Rapacki, Department of Economics II, SGH Warsaw School of Economics, rrapacki@sgh.waw.pl

Abstract. *Contributing to the literature on the diversity of capitalism, this article shows how actors in the Polish public services responded to interlinked crises, namely the chronic public services crisis and its aggravation by the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of refugees triggered by war in Ukraine. The empirical part of our study is based on qualitative interviews with workers, trade unionists, managers and state representatives in education, healthcare and social care. Our analysis suggests that, when faced with an insufficient government response – for reasons reflecting the basic features of "patchwork capitalism" – workers' resourcefulness and self-organization helped maintain essential public services during the crises.*

Keywords: *patchwork capitalism, interlinked crises, public services, Poland, COVID-19, war.*

This article is also available in French, in *Revue internationale du Travail* 164 (1), and Spanish, in *Revista Internacional del Trabajo* 144 (1).

1. Introduction

There is a long list of overlapping disruptions of the social order that have, in recent years, affected humanity and societies. It includes the COVID-19 pandemic, an increase in forced migration, war in Europe and the Middle East, debt and financial crises, a crisis of social cohesion, and the energy and global climate crises. Taken together, these disruptions generate a range of unpredictable consequences. For the purposes of this article, it is useful to make a distinction between two types of crises: protracted or chronic (irreversible) crises, such as the climate crisis, and temporary (reversible) crises, such as recurrent economic crises. These disruptions, simultaneous and/or connected, are sometimes referred to as "interwoven and overlapping crises" (Morin and Kern 1999), "polycrisis" (Lawrence, Janzwood and Homer-Dixon 2022) or "interlinked crises",[1] all of which indicate the "complex intersolidarity of problems" (Morin and Kern 1999, 74). Some interlinked crises, such as the global climate crisis or the chronic crisis of public services under neoliberalism (Keune 2020), are long-term processes and, in principle, could have been anticipated. Others, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the war waged by Russia against Ukraine, developed much more suddenly and seemed to undermine the very foundations of established social, political and economic orders.

This article discusses the effects of and responses to interlinked crises in Poland, namely the chronic crisis in its public services, which was interwoven with and magnified by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of refugees following the humanitarian crisis unleashed by Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The reforms of Poland's public services since the late 1990s – as in other countries (Keune 2020) – involved their liberalization and partial privatization. Contrary to the reformers' hopes, these changes did not lead to better quality services or employment conditions, but instead contributed to labour shortages, wage cuts and freezes, increased workloads and the fragmentation of collective employment relations (Kozek 2011). It can thus be argued that the reforms deepened the chronic public services crisis, understood as a result of "slow processes of deterioration, erosion and negative change" (Vigh 2008, 9).

The case of Poland allows us to explore the strategies employed by frontline essential workers to cope with the consequences of a public services crisis in combination with sudden and unexpected exogenous shocks (the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine). By "frontline essential workers", we refer to those who had to manage the crises on the ground in order to provide services essential to the reproduction of social and economic life in education, healthcare and social care (Mezzadri 2022).

Delving deeper into the reasons for the deficiencies in the Polish State's crisis management and the coping strategies employed by essential workers, this article refers to the literature on the diversity of capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe (Nölke and Vliegenthart 2009; Myant and Drahokoupil 2011; Bohle and Greskovits 2012). It develops and applies the newly crafted concept of "patchwork capitalism" (Rapacki 2019) to the analysis of public services. This concept denotes a historically determined or "path-dependent" weakness in formal institutions, which was compounded by the rapid dismantling of the institutions of state socialism, followed by limitations being placed on the scope of government intervention in the economy and the partial marketization of public services (Kozek 2011). This resulted in a socio-economic order with patchwork features, which is partly reflected in its openness to the attachment of new components (institutions and organizations) embodying diverse institutional logics. This article argues that this order's weak foundations (or institutional fabric) may explain problems in the implementation of well-planned and effectively coordinated long-term systemic responses to crises (Rapacki and Gardawski 2019; Gardawski and Rapacki 2021).

With a few notable exceptions (Hardy 2009; Kozek 2011; Popic 2023), previous studies on the emerging models of capitalism in the Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) region

[1] See, for example, https://news.un.org/pages/global-crisis-response-group/.

have rarely focused on transformations in public services. In this article, we analyse crisis responses both in terms of state policies and from the grassroots perspectives of workers, trade unions and managers in education, healthcare and social care. We address the following questions: (i) How did the protracted public services crisis, reflecting the features of patchwork capitalism, affect these sectors' preparedness for the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of Ukrainian war refugees in Poland? (ii) How did actors at different hierarchical levels react to the outbreak of the pandemic and to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine? and (iii) How have these reactions influenced how the public services are organized?

In addressing the above questions, we formulate three research hypotheses. First, we expect that, owing to the patchwork nature of the socio-economic order in Poland, the preparedness for interlinked crises – that is, the strategic responses involving "decisions made by political and administrative leaders" (Popic and Moise 2022, 511) – was poor and measures were largely based on ad hoc arrangements. Second, we assume that the weakness in the institutional coordination of crisis responses made the socio-economic order reliant upon bottom-up collective efforts by workers at the operational level, that is "decisions and behaviours which focus on offsetting the crisis effects on-the-ground" (Popic and Moise 2022, 511). Third, we expect the patchwork organization of public services to have been reproduced (or "normalized") rather than challenged by interlinked crises, since the incoherence of the institutional architecture would have been reinforced by protracted, overlapping disruptions of the socio-economic order.

In order to verify the aforementioned hypotheses, this article refers to empirical data collected as part of the COV-WORK project.[2] The data were extracted from 60 biographical narrative interviews and 13 focus group interviews with workers, as well as 23 expert interviews with representatives of trade unions, employers' organizations and local and supralocal authorities operating in the sectors of education, healthcare and social care (see table). Biographical narrative interviews helped us to fully grasp what the crises meant for workers in the broader context of their biographical experiences. Interviews were conducted mostly in person in 2021–23 by the COV-WORK research team in the Lower Silesian and Mazovian voivodeships. The interviewees were teachers in primary schools, doctors and nurses in hospitals, and people employed in nursing homes (*dom pomocy społecznej*) (including nurses, caregivers and physiotherapists). The focus group interviews were carried out in the spring of 2022 with workers employed in the three selected sectors in Warsaw and the larger Mazovian voivodeship. The interviews were conducted remotely using the Microsoft Teams platform and focused primarily on issues of job quality, respondents' work experiences before and during the pandemic, and their perception of the consequences of the pandemic in their organizations. Expert interviews were conducted both in person and online in 2021 and 2023, focusing on crisis management in the selected sectors and the role of social dialogue in this process.

Sample description: Biographical interviews and focus group interviews

	Biographical narrative interviews			Focus group interviews		
	Women	Men	Age (avg.)	Women	Men	Age (avg.)
Education	25	4	44	28	6	41
Healthcare	12	7	44	34	7	41
Social care	9	3	47	13	5	50

Source: Own original study.

[2] Project NCN OPUS "COV-WORK: Socio-economic consciousness, work experiences and coping strategies of Poles in the context of the post-pandemic crisis", funded by the National Science Centre of Poland (NCN) under project number UMO-2020/37/B/HS6/00479.

