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ZNACZENIE INSTYTUCJI NIEFORMALNYCH W ZRÓWNOWAŻONYM ROZWOJU

Streszczenie. Celem artykułu jest zaprezentowanie roli instytucji nieformalnych dla możliwości zrównoważonego rozwoju. Należy podkreślić, iż pojawiająca się niepewność behawioralna wynikająca z niedoskonałości mechanizmu rynkowego uniemożliwia optymalną alokację. Stan taki utrudnia osiągnięcie warunków typowych dla zrównoważonego rozwoju. Prawo, umowa czy ekonomiczna racjonalność są konieczne, ale nie są warunkiem wystarczającym dla zapewnienia długotrwałego rozwoju. Z tego też powodu powinny być uzupełnione o kapitał społeczny, który obecnie postrzegany jest za główny czynnik umożliwiający zawieranie transakcji rynkowych.

Słowa kluczowe: instytucje nieformalne, instytucje formalne, kapitał społeczny, zaufanie, zrównoważony rozwój, rozwój społeczno-gospodarczy

THE ROLE OF INFORMAL INSTITUTIONS IN SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

Summary. The aim of the article is to present the role of informal institutions in Sustainable Economy. It should be emphasized that occurring random and behavioral uncertainty resulting from the unreliability of the market prevents the resources to be optimally allocated. Those factors disturb the stable economic development and contribute to the lack of coherence. The rule, the agreement and the economic rationality are the necessary, but not sufficient condition for securing economic and social order. Hence they should be complemented with social capital, which – being an informal institution – is perceived as the main factor making market transactions possible.

Key words: informal institutions, formal institutions, social capital, trust, sustainable economy, social-economic development

1. Introduction

Considerations about proper development of institutions in the process of economic growth have become in recent years, particularly during nowadays global economic crisis, the dominant direction of research. Those thoughts are not only about formal institutions. Though, of course, their role is not to be underestimated, as recalled G.W. Kołodko referring to the history of the Polish road to the market economy. Well, as he stated, "both the collapse in the early 90's and great transitional depression that followed, proved conclusively that one-sided orientation towards liberalization (of prices, trade, entry and exit of economic entities) and privatization, neglecting the importance of building the institution for the smooth functioning and development of market economy, cost all of us [...] a lot"¹. Now – if it applies to economists or politicians - no one disputes the role of institutions. A word of objection or denial of their importance cannot be even heard from the supporters of the neoliberal approach, who believe in almost perfect "invisible hand of a market", which – in their opinion - is a sufficient instrument to ensure market balance and simultaneously eliminates all the problems and shortcomings of the market. Let us only recall that the institutions were previously treated by them as "black boxes".

The issue is that the economic crisis also highlighted that in the sphere of management are equally important, formal and informal, often even intangible institutions. Building, developing and modifying those informal ones, although it is laborious, because of the long-term process, is necessary also in the aspect of sustainable development, which the concept is a response to the negative consequences of internationalization and globalization process. This concept aims at balancing economic, ecological and social priorities, balancing material and financial capital with social capital which is an informal institution on global, national, regional and on local level.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is to indicate the role of institutions, including in particular the "informal rules of the game" like social capital in sustainable social-economic growth in Poland. Although there is no doubt that formal institutions play a significant role in this process /e.g. property rights, contract enforcement mechanisms and organizations responsible for market transactions/, without building and enforcing basic resources inherent in social relations, it is not possible to accumulate other forms of capitals and reap benefits from them by all participants of social and economic life. Moreover, as aptly observes W. M.

¹ Kołodko G. W.: Instytucje i polityka a wzrost gospodarczy. „Ekonomista”, No. 5, 2004, p. 609-634.

Orłowski, the quality of the institutional environment is one of the major determinants responsible for the development chances of countries from Central and Eastern Europe².

2. Institutions – historical outline, definition and types

Institutional stream that has developed since the late nineteenth century, in opposition to schools focusing on the classical paradigm, drew close attention to the importance of institutions in the sphere of management and the need for interdisciplinary research (Sobiech-Grabka, 2010)³. Representatives of this school of thought saw the need to integrate economics with other social sciences, because - in their opinion – one should not artificially isolate the economic phenomena from social ones. Economic sciences should also benefit from the rich achievements of sociology, psychology, organization and management theory, political science or even law. For the first time this approach was presented in the work of T. Veblen called "The theory of enterprise" published in 1904. Institutionalists were convinced that the basic mistake of classics and their later followers is suspending a human being in a vacuum and analyzing only atomistic homo oeconomicus model /so called economic man/. They were convinced that a human being is guided by limited rationality and in this way it behaves like homo sociologicus /social man/, who takes into account not only economic matters, but also habits, emotions or values. As rightly perceives J. Wiśniewski, "[...] going beyond the category of homo oeconomicus is tantamount to accepting the thesis that the economic criteria of rationality are inadequate, so they do not fully reflect the rationality of man acting in economic field"⁴. Social unit has a complex nature and is rooted in a specific environment that determines its behavior. One should not forget that human being is dichotomous, full of contradictions, "and the dichotomy of rational and non-rational, ceremonial human behavior is revealed by the inductive analysis of the economy." In addition, the researcher states that a man is a complicated subject of analysis, because it does not work like a counting machine, which processes the data in order to optimize choices and actions. What's more, the action can also be caused by non-economic factors. One can even indicate here the uncertainty and mistrust, which can lead to limitation of action or even its abandonment, and their occurrence will incur substantial transaction costs. For this reason, T.