We transcribed and anonymized the data collected and applied the procedures of thematic coding (Gibbs 2007), using Atlas.ti software to systematize the codes. We used Statistics Poland data (GUS) as well as existing reports (e.g. NIK 2021) to understand the dynamics of employment and collective labour relations in the selected sectors.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. In the second section, we describe the key characteristics of the chronic public services crisis and the patchwork capitalism that emerged in CEE countries, including an overview of its empirical features. In the third section, we examine social actors' responses to the interlinked crises in question and link them to features of patchwork capitalism. In the final section, we discuss the fit of the conceptual framework of patchwork capitalism for the analysis of the responses to interlinked crises in Poland.

2. The chronic crisis of the public services and patchwork capitalism

2.1. A public services crisis

The logical premise for this article is that the institutional and social underpinnings of a socio-economic order influence its management of interlinked crises and its effectiveness. The existing literature points to a protracted public services crisis following neoliberal reforms in most capitalist countries, which involved the introduction of the principles of New Public Management, decentralization, privatization and contracting out (Keune 2020; Peters 2012). It is argued that the marketization and liberalization of public services led to a decline in both their quality and the employment conditions of their workers – trends that spilled over into various institutional regimes in Europe, North America and beyond (Greer and Umney 2022; Kozek 2011; Peters 2012; Popic 2023). These negative tendencies were compounded by the 2008 global financial crisis, which introduced wage freezes, increased workloads and working time, as well as further erosion of collective bargaining (Keune 2020). The liberalization of public services moreover resulted in a dualization of employment conditions in the public sector, with better wages and conditions for former monopolistic providers than for their new private competitors (Kozek 2011).

We propose to examine the public services crisis through the anthropological lens of "chronicity". As argued by Vigh (2008, 10), this "shifts our perspective away from the notion of rupture and aberration towards a perspective on pervasive critical states". In this sense, the public services crisis constitutes a prolonged failure by institutions to fulfil their designated functions, in particular with respect to social reproduction, understood as "the structures, practices, activities and realms aimed at the daily and intergenerational regeneration of life *and* capitalist relations" (Mezzadri 2022, 381 – original emphasis).

Despite some similarities, public services crises have differed across European countries, depending on the institutional context and political actors' strategies and choices (Kozek 2011; Keune 2020). In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the differences in the quality of essential public services. In addition to poor coordination of crisis measures, one of the results of underfinancing and understaffing was a higher death rate in countries where neoliberal reforms were most advanced, including the United Kingdom and the United States, and countries in Latin America and CEE.[3] As Popic and Moise (2022) argue, in the case of CEE countries, this result can also be explained by lower healthcare system capacities and political decisions to reopen economies early in order to save jobs and maintain competitiveness at the expense of increased health risks. Existing studies and documents (Mrozowicki 2023; Rudnicki 2023; RPO 2023) indicate that poor strategic management was also evident in the handling of the mass arrival of Ukrainian war refugees in Poland.

[3] World Health Organization, "WHO Coronavirus COVID-19 Dashboard". https://covid19.who.int/table.

In this article, we argue that the responses of frontline essential workers to the challenges presented by these two crises should be understood in the context of a chronic public services crisis and the core characteristics of patchwork capitalism in CEE countries. In the next section, we discuss the most salient features of this socio-economic order.

2.2. The most salient features of patchwork capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe

After the collapse of socialism in 1989, CEE countries (in particular, the 11 that became European Union Member States (CEE11)) witnessed the emergence of a new socio-economic order: capitalism. As per recent theoretical contributions applying Weber's ideal-types method (Rapacki and Gardawski 2019; Gardawski and Rapacki 2021) and the results of empirical studies (Rapacki 2019), the particular manifestation of capitalism in the CEE11 exhibits features akin to those of the "ideal-typical" model that we have defined in the aforementioned contributions as "patchwork capitalism". In its essence and most salient characteristics, it significantly differs from both the varieties/models of capitalism prevalent in Western Europe and the post-communist capitalism found in the remaining former Communist Bloc countries (Rapacki 2019).

Below, we briefly outline the key components of the ideal type of patchwork capitalism born in CEE11 countries. According to Weber's understanding of the ideal type concept, the components of an ideal type do not adhere strictly to any empirical order of a particular country; rather, they provide a way of understanding and ranking specific real-life socio-economic orders in terms of their distance from the ideal type. For the purposes of this article, it may be useful to consider the components of the ideal type of patchwork capitalism in terms of three broad dimensions, namely its formation, institutional design and operation (that is, its real-life behaviour).

2.2.1. Patchwork formation

Patchwork capitalism in CEE11 countries is the product of the *longue durée* (Braudel 1969) or path dependence (David 1994). Consequently, the current institutional architecture is a heterogenous set of loose components and parts inherited and/or transplanted from various socio-economic orders that can be arranged chronologically into three temporal layers: (i) feudal and capitalist institutional legacy, (ii) the legacy of authoritarian socialism and (iii) imports of institutions from various types of capitalism coexisting in Western Europe during the period of systemic transformation after 1989. Two systemic breakthroughs (from capitalism to socialism in 1945–48 and back to capitalism after 1989) respectively destroyed the pre-existing institutional fabric.

The task of building capitalism was taken up by the members of the elite who were reforming the economy (the breakthrough elite) through an act of creative destruction: they dismantled the institutional architecture of state socialism, deprived the nomenklatura of power and launched a systemic transformation programme encompassing privatization (with a particular emphasis on liberalizing and marketizing public services), downsizing government intervention in the economy, deregulation – including of labour relations – and decentralization of economic and administrative structures. This breakthrough elite undertook to establish the foundations of a market economy, idealizing the liberal model. At the same time, its members did not aspire to become a class of new economic owners, which made them different from the reformist elites in Russia and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

One of the most important implications of the implosion of socialism in CEE11 countries in 1989 was that the formation of a new socio-economic order – capitalism – initially occurred in the absence of domestic capitalists. In other words, there was no social class with an economic interest in establishing institutions that would lay down the fabric of this order, and then ensuring its stability and protection by erecting entry barriers (and transaction

costs) for new players and enforcing their compliance with the prevailing rules of the game (Gardawski and Rapacki 2021).

The breakthrough elite did not decide to build capitalism "from below", by introducing an employee shareholding organization similar to the employee stock ownership plans in the United States, for example, or "from above", through the oligarchic model, among other options. Instead, capitalism in CEE11 countries was created "from without" or "from abroad" through foreign capital (King and Szelényi 2005), especially foreign direct investment (FDI), in line with the principles of the Washington Consensus. Foreign capital became one of the key elements in the process of shaping the new economic order of a dependent market economy (Nölke and Vliegenthart 2009) and limited the emergence of a class of domestic oligarchs. Multinational corporations, the main vehicles of FDI inflows to CEE11 economies, enjoyed minimal entry barriers and retained full discretion over the internal (corporate) functioning of their subsidiaries in CEE11 countries, further adding to the development of a patchwork order there. The arrival and power of multinationals clearly demonstrated the priorities of CEE11 governments, which focused on providing privileged conditions for foreign capital and its accumulation, often at the expense of broadly understood social reproduction.

European Union (EU) membership led to a certain institutional convergence and "standardization" of socio-economic orders in the CEE11 countries, but it also presented something of an exogenous shock, at least in the short and medium terms, that temporarily increased their institutional heterogeneity. As regards the public services, it provided an additional drive for their liberalization and marketization, further promoted by EU regulations in the CEE11 countries (Keune 2020).

2.2.2. Institutional design

The historical roots and contemporary formation of patchwork capitalism are reflected in several peculiar traits in its heterogenous institutional design in the CEE11 countries, the most pronounced being:

(1) *The fundamental weakness of the "institutional fabric"*, that is, the basic institutions that define the rules of the game within the existing socio-economic order.

(2) *Incoherence and lack of complementarity in the institutional architecture*, resulting in multiple loopholes and mismatches between its building blocks.

(3) *Coexistence of diverse – or even divergent – coordination mechanisms* for decisions/actions taken by economic and social actors across and within various areas of the institutional architecture (Rapacki 2019).[4] For example, while heterogeneous and market-based coordination mechanisms prevail in the areas of product market competition and financial intermediation, hierarchical coordination tends to be the most widespread coordination mechanism in the knowledge system (i.e. innovation, research and education). In contrast, in the area of housing and in the social protection system, personalized coordination mechanisms, including family-based coordination and cronyism, are dominant (Czerniak, forthcoming; Meardi and Guardiancich 2022; Rapacki 2019). Overall, this gives rise to multiple frictions, idle capacities and systemic imperfections.

(4) *The mismatch between formal and informal institutions and the poor social embeddedness of the former*. Historically, CEE11 countries have been characterized by a low level of formal institution development, weak central government and poor law enforcement. In the nineteenth century – a crucial period for the formation of modern societies – the nations of CEE11 countries were deprived of independent statehood and subordinated

[4] We refer here to pertinent classifications put forward, among others, by Hall and Soskice (2001), Amable (2003) and Nölke and Vliegenthart (2009), and to the concept of "crony capitalism" originally developed in relation to the Philippines (Kang 2002).

to foreign, oppressive powers. In collective life, people did not identify with formal institutions but with informal ones, strengthening the organic solidarity of small groups and enabling nations to survive in a hostile environment. These value patterns were consolidated in the oppressive times of totalitarianism and authoritarian socialism, which also saw the rise of attitudes of resourcefulness and a specific type of entrepreneurship or rent-seeking in the shadow economy. The exclusive (or "bonding") social capital based on trust within small groups was strengthened, whereas the inclusive (or "bridging") social capital of trust towards other groups and authority was weakened (Putnam 2000). In particular, the attitudes of "resourcefulness" and the tendency to "take matters into one's own hands", regardless of the official provisions, turned out to be a permanent component of the social mentality under patchwork capitalism and enabled adjustments at the micro level during the outbreak of the recent polycrisis.

(5) *Axiological patchwork.* The multiplicity and inner inconsistency of values shared by society further adds to the heterogeneity of the institutional design in these countries. In particular, contradictory values coexist at the national level, are remarkably dispersed and diverge with the principles of a market economy (Gardawski 1996; Nowak 1979; Lissowska 2020; Maszczyk et al. 2023). More specifically, the "ideal-typical" concept of axiological patchwork refers to a situation in which social cohesion falls apart and, as a consequence, particular autonomous segments of a society (social groups) become fully isolated or constitute closed monads with completely different value systems from one another. In social practice, such axiological patchworks can be found in societies so deeply divided ideologically that individual groups do not argue about ideas but completely ignore each other.

(6) *Low barriers and (transaction) costs of entry* to the patchwork order, which facilitate attachment of new organizations and institutions representing different, often divergent, inner logics. This feature makes patchwork capitalism, unlike most other heterogeneous types of capitalism, an *open-access order*.

2.2.3. Operation

As a result of the origins of, and the institutional design inherent to, the ideal type of patchwork capitalism, this model is prone to display several peculiarities in its operation. These include a proclivity to fall into a development drift, a high incidence of government failure (Buchanan and Tullock 1962), underdevelopment and a chronic crisis of public services, weak government support for social actors in crises and considerable room for spontaneous grassroots entrepreneurship or resourcefulness.

2.3. An empirical picture of patchwork capitalism

Having discussed the key characteristics of the ideal type of patchwork capitalism in CEE11 countries, we will now briefly depict its empirical features (the Weberian average or statistical type), based on the case of system transformation and the formation of a new socio-economic order in Poland. In terms of the real-life behaviour of the socio-economic order prevalent in Poland, since 2015 the country has witnessed developments that may shed empirical light on the link between the most salient features of patchwork capitalism and the management of interlinked crises by essential public services. In this context, the following should be highlighted:

(1) The acceleration in the state capture, and the capture of key areas of the economy, by politicians, strengthening the rent-seeking drive of the development model (Szanyi 2020) that was introduced by the class of key state asset holders, whose members freely decide what income they will derive from their functions (Szelenyi 2016).

(2) A marked deterioration in the enforcement of formally binding rules (including the unprecedented practice of breaching or "bypassing" the Constitution), guided by

decisions dictated by the current political interest of the governing right-wing party and made at the discretion of state officials.

(3) Mounting government failure, particularly manifested in declining state effectiveness and ability to respond quickly to unexpected threats and exogenous shocks. This is a result, among other things, of the longer-term process of the State's self-limitation in terms of its basic functions as a supplier of key public and merit goods through its decision to marketize some public services, thereby resulting in a chronic crisis within these services.

The patchwork nature of Poland's capitalism also influenced how its institutional architecture (in its formal layer) – particularly state institutions – responded to the major external shocks of the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. First, following the outbreak of the pandemic, the Government took immediate measures to contain the spread of the virus and protect the population against the resulting health hazards. These measures included implementing new ad hoc institutional arrangements (such as lockdowns, social distancing, remote work or distance learning) or adjusting existing practices (such as the use of quarantine and vaccination schemes) to the new crisis circumstances. The former category also included several packages of new regulations known as *tarcze antykryzysowe* (anti-crisis shields), offering those considered to be most affected by lockdowns – who were more often businesses than workers – countervailing budgetary transfers or tax (social security contribution) relief.

Second, the public healthcare system provided a lagged, incomplete, selective and inadequate response to the challenges unleashed by the pandemic. In particular, the outbreak revealed the system's vulnerability to adverse exogenous shocks due to its incoherent structure, multiple loopholes and mismatches, chronic underfunding and numerous organizational dysfunctions, among others; more globally, it revealed increased government failure. Under these circumstances, regular employees were compelled to show individual resourcefulness and undertake non-routine actions.

Lastly, the response to the mass arrival of refugees triggered by the invasion of Ukraine was characterized by a fairly low level of state involvement and delays in the actions of its agencies. This contrasts starkly with the unprecedented explosion of activity in Polish society, providing a strong premise for an ad hoc formation of civil society.