²Orłowski W. M.: W pogoni za straconym czasem. Wzrost gospodarczy w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej 1950-2030. PWE, Warszawa 2010, p. 213.

³Sobiech-Grabka K. G.: Współczesne szkoły myślenia ekonomicznego w makroekonomii, [in:] Skawińska E., Sobiech-Grabka K. G., Nawrot K. A.: Makroekonomia, Teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty gospodarki rynkowej. PWE, Warszawa 2010, p. 41-42.

⁴Wiśniewski J.: Homo oeconomicus i ograniczenia jego racjonalności, Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici No. 295, Toruń 1995, p. 8.

Veblen hoped in institutions which are identified with traditions, norms and customs and which are appointed for life, in order to facilitate the functioning of various social groups⁵.

After a period of popularity in the early decades of the twentieth century institutionalism was regarded as a dying stream of economic thought. To increasing interest in this direction contributed after the II World War such researches like J.K. Galbraith and G. Myrdal⁶. Those neoinstitutionalists were convinced that economics is a science of moral and it cannot ignore evaluation process. The proposal for a synthesis of neoclassical economics and institutionalism gave rise to New Institutional Economics (NIE), in which one can distinguish the following theories: 1) property rights, 2) transaction costs, 3) agency⁷. The figure below presents the schools, which in their deliberations refer to the category of institutions.