The empirical picture of patchwork capitalism would not be complete, however, without a brief assessment of its performance from a broader comparative perspective. In this regard, a number of aspects synthesizing the comparative economic and broader developmental performance of patchwork capitalism are particularly worth highlighting.[5] First, in terms of economic performance, since their accession to the EU from 2004 onwards, CEE11 economies have succeeded in substantially narrowing their economic development gap with the "core" EU countries (GDP per capita in purchasing power standards rose from 53 per cent of the average for the 28 EU Member States in 2004 to 73 per cent in 2019), while – as a group – simultaneously overtaking the economies of Greece and Portugal. It is of particular relevance that economic growth and the process of real income convergence in patchwork capitalism also made it the most resilient model of capitalism in the EU in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. The "pandemic recession" in this group was the shallowest and shortest, and the subsequent GDP rebound (which also accounts for the effects of the war in Ukraine) was the strongest in the EU (Maszczyk et al. 2023). However, the combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of Ukrainian war refugees can be seen in the deterioration of the key yardsticks of overall macroeconomic equilibrium in "patchwork" countries, particularly in terms of price stability and general government budget balance. Thus, accelerated inflation and rising fiscal imbalances became the main shock absorbers in these countries, providing a cushion against possible spillovers to the remaining parts of their economies.

[5] For a more in-depth discussion, see Maszczyk et al. (2023).

With regard to developmental performance, it should be noted that a fairly successful defence of GDP growth and employment levels in CEE11 countries during these crises entailed high economic and social costs and fuelled the highest inflation levels in the EU (Maszczyk et al. 2023). Moreover, patchwork model countries ranked among the least effective in dealing with the health hazards of the pandemic, recording the highest relative number of excess deaths and the highest health sacrifice coefficient compared with EU countries classified under other models of capitalism (Próchniak et al. 2022).[6]

The above indicates that a relatively good economic performance came at the expense of broadly understood social reproduction and achieving a set of longer-run socio-economic development goals, particularly those directed towards the challenges posed by interlinked crises (related to climate change, the environmental crisis, health hazards, demographic change, immigration and broadly conceived security, etc.). Simultaneously, the patchwork model has failed to alter the traditional pattern of its international competitive advantage (low costs and low added value, among others), which translates into a development drift (see Gardawski and Rapacki 2021) and further perpetuates the place of CEE11 countries in the international division of labour at the European (semi)periphery. Most importantly, the evolution of the patchwork order since 2004 has shown some signs of a "disassembly" of the welfare state in certain CEE11 countries (including Poland), accompanying the processes of liberalization, marketization and partial privatization of public services.

In light of the foregoing discussion and as a starting conjecture for the empirical part of this article, it may be argued that – seen through the lens of comparative institutional advantage – the model of patchwork capitalism exhibits fairly low resilience against, and low capacity to cope with, the challenges of sudden, unanticipated and interlinked crises. In the next section, we relate selected features of patchwork capitalism to the empirical study of the responses of public sector actors in Poland to the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of Ukrainian refugees. In the analysis that follows, we place particular emphasis on the social role of informal institutions and resourcefulness, and on the State's limited coordination capacities (strategic management), which proved to be most relevant to the experiences of public sector workers.

3. Strategic and operational responses to the crises in public services: Empirical analysis

The empirical analysis below will be confined to two exogeneous shocks: the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which prompted the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in Poland starting in February 2022. The effects of these two crises were most keenly felt in the working conditions of education, healthcare and social care workers. The analysis of qualitative interviews with workers, managers, trade unionists and state representatives allows us to explore social actors' responses to the crises observed in these three sectors from 2020 to 2023. It also allows us to link these responses to the aforementioned features of a patchwork order and to demonstrate their intersections with the chronic public services crisis. Social actors' responses comprise both top-down crisis measures adopted by the Government at the "strategic" level and bottom-up coping strategies developed at the "operational" workplace level by management and workers (Popic and Moise 2022). The analysis suggests that the crucial role of the latter was a result of the limited effectiveness and coordination of the former.

The weakness of the "strategic" level has already been discussed in the sections on the operation and performance of patchwork capitalism. The Polish Government's immediate reaction to the pandemic was to impose a relatively fast "hard" lockdown. However, in line with other CEE11 governments, it loosened the lockdown restrictions in the second and

[6] The health (or COVID) sacrifice coefficient was calculated as a ratio of the relative number of excess deaths and the difference between the average annual growth rate in 2010–19 and the 2020 growth rate (for details, see Próchniak et al. 2022).

subsequent phases of the pandemic in order to maintain economic activity, despite the rapidly growing human cost (Popic and Moise 2022). The strategic decisions in the sectors under consideration proved to be equally inconsistent. In healthcare, COVID-19 wards were created in regular hospitals in response to the increasing number of infections. These crucial units were staffed with doctors and nurses who were seconded from other departments and, therefore, often lacked experience in dealing with infectious diseases. Given that the healthcare system had been struggling with permanent staff shortages even before the pandemic, the reallocation of staff to combat COVID-19 resulted in significant delays in previously scheduled regular treatments, negatively affecting health outcomes (NIK 2023). Increased workload was to be offset by financial compensation for medical staff in direct contact with COVID-19 patients. In April 2020, the Government introduced a COVID-19 allowance of 100 per cent of a person's salary, up to a maximum of 15,000 Polish zloty.[7] However, many healthcare and social care workers were not eligible for the allowance and the rules on its distribution were unclear.

Another ineffective crisis solution that was sharply criticized by the Polish Supreme Audit Office (NIK 2023) was the decision made in the spring of 2020 to establish so-called "temporary hospitals", restricted to COVID-19 patients. Starting from the autumn of 2020, 33 such facilities were established. As the Polish Supreme Audit Office wrote in the summary of its report, "temporary hospitals for COVID-19 patients being set up in Poland from October 2020 on an unprecedented scale in Europe, were created without any plan, without a sound analysis of data on the epidemic situation and availability of medical staff, and without cost calculations." (NIK 2023 – our own translation).

Social care underwent more limited top-down reorganizations. In March 2020, based on the "Act on special measures related to the prevention, counteraction and suppression of COVID-19, other infectious diseases and crisis situations caused by them",[8] provincial governors issued several orders with regard to nursing homes under their jurisdiction (Glac and Zdebska 2020). These included a prohibition on residents leaving nursing home premises, except in situations requiring medical consultation, and a ban on visits to nursing homes. However, the effectiveness of these orders depended on the provincial governors' supervision of enforcement, which even before the pandemic had been limited, especially in the case of private facilities (NIK 2020). In addition, the ban on working in more than one workplace for medical personnel interacting with COVID-19 patients (introduced in April 2020) created staff shortages in nursing homes. Before the pandemic, most doctors and nurses worked in nursing homes only part-time to supplement their income and, therefore, chose to work in hospitals as their main workplace once these rules came into force. This again shows the shortcomings in strategic planning for crisis measures.