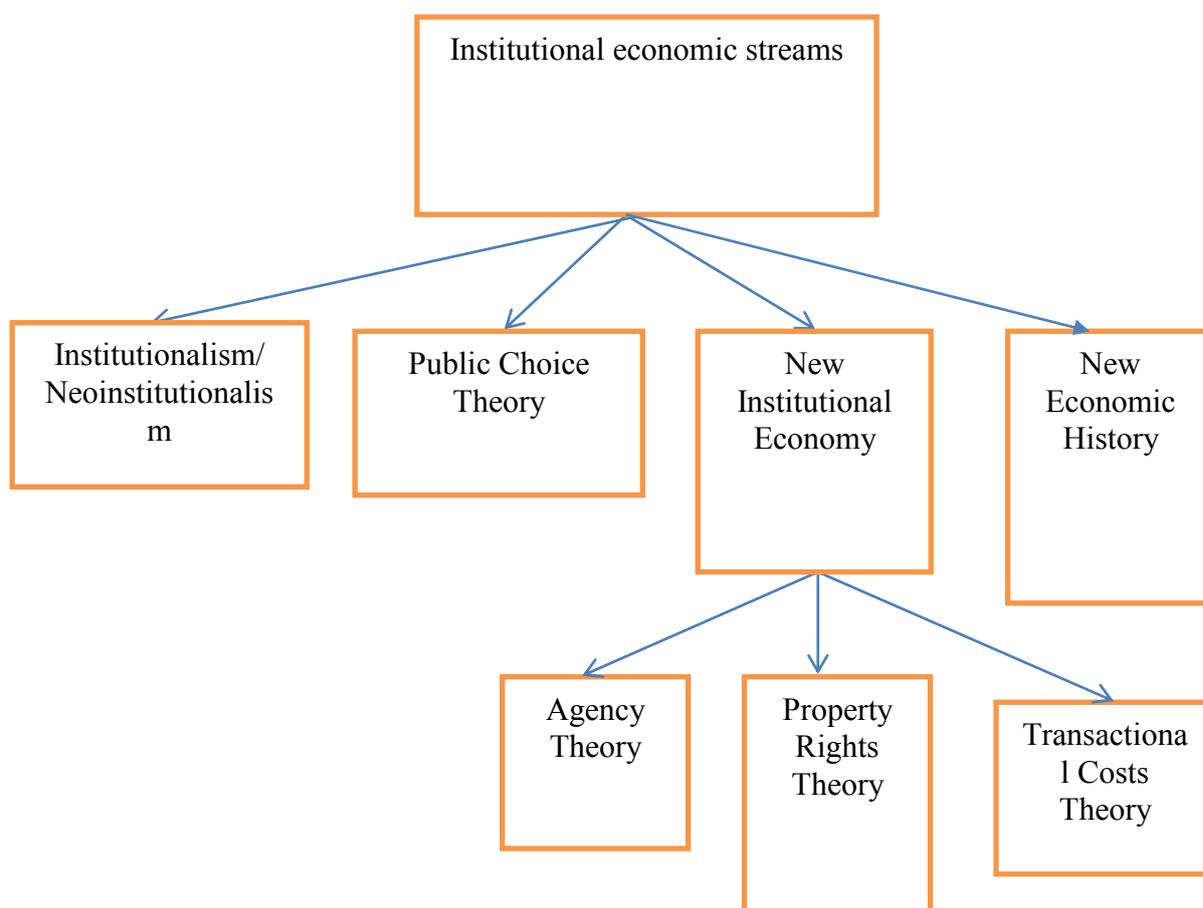


Fig. 1. Schools which invoke to institutions

⁵ Veblen T.: *The Place of Science in Modern Civilisation and Other Essays*, New York 1919.

⁶ Sobiech-Grabka, op. cit., p. 41-42.

⁷ Sobiech K., Woźniak B.: *Ekonomia instytucjonalna*, [in:] Ratajczak M. (ed.): *Współczesne teorie ekonomiczne*. Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Poznaniu, Poznań 2005, p. 133-34.

Rys.1. Szkoły nurtu instytucjonalnego

Source: Sobiech K., Woźniak B.: *Ekonomia instytucjonalna*, [in:] Ratajczak M. (ed.): *Współczesne teorie ekonomiczne*. Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej w Poznaniu, Poznań 2005, p. 133-34.

Although institutional stream has failed to create a compact theory, its merit is a "revival of discussion on the fundamental issues of economics: its subject, relation between economy and society or the importance of institutions in the processes of management. Institutionalism also created the basis for the integration of social sciences in relation to economic processes"⁸.

It should also be noted that during the development of this stream its representatives proposed various definitions of the institution. Today, however, most researchers refer to this presented by D. North (NIE representative). In his meaning institutions are "constraints that shape the political, economic and social interactions. They contain both informal constraints - sanctions, taboos, customs, traditions or rules of conduct - the formal rules - constitution, law, property rights"⁹ (North, 1994). This definition highlights that both formal and informal institutions are a kind of constraints that govern the economic, social and political relations. The following table presents the basic division of the institutions.

Table 1

Types of institutions

Formal rules	political (judicial) rules
	economic rules that define property rights
	contracts
Informal rules	conventions
	norms of behavior
	self-liberate codes of behavior

Source: D.C. North, *The Process of Economic Change*, UNU/WIDER, March 1997, p. 7.

It should be also noted here that formal institutions are the subject of conscious and rational change, mainly because of a legislative nature due to the relatively easy way in which they can be identified and explored - the formal rules or systems of rules control behaviors or restrict them. In turn, these informal rules are recognized by the community and form a part of cultural heritage. As D. Kuder adds, "the criterion of division into these two

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ North D. C.: *Economic Performance Through Time*, *American Economic Review*, No 84/1994, p. 359-368.

categories - formal and informal institutions - is a record of rules: if institutions are saved and written, their goal is to facilitate transactions between individuals; unsaved extend the swap of transactions through that they increase or modify scope of application of formal rules. Formal institutions have a much greater variability than informal ones. It should be emphasized, that there must be a correspondence between the formal and informal institutions in the economy, since its absence leads to corruption, insecurity and serious disturbances in sustainability¹⁰.

3. Social capital as informal institution

It is worth noticing that on the basis of the above division of institutions one may say that the resource of such values like trust, credibility or loyalty inherent in social relations, commonly identified with the social capital is permanently inscribed in the institutional mainstream. There it is no doubt that social capital can be identify with informal norms which control behavior of actors. In addition, it plays a role of the binder, which connects institutions in such a way that they together form a functional whole. Social capital is the common good, in fact it reduces the uncertainty inherent in all economic transactions. One may recall here that New Institutional Economics assumes that "good" institutions are those which form the structure of incentives to reduce the uncertainty in the economic sphere and support market, thereby reducing transaction costs generate better economic results¹¹. It is undoubtedly that without social capital, the reproduction of interaction requires incurring transaction costs, so continued investments to coordinate the independent decision of participants in the exchange market. Due to social capital, costs that are saved can be allocated for investment purposes. In this way social capital get the obvious economic connotation. On the below picture the influence of social capital on the level of transactional costs is shown.

¹⁰ Kuder, D.: Instytucje wspierające wzrost gospodarczy w wymiarze teoretycznym, [in:] Kopycińska D. (ed.): Polityka ekonomiczna państwa we współczesnych systemach gospodarczych. Wydawnictwo Print Group, Szczecin 2008, p. 55-64.

¹¹ Ibidem.

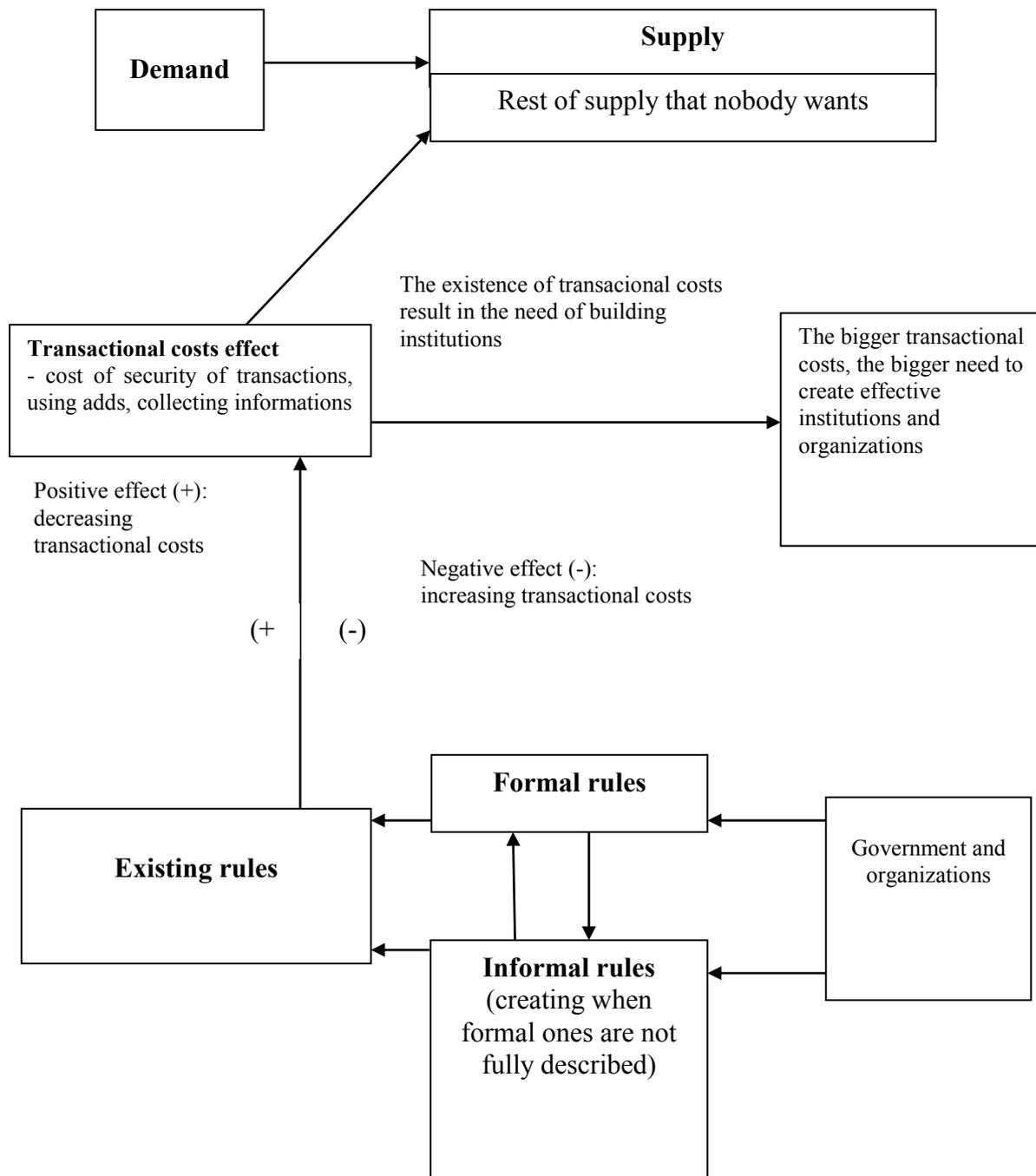


Fig. 2. The impact of institutions on the level of transaction costs

Rys.2. Wpływ instytucji na poziom kosztów transakcyjnych

Source: Horodecka A.: Instytucjonalizm i podejście instytucjonalne do polityki gospodarczej. „Polityka Gospodarcza”, No. 5-6, 2002, p. 132.