Of the three sectors, education underwent the most drastic reorganization of work, with a rapid transition to remote learning on 25 March 2020, without any material, procedural or organizational preparation stage. Remote learning was also reintroduced for shorter periods and in various forms during the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school years. As part of the decision to implement remote learning, teachers were granted a small disbursement (500 zloty), intended to cover the cost of computer equipment. Regulations on remote work and remote learning were based on non-strategic, situational amendments and legal patches. They have been under consultation with the social partners since spring 2020, but no labour law amendments were introduced until January 2023, except for ad hoc solutions included in anti-crisis regulations. The Supreme Audit Office report (NIK 2021) emphasized the lack of a systemic approach to remote learning, the ad hoc nature of decisions made by the Minister of Education and Science, and frequent changes in the law as factors that destabilized the operation of schools. It should be noted that all of the above-mentioned top-down crisis

[7] US$1 = 3.9 Polish zloty (2020).

[8] Original title: Ustawa o szczególnych rozwiązaniach związanych z zapobieganiem, przeciwdziałaniem i zwalczaniem COVID-19, innych chorób zakaźnych oraz wywołanych nimi sytuacji kryzysowych, *Dziennik Ustaw* 2020, Pos. 374, 2 March 2020.

responses were implemented with very little consultation with trade unions and employers' organizations and, most importantly, with no prior communication and preparation in terms of material or procedural resources (Czarzasty and Mrozowicki 2023).

As regards the mass arrival of refugees after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, there were no significant changes in the organization of work in social care or healthcare. In the months that followed, education was the sector most affected by this influx, since it significantly increased the number of Ukrainian pupils at all school levels. According to the data published by the Ministry of Education and Science, there were more than 180,000 Ukrainian pupils in the system by February 2024.[9] In a letter to the Ministry of Education and Science of March 2023, the Polish Commissioner for Human Rights drew attention to a number of unresolved problems related to the education of Ukrainian children in Polish schools, some of which clearly pointed to underfinancing and a lack of policy coherence (RPO 2023). The problems included staff shortages and financial shortfalls preventing the creation of preparatory classes for Ukrainian children, failure to modify the core curriculum and limited training for teachers to work with children suffering from war trauma. The Commissioner also highlighted the insufficient number of intercultural assistants, with other sources indicating that these have typically been refugee women, largely hired with non-state funds, in particular with grants from international organizations such as UNICEF (Kozakiewicz 2023). All of this points to the same pattern of non-strategic crisis management that was witnessed in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taking into account the weakness and incoherence of the top-down, macro-level strategic management of the crisis, the next section focuses on the meso- and micro-level crisis response. The analysis explores how the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of Ukrainian war refugees intersected and amplified chronic challenges for workers in essential public services. As the war-related humanitarian crisis impacted education more than healthcare and social care, such intersections were best observed through teachers' experiences. The analysis below focuses on three key dimensions of workers' responses to interlinked crises: (i) organizational chaos affecting the labour process, (ii) workers' self-organization and resourcefulness and (iii) the limitation of workers' mobilization potential through a tendency to normalize overlapping crises.

3.1. Organizational chaos: Management problems and the innovative potential of crises

In all our interviews we asked our informants about the start of the pandemic and about other types of crises that they had experienced after 2020. Following the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, we asked interviewees about its consequences for their lives and conditions of work.

Many of our respondents assessed their organizations' preparedness for the COVID-19 crisis negatively. Although the incidence and types of problems varied, organizational chaos prevailed at the beginning of the pandemic, supporting the idea that there was limited or no coordination of top-down crisis strategies.

> The first month was one big chaos. There was nothing, no gloves, no goggles, no … I mean, there was, but it was all … it was of multiple use. So, you went in, you should come out, take it off, disinfect it, throw it away, put another one on. (Focus group interview with nurses)

In the case of healthcare, hospitals in larger urban centres were generally better prepared than those in small towns, in terms of material resources, procedures and their overall assessment of ways to manage the crisis (NIK 2023). In some cases, the procedures were devised by the healthcare workers themselves – both doctors and nurses, in cooperation with junior ward management, decided how to organize work on particular

[9] Otwarte Dane, "Uczniowie uchodźcy z Ukrainy w podziale na typy szkół, klasy i powiaty_stan na 01.02.2024". https://dane.gov.pl/en/dataset/2711,uczniowie-uchodzcy-z-ukrainy.

wards. Top-level management had to rely on the commitment of lower-ranking workers owing to the chronic scarcity of staff and equipment and, most importantly, the lack of ready-made procedures and instructions from governing bodies. This evidence suggests that there was little top-down coordination even in the transfer of knowledge about COVID-19 through organizational structures.

In social care, we focused on the situation in nursing homes, which were particularly vulnerable to the spread of the virus owing to their residents' already weakened health conditions (Glac and Zdebska 2020). Homes were required to impose restrictions on family visits and on workers and residents leaving their premises. Moreover, staff had to be prepared to implement quarantines, during which they would have to stay at work without returning home. In addition, much therapeutic and physiotherapeutic care was reduced or suspended, resulting in both a deterioration in the residents' health and significant workload imbalances.

In education, the closure of schools forced management, teachers, pupils/students and their families to adapt rapidly to distance learning. Here, as in healthcare, the organizational and material situation of the workplace and a school's location were important factors in determining the smoothness of the transition. Schools and children's families in cities were better prepared for distance learning – in terms of equipment and competences – than those in smaller municipalities.

The analysis of teachers' collective responses to the unanticipated arrival of Ukrainian refugees in February 2022 suggests a similar pattern. This humanitarian crisis amplified existing chronic problems at schools related to underfinancing and staff shortages. The teachers who we interviewed complained of a lack of government support in terms of basic communication with Ukrainian pupils who did not speak Polish, which increased their workload, and a lack of teaching materials in the Ukrainian language:

> Once again, it has turned out that a Ukrainian child has been admitted to school, and rightly so, [...] but the conditions for the education of Polish children in these combined [Polish–Ukrainian] classes have ceased to be a problem for the Minister for Education and Science, they have ceased to be a problem for local government, they have become my problem. My problem, a teacher's problem. [...] So here the teachers are left to their own devices. (Expert interview, Polish Teacher's Union representative)

Although to a lesser extent, doctors and nurses also said that they had increased workloads and struggled with unclear regulations in the face of this humanitarian crisis. In particular, there was a lack of clarity surrounding regulations on the provision of medical services for Ukrainian citizens, including the recommendation of priority treatment, which led to tensions with Polish patients. Owing to long-term staff shortages, some caregivers and nurses also expressed fears about accepting Ukrainian care workers, which can be interpreted as fear of labour market competition. Other interviewees (including doctors) mentioned problems created by admitting Ukrainian medical staff to work in hospitals too quickly, without careful vetting.

3.2. Self-organization and resourcefulness in managing the crises

Organizational chaos, involving inconsistency and frequent changes in regulations and recommendations, as well as limited communication and coordination between different levels of crisis management, reflect some of the core features of the patchwork order, including the weakness of the institutional fabric and incoherence and lack of complementarity in the institutional architecture. On the meso and micro level of workers' responses to organizational crises caused by the pandemic, other characteristics of patchwork capitalism become evident, in particular the mismatch between formal and informal institutions resulting in the patterns of "resourcefulness" and "taking matters into one's own hands" in reaction to the shortcomings of the "strategic" level of crisis management.

The need to reorganize the labour process in an emergency led to increased innovativeness among workers to ensure the functioning of services. This was found, for example, in the hospital COVID-19 wards. As documented in interviews, owing to a lack of material, human and technological resources, their functioning depended on the ingenuity and efforts of the staff seconded to them.

> I was coming [to the COVID-19 ward] from the other ward – thrown in. At the beginning it was like that – the girls were setting up and moving beds to this ward from other wards on their own initiative. There wasn't even a team to organize it. It was all done by the nurses themselves. (Focus group interview with nurses)

In social care, limitations in everyday work also triggered the reorganization of the labour process in some cases. One common practice was to share duties related to the everyday care of nursing home residents with personnel who had not been involved in such activities before the pandemic. An extreme case of self-organization is illustrated by the following experience of one of the trade unionists employed as a caregiver in nursing homes:

> It was total chaos […]. The employees practically managed everything. We organized ourselves, we knew what was being done […]. So all this chaos, it was really prevented thanks to … internal organization among the caregivers. (Biographical narrative interview, caregiver, nursing home)

In primary schools, the authorities paid much more attention to developing new skills and competencies in online learning, but some cases of worker-driven innovations were also observed. Teachers frequently benefited from pre-pandemic networks of colleagues and organized themselves into small mutual support groups in which they started to learn how to use applications such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom. Interviewees mentioned producing original materials such as educational films on specific topics:

> I started recording, I first came out as an actress, an artist. I was teaching myself lessons, I was showing the children some things, Maja [the interviewee's daughter] was recording it, she was uploading it somewhere on – I don't even know where she uploaded it – but then it, it appeared in the lesson materials. (Biographical narrative interview, teacher)

We found a similar bottom-up innovation-based pattern in teachers' accounts of the response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugee children in their schools. They mentioned the widespread use of Google Translate to communicate with children and parents, the need to prepare new teaching materials and organize lessons in the Polish–Ukrainian mixed classes without any extra remuneration for additional efforts. Such accounts were less common in the other sectors owing to the smaller scale of the challenges that the arrival of Ukrainian war refugees posed for hospitals and nursing homes.

3.3. Protests and "patchwork normalization" in the face of interlinked crises

So far, our analysis confirms our first two hypotheses: the sectors examined were poorly prepared for interlinked crises and, in the absence of an efficient and coherent state coordination mechanism, the sectors' daily functioning largely depended on frontline workers' resourcefulness and informal networks. This outcome can be related to the institutional environment of patchwork capitalism, in which workers and recipients of public services are systematically confronted with institutional deficiencies, incoherence and poor coordination of crisis measures.

While bottom-up workers' responses and improvised innovations in reaction to the crises can also be found in other countries (McCallum 2022; Wiedner, Croft and McGivern 2020), a specific feature of the patchwork order is the long-term weakness of the strategic management of crises by the State and the relatively limited collective labour protests against deteriorating working conditions in the public sector. Essential workers' narratives about coping with the crises are dominated by individual and communitarian responses at the workplace level rather than the stories of collective resistance and discontent observed

in other research (e.g. in the United States – see McCallum 2022). Both the pandemic and the crisis caused by war in Ukraine favoured more community-oriented and solidaristic coping strategies; the latter were particularly strong in spontaneous bottom-up, self-organized support for Ukrainian refugees in the spring of 2022. However, where the crises overlapped, coping strategies based on the actions of individuals and small groups (work teams, family, neighbourhoods) were dominant.

References to collective protests varied across the sectors studied. Nurses and doctors were aware of trade union activity, the general protest and the "White Village" (protesters' camp) set up in front of the Polish Prime Minister's Office in Warsaw in the autumn of 2021. Most healthcare workers (especially nurses) sympathized with the demands but had not been directly involved in the protest. Some of the teachers we interviewed referred to their participation in the nationwide strike in 2019. However, there was general disappointment with the outcomes of that protest, which was frequently presented in our empirical exercise as a bitter lesson.

> I think the situation changed a lot after the [teachers'] strike [... in] April 2019. I noticed that our profession lost a lot of respect. We started to be treated, maybe not all of us, but a very large proportion of us, as non-workers, freeloaders. (Focus group interview with teachers)

There were exceptions to the general mood of disappointment with union activism in relation to nursing homes. One of the trade unionists interviewed said that the COVID-19 pandemic helped to consolidate trade unions in the sector through, among other things, the increased amount of time that caregivers spent with each other. It also brought to light problems related to working conditions, such as the failure to pay staff overtime when they stayed at facilities after they had been closed in order to protect residents.

Widespread labour shortages in schools, nursing homes and healthcare units, reflecting a chronic public services crisis, amplified the tendency among employees to adopt "exit" strategies (Hirschman 1970). Accordingly, employees' commitment to work declined or they left their jobs when workloads increased without any significant increase in wages. Although some of the problems in the public services were chronic, they were exacerbated by the interlinked crises, owing to the significant intensification of work, new challenges and – particularly acute in education and social care – the stagnation or even decline of real wages.

The main ways in which workers responded to the crisis reflects a process of normalization of the patchwork order, which reproduces itself despite chronic crises and overlapping shocks. Theories of social normalization describe the process of integrating crisis-driven patterns of thinking and behaviour into everyday routine actions (May and Finch 2009). The perpetuation of individual resourcefulness and the reliance on informal networks as the dominant ways of coping with crisis are consistent with the institutional design of the patchwork order and its other main feature, the pervasive incongruencies and lack of complementarity among the constituent parts of its institutional architecture, leading to weakness at the "strategic" level of crisis management. Thus, our third hypothesis is confirmed in that overlapping exogeneous shocks have not led to changes in the patchwork organization of public services. In the patchwork institutional environment, citizens, workers and recipients of public services are expected to be resilient and resourceful enough to cope with external and internal shocks in the absence of top-down coordinated support from the State.

4. Conclusions

High-quality, well-managed and accessible public services are crucial for the daily reproduction of society. However, market reforms, which were intended to reduce the costs of service provision, introduced competition mechanisms and cost-effective New Public Management principles that have in many countries contributed to a chronic public

services crisis, exacerbated by successive economic, political and health shocks (Kozek 2011; Keune 2020; Mezzadri 2022). The manifestations of this crisis include persistent staff shortages and work overload, with a consequent deterioration in the availability and quality of services. This particularly affects economically disadvantaged groups who are unable to benefit from fully paid services. It is therefore reasonable to argue that the quick succession of exogenous crises in Europe since 2020, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, have overlapped with and exacerbated this long-term public services crisis.

These "interlinked crises" could ultimately be referred to as a crisis of "social reproduction" (Mezzadri 2022). The long-term familialist features of the Polish welfare state, reinforced by the *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* Government (Inglot, Szikra and Raț 2022; Meardi and Guardiancich 2022), and the core characteristics of patchwork capitalism have contributed to the management of crisis primarily at the family or primary group level. Meanwhile, the State's policies, which could alleviate the consequences of the crises, remain inconsistent. Nevertheless, the general disillusionment with the ineffectiveness of the State did not result in a decline of citizens' support for state-funded essential public services, which remained high and relatively stable after the pandemic (Gardawski et al. 2022; Sadura and Sierakowski 2023).