It should be also noted that social capital is not usually included in the set of assumptions of homo oeconomicus model. Indeed, this model ignores transaction costs. This means that

the classical concept of the invisible hand as a tool to maximize social welfare should be complemented by the existence of social capital. So taken by the classics the assumption of perfectly operating market mechanism, which always leads to balance, is insufficient to regulate collective action. One may say here that care about self-interest - which is one of the basic assumption of homo oeconomicus model - is not a sufficient condition for the coordination of individual's social action. James Coleman points out that "only under conditions of far-reaching consensus an action arises spontaneously from individual person's purposes. In any other situation, spontaneous activity does not occur, because at least one person wants something else"¹². Moreover, if man is not sure of partner behavior, he will avoid working with others even if he expects the benefits from it¹³.

Having imperfect knowledge about the market where the conditions are different from those based in idealized model of perfect competition, as well as maintaining a potential partner or competitor, is determined by the decisions of individuals. Uncertainty of "other side" action may limit the scope of cooperation or provoke a worse choice of solutions. Therefore, to cooperate in the absence of certainty is only possible when one will get trust, so the key resource of social capital. As it is noted by P. Dasgupta, "trust [...] is the correct prediction of the activities of other people that have an impact on the operation of the unit in a situation when the choice of action must be made before it will be possible to observe the actions of others"¹⁴. In a situation where we need to take action despite the uncertainties and risks occurring, trust comes at the forefront. This value becomes the elementary strategy of coping with uncertainty and inability to control the future. It can be regarded as a simplifying strategy that allows individuals to adapt to a complex social environment, and thus benefits from a wider pool of possibilities¹⁵. Trust is necessary, when we are dealing with ignorance - whether in the field of technical expertise, or the thoughts and intentions of others. Though ignorance is in fact always opens the field for skepticism, or at least caution, which may restrict farming activities in the sphere of management. As rightly concludes A. Giddens, trust is "a device by which we cope with the freedom of others, but the first condition for the existence of trust is not a lack of power, but the lack of full information"¹⁶. Therefore, one can say that social capital, including trust, determine the scope and manner of operation of the market and is a prerequisite for the occurrence of market exchange. As an informal institution it is at the same time a kind of regulator of social relations that determines human behavior,

¹² Coleman, J.S.: Podstawy decyzji zbiorowych, [in:] Kempy, M., Szmatka, J.: Współczesne Teorie Wymiany Społecznej. PWN, Warszawa 1992, p. 345.

¹³ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴ Dasgupta, P.: Trust as a commodity, [in:] Gambetta D. G. (ed.): Trust: Making and Breaking Cooperative Relations. Basil Blackwell, New York 1988, p. 51.

¹⁵ Earle T. C., Cvetkovich G. T.: Social trust: Toward a cosmopolitan society. Praeger, Westport 1995, p. 38.

¹⁶ Giddens A.: Konsekwencje nowoczesności. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2008, p. 6.

both at the level of individual and group activity. Activities undertaken in the economic, social or cultural life. This informal institution is one of the main factors of creation, operation and improvement of social order¹⁷.

4. Social capital resources in Poland

Nowadays, representatives of the economics have no doubt that the greatest opportunities for development are in those countries where investors may use freely property rights, monetary and fiscal policies are rooted in permanent institutions and economic incentives are associated with social objectives¹⁸. As M. G. Woźniak stated, the durability and stability of the institutions of a country depends on its investment attractiveness¹⁹. However, considering the impact of institutions on the economic growth one cannot omit those of an informal nature. Thus, studies made for example by S. Knack and P. Keefer, F. Fukuyama or R. Putnam shows the role of social capital on social-economic development. These studies proved a positive and significant relationship between such variables as trust, social norms and economic growth. Moreover, D. Kuder adds that informal institutions positively and significantly affect the quality of formal institutions²⁰. The following table presents the pro-efficiency role of social capital on economic, social sphere and also health care, education system and politics.

Table 2

The benefits of social capital

1. Economic sphere	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) ensures economic growth b) enables the creation of strong and consistent organizations in the private sector c) increases the possibility of adaptation to the new organizational and technical conditions d) reduces transaction costs e) reduces the problem of "free riders" f) contributes to the growth of living standards of people and households g) allows to find work
2. Social sphere and health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) affects the growth of well-being, decreases stress levels and reduces the incidence of depression
3. Sphere of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provides better results in science

¹⁷Przybysz J., Sauś J.: Kapitał społeczny. Szkice socjologiczno-ekonomiczne. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2004, p.18.

¹⁸ Kuder D.: op. cit., p. 55-64.

¹⁹ Woźniak M. G.: op. cit., p. 40-54.

²⁰ Kuder D.: op. cit., p. 55-64.

4. Sphere of politics	a) promotes democratic social order b) allows efficient self-organization of groups c) provides more efficient institutions

Source: own work based on: M. Theiss, *Relatives - Friends - Citizens. Social Capital and local social policy*. Wydawnictwo A. Marshall, Torun 2007, p. 76-101.

Due to such vital importance of social capital in all aspects of life, unequivocal opinion of researchers that its level is too low in Poland, may negatively affect both the physical condition and health of individuals, innovativeness and competitiveness, and consequently also the level of prosperity in the country, and therefore sustainable development. As an example of a bad situation may be such indicators like: low voter turnout, the lack of knowledge on political issues, the low participation in social organizations and in public meetings which aim is to realize common good, low level of trust to other people, increased crime or too little interactivity between participants in social networks²¹. As it is pointed out by J. Hausner, "our growth is suffering from lack of social capital"²². In turn - as noted by E. Skawińska - low level of social capital results in incomplete utilization of sources of population activity and the opportunities arising from international integration and globalization²³. Moreover, the negative consequences of low level of social capital in Poland, among others, one may find in low propensity to save which is the result of lack of trust in the stable development of the nation or high consumption comparing to income, which reflects low intellectual aspirations. Therefore - according to authors of governmental report "Poland 2030. Development Challenges" - an increase of social capital and change of its form is one of the main challenges facing Poland in the next 20 years. These authors add that now, to address it, has to be produced a special kind of social capital so called development capital /or capital of competitiveness/²⁴. Such capital may play the key role in the Polish competitive fight in the global world of knowledge and innovation.

In Poland, the cyclic measurement of social capital are made by the authors of the study "Social Diagnosis" who identify it with the social network govern by moral standards or customs (and not or not only by the formal rules of law), which binds the entity with the society in a manner that enables it to interact with others for creating common good. In that

²¹ Skawińska. E.: Rola kapitału ludzkiego i kapitału społecznego we wzroście konkurencyjności, [in:] Skawińska E., Cyrson E., Zalewski R.I.: *Konkurencyjność przedsiębiorstw*. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Poznańskiej, Poznań 2011, p.119-131.

²² Hausner J.: *Za dużo kapitalizmu, za mało ... kapitału społecznego*, [in:] Gołata K. (ed.): *Bohaterowie polskiej transformacji*. Wydawnictwo WAB, Warszawa 2009.

²³ Skawińska. E.: *op. cit.*, s. 119-131.

²⁴ *Polska 2030. Wyzwania rozwojowe*, ed. M. Boni, Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, Warszawa 2008, p. 344.

study, as indicators of social capital are taken into account: interpersonal trust, a voluntary membership in a organization and performing in it any function, organizing, participating and speaking during public meetings, voluntary action for the local community, participation in elections and a positive attitude to democracy. Summary data for these dimensions are presented in the table below.

Table 3

Values of chosen spheres of social capital in Poland in 2011

Indicator of social capital	Percentage of respondents
1. Generalized trust	13,4%
2. Voluntary membership in a organization	14,8%
3. Acting in a organization	4,8%
4. Non-compulsory participation in public meetings	22,9%
5. Speaking at the public meetings	10%
6. Organizing public meetings	5%
7. Voluntary work for the local community	15,6%
8. Participation in elections (local election in 2010)	68,3% (47,3% due to Public Election Committee)
9. Positive attitude to democracy	26,8%

Source: Diagnoza Społeczna 2011. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków, ed. J. Czapiński, T. Panek, Rada Monitoringu Społecznego, Warszawa 2011.

In addition, resources of negative social capital in Poland, and hence the weakness of the informal institutional environment, one may observe by analyzing such indicators: the number of divorces, the existence of the “green zone”, corruption, the number of organized criminal groups, or the scale of economic crime. Some of them are presented in the table below.

Table 4

Chosen examples of negative social capital

Indicator	Position / level / amount
1. Grey Zone *	25% of GDP (EU average is 15% of GDP)
2. Corruption**	41. place among 178 countries in 2010 (according to the CPI) 49. place among 178 countries in 2009 (as above)
3. Number of organized criminal groups ***	547 due to Central Bureau of Investigation in 2010 501 due to Central Bureau of Investigation in 2009
4. Economic crime (number of crimes detected)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 166.970 in 2010, about 0,9% more than in 2009 **** • 30% of Polish companies fell in the course of 2010 at least one victim of economic crime *****

Source: own work based on: * Oszustwo – nasz sport narodowy. Fiskus nabiera się na banalne sztuczki. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 8 stycznia 2010; ** Raport w sprawie korupcji na świecie, Transparency International; *** Raport „Sprawozdanie z działalności CBS KGP za 2010r”, www.cbs.policja.pl; **** Raport „Przestępstwa wszczęte, przestępstwa stwierdzone i wykrywalność w latach 1999-2010, Komenda Główna Policji, www.statystyki.policja.pl.