While the public services crisis seems to be a universal phenomenon in Europe, its manifestations and consequences and the responses to it differ across countries (Keune 2020). In this article, we have chosen to look at the case of Poland, which, we argue, has been particularly affected by two exogenous shocks: the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. These crises have overlapped not only with the ongoing public services crisis, but also with each other, both chronologically and in the similarities of the challenges they have posed for public sector workers in education, healthcare and social care. This article has sought to understand the relationship between the institutional and social foundations of the socio-economic order in Poland and the ways in which interlinked crises affecting public services are managed, focusing on primary schools, hospitals and nursing homes. Using the ideal type of patchwork capitalism developed in our previous research (Rapacki 2019; Gardawski and Rapacki 2021), we have addressed three research questions regarding (i) the preparedness of the education, healthcare and social care sectors for the COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of refugees from Ukraine; (ii) the crisis responses of the State and workers; and (iii) the impact of the crisis responses on public services.

The theoretical and empirical analysis presented in this article complements existing literature on the relationship between emerging models of capitalism in CEE11 and transformations in public services (Hardy 2009; Kozek 2011; Keune 2020; Popic 2023). The responses of the State, workers and managers to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the humanitarian crisis fit well with the model of patchwork capitalism. The weakness of the "strategic" management of the crisis, which translated into poor preparedness in the sectors studied (and the State as a whole) for the pandemic and the crisis caused by the war in Ukraine, is linked to the key features of institutional design in this model, such as the fundamental weakness of the institutional fabric, limited complementarity of elements in the institutional architecture and the coexistence of diverse coordination mechanisms in various areas of social life. The functioning of this institutional patchwork also results in the specificity of the chronic public services crisis in Poland, which is compounded by three decades of reforms (introducing liberalization, commercialization and privatization). The idealized market model of public services, combined with an emphasis on lifting restrictions relatively rapidly during the pandemic, are also consistent with the ideal type of patchwork capitalism, which prioritizes economic performance over the quality of work, life and services, and proved wholly inadequate to containing the human costs of the COVID-19 crisis.

As regards the crisis responses of workers and lower management, we have also found a correspondence with the institutional design of patchwork capitalism. In particular, the mismatch between formal and informal institutions is key to explaining these responses, which have the effect of "patching up" the deficiencies of strategic crisis management through individual and collective resourcefulness and spontaneous self-organization. These have been identified as common and established ways of dealing with crises in the patchwork order (see Sitek 1997; Rudnicki 2023). A deep-rooted scepticism about the effectiveness of the State and distrust of formal institutions favour bottom-up solutions. However, as documented in the last part of our analysis, workers' collective responses rarely translated into protests, strikes and overt resistance aimed at changing the "rules of the game" – that is, "voice" in the sense of Hirschman (1970). Compared with other European countries, labour protests during the pandemic period were extremely rare in Poland (Vandaele 2021). This combined absence of coherent and effective state and associational responses seems to reflect the widening gap between formal and informal institutions in the context of exogeneous shocks, typical of patchwork orders, which certainly deserves further investigation. The long-term importance of informal relations within small groups in and beyond the workplace for the daily "operational" management of crises favours the persistence or normalization of the status quo rather than radical change or the bottom-up formation of new socio-economic models.

Future research should explore the extent to which the types and sequences of workers' collective responses in Poland were also present in other CEE countries. This would shed more light on the relationship between the design and operation of patchwork capitalism and the ways that social actors at various levels of organizational structures in essential public services manage crises.

Acknowledgements

This article was prepared as part of the project NCN OPUS 19 "COV-WORK: Socio-economic consciousness, work experiences and coping strategies of Poles in the context of the post-pandemic crisis", funded by the National Science Centre in Poland (NCN project number UMO-2020/37/B/HS6/00479). We would like to thank the reviewers and editors for their valuable comments, which significantly improved the quality of the article.

References

Amable, Bruno. 2003. *The Diversity of Modern Capitalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bohle, Dorothee, and Béla Greskovits. 2012. *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Braudel, Fernand. 1969. *Écrits sur l'histoire*. Paris: Flammarion.

Buchanan, James M., and Gordon Tullock. 1962. *The Calculus of Consent: Logical Foundations of Constitutional Democracy*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Czarzasty, Jan, and Adam Mrozowicki. 2023. "The Nail in the Coffin? Pandemic and Social Dialogue in Poland". *Employee Relations* 45 (7): 62–78. https://doi.org/10.1108/ER-06-2022-0289.

Czerniak, Adam. Forthcoming. "Coordination Mechanisms in Patchwork Capitalism – Example of the Housing Area". *Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology* 12 (25), accepted article pending publication.

David, Paul A. 1994. "Why are Institutions the 'Carriers of History'? Path Dependence and the Evolution of Conventions, Organizations and Institutions". *Structural Change and Economic Dynamics* 5 (2): 205–220. https://doi.org/10.1016/0954-349X(94)90002-7.

Gardawski, Juliusz. 1996. *Przyzwolenie ograniczone: Robotnicy wobec rynku i demokracji*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Gardawski, Juliusz, Adam Mrozowicki, Jacek Burski, Jan Czarzasty, and Mateusz Karolak. 2022. *Polacy pracujący w czasie COVID-19.* Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

Gardawski, Juliusz, and Ryszard Rapacki. 2021. "Patchwork Capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe: A New Conceptualization". *Warsaw Forum of Economic Sociology* 12 (24): 7–106. https://econjournals.sgh.waw.pl/wfes/article/view/3399.

Gibbs, Graham R. 2007. *Analyzing Qualitative Data.* London: SAGE.

Glac, Wojciech, and Ewelina Zdebska. 2020. "Sytuacja pracowników domów pomocy społecznej w okresie epidemii koronawirusa SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) w Polsce". *Praca Socjalna* 35 (2): 129–142. https://doi.org/10.5604/01.3001.0014.1493.

Greer, Ian, and Charles Umney. 2022. *Marketization: How Capitalist Exchange Disciplines Workers and Subverts Democracy*. London: Bloomsbury.

Hall, Peter A., and David Soskice, eds. 2001. *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundation of Comparative Advantage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hardy, Jane. 2009. *Poland's New Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Hirschman, Albert O. 1970. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Inglot, Tomasz, Dorottya Szikra, and Cristina Raț. 2022. *Mothers, Families, or Children? Family Policy in Poland, Hungary, and Romania, 1945–2020.* Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.

Kang, David C. 2002. *Crony Capitalism: Corruption and Development in South Korea and the Philippines*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Keune, Maarten. 2020. "Overview: Employment, Job Quality and Labour Relations in Europe's Public Sector since the Crisis". In *Working under Pressure: Employment, Job Quality and Labour Relations in Europe's Public Sector since the Crisis,* edited by Maarten Keune, Nuria Elena Ramos Martin and Mikkel Mailand, 7–34. Brussels: ETUI.

King, Lawrence P., and Szelényi, Iván. 2005. "Post-Communist Economic Systems." In *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*. 2nd ed., edited by Neil J. Smelser and Richard Swedberg, 205–230. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kozakiewicz, Karolina. 2023. "Asystenci międzykulturowi w szkołach. 'Było rewelacyjnie, jest przeciętnie, będzie tragicznie'". *wyborcza.pl*, 1 September 2023. https://wroclaw.wyborcza.pl/wroclaw/7,35771,30139795,asystenci-miedzykulturowi-w-szkolach-bylo-rewelacje-teraz.html.