Due to the fact that in almost every analyzed by the authors of "Social Diagnosis" dimensions, the Poles turn out to be extremely poor in social capital resources, which - as noted by E. Skawińska - affects the poor economic competitiveness and innovativeness in light of the IMD and WEF rankings²⁵, it becomes important to identify the causative factors, which are responsible for atrophy of social capital. In Poland there is still lack of deep studies on that matter. That is why such an attempt is made in this article. One may point such factors responsible for low level of social capital resources:

1. "great tear" associated with the transition from industrial age to the information society. This phenomenon concerns the erosion of social conditions: increase in crime, the collapse of law and order. Therefore, one may observe weakening of family ties, decrease in the number of marriages and births, a dramatic increase in number of divorces, single households, and children born out of wedlock. One may also observe a deep crisis of trust in social institutions. This process is accompanied by a whole series of liberation movements, which are aimed at freeing the individual from the constraints imposed by traditional social norms and moral principles.
2. the socialist system and the homo sovieticus union;
3. Polish radical transformation and the associated changes in management, hierarchy of believed values, the appearance of the molecular model, transformation's trauma, income disparities and irregularities in the privatization procedures;
4. constant dysfunctionality of justice;
5. deterioration of standards, customs and law in the sphere of public life;
6. short horizon of action, which is a consequence of political uncertainty;
7. intense culture of distrust, which is based on the belief that the intentions of the government or the institutions are determined by self-interest, resulting in low respect to both standards, the legal system and the institutions themselves²⁶.

²⁵ Skawińska. E.: op. cit., s. 119-131.

²⁶ Gracia E.: Kryzys argentyński w świetle nauki społecznej Kościoła. „Społeczeństwo”, No. 2, 2002; Kochanowski J.: Rozpad i odbudowa kapitału społecznego. Referat na Konferencji 25 listopada 2002r. "Kapitalistyczna gospodarka rynkowa, a tzw. sprawiedliwość społeczna" Zeszyty Towarzystwa Ekonomistów

It follows that prevailed in Poland until 1990 socialist system, then the transformation process have contributed largely to the atrophy of social capital. Formal institutions can be quickly modified. Unfortunately, it is harder to do that with those of an informal nature. Eulalia Skawińska notes that the transformation of social mentality is much slower than the changes in the material or formal institutions²⁷. Moreover, as M.G. Woźniak adds, the "crucial role in the process of transformation of postsocialist economies and its effects in the real sphere is believed to be in attributable inherited informal institutions that determine the readiness of transfer institutions. Paternalistic expectations, mediocrity of work, lack of respect to the good work's organization and to law, demanding attitudes and other stereotypes of thinking and acting inherited from the centrally planned economy cannot be removed quickly by changing the external standards. Also, external standards of the liberal state will not universally and immediately trigger the ethos of labor, entrepreneurship, respect to contracts or liability"²⁸. Therefore one of the main challenges facing Poland, apart from reforming the formal institutions, is to reconstruct the informal institutional environment. I agree with those researchers who suggests that "high social costs of institutional change in post-socialist economy cannot be an argument for its abandonment. An alternative would be the institutional incoherence resulting in time in "wild capitalism", where the power is conversed to the property and [...] there are no chances to build civil society"²⁹..

5. How to stimulate social capital? New approach

In view of the dramatically low level of social capital in Poland, it is made numerous attempts to build and develop its basic resources. These activities have different impact and are taken in a different scale. At the national level one cannot omit the Strategy "Poland 2030. Development Challenges". This governmental document contains many recommendations, which used in practice may contribute to increase of social capital's designates in Poland. In this Report many attention is being paid to such factors as educational system, civil society, local government or culture, which all can significantly contribute to the generation of social capital and change unfavorable rankings for Poland. The major recommendations include those which can stimulate the development of civil society and force its cooperation with local government. It is seemed to be important, therefore, to create law governing activities of

Polskich. Zeszyt 7, styczeń 2003; Herbst M.: Kapitał ludzki i kapitał społeczny a rozwój regionalny, Centrum Europejskich Studiów Regionalnych i Lokalnych UW. Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, Warszawa 2007.

²⁷ Skawińska. E.: op. cit., s. 119-131.

²⁸ Woźniak M. G.: op. cit., p. 40-54.

²⁹ Ibidem.

the civil society and the long-term strategy for its support, as well as enhancing the role of social and civic consultations. In addition, the decentralization of decision-making process of financing national and local activities and providing support of governmental agencies to local governments can build a basis for the development of social capital resources. According to the authors of this Strategy it is also important to redefine the role of public media, so that they become a source of standards for reliable information, public debate, high culture. Public media are also able to promote attitudes and values consistent with the needs of social capital improvement. It is also necessary to create a comprehensive strategy for the development of culture identified with a resource responsible for country's development. Allowing mass access to cultural heritage of the country may also contribute to build proper attitudes in a society. What's more, the development of the creative sector, as well as promoting individual and grassroots creativity is becoming an important element in building social capital³⁰.

It is no doubt that the recommendations contained in the Strategy aim to realize the common good of whole society, but implementation them at the national level is a long and at the same time expensive process. Unfortunately, although the ambitions of politicians are high, without the involvement of individuals, their willful desire to change the current social and economic situation in Poland dominated by distrust, including especially lack of trust to government and politicians, these recommendations do not have any chances for success. Moreover, often high-flown ideas, if they are passwords without coverage, and perhaps they are only the campaign slogans, will not find acceptance among the society and destroy the remnants of public trust. One should also not forget the role of a family in the process of creating social capital. Therefore it is not denied that an appropriate social policy which aims not only to promote the formation of families, but also to facilitate the effort of raising children (as for example the creation of nurseries, kindergartens, schools, financial aid, but not on the poverty line) can positively stimulate public trust.

It should also be added here that nowadays appeared many opinions that a better way to stimulate activity of human beings and build what is covered by the term of social capital is to promote bottom-up activity of population. Therefore, attempts to create and develop social capital requires knowledge about the specific local context. At the local level one can easier adapt to the expectations and needs of the population in the best way. As P. Poławski concludes, "the existence of a generalized norm of reciprocity at the level of large populations is questionable, if at all, one can talk about it, but rather in small collectivities in which

³⁰ Polska 2030. Wyzwania rozwojowe, op. cit., p. 344.

relationships are based on "face to face" contact³¹ (P. Poławski, 2011).

Examples illustrating the attempts of building local communities, where the relations lead to the construction of basic resources of social capital, and which aim is to contribute to the public good is not missing out in Poland. One may point here a bottom-up projects taken under such programs as "Leader" and "Act locally". They are particularly visible on local, rural areas, also on those, where the public farms were situated before the transformation process and where the socialist system in a particular way used to realized its purpose of atomizing human beings. The basic aim of those projects is to mobilize rural communities by incorporating social and economic partners in planning and implementing local initiatives. Locality allows a better identification of existing problems, as well as more adequate to the possibilities of their solution. These programs combine both human, natural, cultural, historical resources, knowledge and skills of representatives of three sectors: public, private and society to achieve the common good. Bottom-up community involvement is consolidating and strengthening the consistency of decisions and teach to take responsibility for project's implementation and consequently contribute to the growth of social capital. It teaches its participants how to be an active citizen. This programmes can also deliver to them such features like innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship.

6. Final remarks

In conclusion, it should be noted that the currently observed phenomenon of widening income disparities between countries does not result solely from the uneven accumulation of physical and financial capital or various macroeconomic and structural policy undertaken in response to external shocks. More often, emerge opinions that the uneven development of countries is influenced by the quality of institutions, but not only by those of a formal nature. Important here is also the quality of these informal and often intangible institutions like for example social capital. As aptly concludes B. Będziak, "in the face of the depletion of cheap resources and easy opportunities to achieve economic growth, socio-economic development, and thus development in all aspects of life highly developed societies will not be possible without the strengthening of ties and trust in society. Although called the next stage of evolution, civil society, information society, knowledge-based economy, any form requires cooperation, relationships, information flow and, out of which grows previous - trust" ³². Therefore, the authors of the government's report "Poland 2030. Development Challenges"

³¹ Poławski P.: Po ciemniej stronie: o niezbyt dobry kapitale społecznym i społecznych więziach. „Polityka Społeczna”, No. 5-6, 2011, s. 15 and next.

³² Będzik B.: Deficyt kapitału społecznego zwiastunem nadchodzących kłopotów. „ACTA Scientarium Polonorum, Oeconomica”, No. 9, 2010, p.15-21.

point that to strengthen social capital understood as a capital of development it is important to consolidate postmaterialistic attitudes that emphasize self-fulfillment, life satisfaction, quality of life, which combine with such elements as environmental interest, human rights, participation in public life, the emancipation of social minorities. The low importance attached to postmaterialistic values (e.g. freedom of expression) may interfere with the development of innovation and creativity, which are now key factors in development process³³. Moreover, the growth of fundamental social capital designates can also be seen in the improvement of macroeconomic policy, improvement of legal, administrative and financial environment. Imperfect law and poor quality of formal institutions awakens distrust, uncertainty and the reluctance of the population, which in turn weakens its activity. It is also important not to forget about small groups of people that act locally. This bottom-up initiatives can in much better, faster and cheaper way build relations based on trust, loyalty and reliability. Importance of them is unquestionable and after few years it is worth to take deep studies on their role on social capital improvement in Poland.

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³³ Polska 2030. Wyzwania rozwojowe, op. cit., p. 344.

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