Kozek, Wiesława. 2011. *Gra o jutro usług publicznych w Polsce*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

Lawrence, Michael, Scott Janzwood, and Thomas Homer-Dixon. 2022. "What Is a Global Polycrisis? And How Is It Different from a Systemic Risk?", Version 2.0, Discussion Paper No. 2022-4. Victoria, BC: Cascade Institute.

Lissowska, Maria. 2020. "Beliefs and Preferences of a Society as a Background for Shaping Institutional Structures", manuscript. Warsaw: SGH Warsaw School of Economics (internal access).

Maszczyk, Piotr, Maria Lissowska, Mariusz Próchniak, Ryszard Rapacki, and Aleksander Sulejewicz. 2023. "Development Trajectories of CEE Countries: A Tentative Assessment of the Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic and the War in Ukraine". In *Report of the SGH*

Warsaw School of Economics and the Economic Forum 2023, 13–39. Warsaw: Warsaw School of Economics.

May, Carl, and Tracy Finch. 2009. "Implementing, Embedding, and Integrating Practices: An Outline of Normalization Process Theory". *Sociology* 43 (3): 535–554. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038509103208.

McCallum, Jamie K. 2022. *Essential: How the Pandemic Transformed the Long Fight for Worker Justice*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Meardi, Guglielmo, and Igor Guardiancich. 2022. "Back to the Familialist Future: The Rise of Social Policy for Ruling Populist Radical Right Parties in Italy and Poland". *West European Politics* 45 (1): 129–153. https://doi.org/10.1080/01402382.2021.1916720.

Mezzadri, Alessandra. 2022. "Social Reproduction and Pandemic Neoliberalism: Planetary Crises and the Reorganisation of Life, Work and Death". *Organization* 29 (3): 379–400. https://doi.org/10.1177/13505084221074042.

Morin, Edgar, and Anne Brigitte Kern. 1999. *Homeland Earth: A Manifesto for the New Millennium*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Mrozowicki, Adam. 2023. "Innowacja, kontrola, opór, normalizacja: Pracownicze sposoby radzenia sobie z pandemicznym kryzysem w miejscu pracy". *Przegląd Socjologiczny* 72 (3): 9–38. https://doi.org/10.26485/PS/2023/72.3/1.

Myant, Martin, and Jan Drahokoupil. 2011. *Transition Economies: Political Economy in Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

NIK (Poland, Supreme Audit Office). 2020. "Pozorny nadzór państwa nad placówkami świadczącymi opiekę całodobową". 22 April 2020. https://www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/nadzor-nad-placowkami-opieki-calodobowej.html

———. 2021. "Funkcjonowanie szkół w sytuacji zagrożenia COVID-19". KNO.430.006.2021. Warsaw. https://www.nik.gov.pl/plik/id,25380,vp,28141.pdf

———. 2023. "14 zbędnych szpitali tymczasowych za ponad 600 mln zł". 12 September 2023. https://www.nik.gov.pl/aktualnosci/14-zbednych-szpitali-tymczasowych.html.

Nölke, Andreas, and Arjan Vliegenthart. 2009. "Enlarging the Varieties of Capitalism: The Emergence of Dependent Market Economies in East Central Europe". *World Politics* 61 (4): 670–702. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0043887109990098.

Nowak, Stefan. 1979. "System wartości społeczeństwa polskiego". *Studia Socjologiczne* 4 (75): 155–173.

Peters, John. 2012. "Neoliberal Convergence in North America and Western Europe: Fiscal Austerity, Privatization, and Public Sector Reform". *Review of International Political Economy* 19 (2): 208–235. https://doi.org/10.1080/09692290.2011.552783.

Popic, Tamara. 2023. *Health Reforms in Post-Communist Eastern Europe: The Politics of Policy Learning*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.

Popic, Tamara, and Alexandru D. Moise. 2022. "Government Responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic in Eastern and Western Europe: The Role of Health, Political and Economic Factors". *East European Politics* 38 (4): 507–528. https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2022.2122050.

Próchniak, Mariusz, Maria Lissowska, Piotr Maszczyk, Ryszard Rapacki, and Rafał Towalski. 2022. "Differentiation of Inflation Rates in the European Union vs. Labour Markets

and Economic Growth – Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic". In *Report of the SGH Warsaw School of Economics and the Economic Forum 2022*, 13–49. Warsaw: Warsaw School of Economics.

Putnam, Robert D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Rapacki, Ryszard, ed. 2019. *Diversity of Patchwork Capitalism in Central and Eastern Europe.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Rapacki, Ryszard, and Juliusz Gardawski. 2019. "Istota i najważniejsze cechy kapitalizmu patchworkowego w Polsce i krajach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej". In *Kapitalizm patchworkowy w Polsce i krajach Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej,* edited by Ryszard Rapacki, 343–353. Warsaw: Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne.

RPO (Rzecznik Praw Obywatelskich). 2023. "Nierozwiązane problemy edukacji dzieci i młodzieży z Ukrainy: Min. Przemysław Czarnek odpowiada RPO". 21 March 2023. Warsaw: Commissioner for Human Rights. https://bip.brpo.gov.pl/pl/content/rpo-mein-problemy-edukacja-uczniowie-ukraina-odpowiedz.

Rudnicki, Paweł. 2023. *Kto, jak nie my? Wspólnota i działanie na Dworcu Głównym we Wrocławiu (marzec-kwiecień 2022)*. Wrocław: Naukowe Dolnośląskiej Szkoły Wyższej.

Sadura, Przemysław, and Sławomir Sierakowski. 2023. *Społeczeństwo populistów*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyka Polityczna.

Sitek, Wojciech Józef. 1997. *Wspólnota i zagrożenie: Wrocławianie wobec wielkiej powodzi*. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Szanyi, Miklós. 2020. "The Three Archetype European Historic Development Models and their Impact in East-Central Europe", IWE Working Paper No. 261. Budapest: Institute of World Economics, Centre for Economic and Regional Studies.

Szelenyi, Iván. 2016. "Weber's Theory of Domination and Post-Communist Capitalisms". *Theory and Society* 45 (1): 1–24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-015-9263-6.

Vandaele, Kurt. 2021. "Applauded 'Nightingales' Voicing Discontent: Exploring Labour Unrest in Health and Social Care in Europe before and since the COVID-19 Pandemic". *Transfer: European Review of Labour and Research* 27 (3): 399–411. https://doi.org/10.1177/10242589211031103.

Vigh, Henrik. 2008. "Crisis and Chronicity: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuous Conflict and Decline". *Ethnos* 73 (1): 5–24. https://doi.org/10.1080/00141840801927509.

Wiedner, Rene, Charlotte Croft, and Gerry McGivern. 2020. "Improvisation during a Crisis: Hidden Innovation in Healthcare Systems". *BMJ Leader* 4 (4): 185–188. https://doi.org/10.1136/leader-2020-000259.