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## Concepts of Political Culture in Polish Political Science

**Abstract:** The text presents theoretical problems related to the concepts of political culture raised by political scientists in Poland. Among others, the following questions are posed: Is the concept of political culture cognitively promising enough to be used in situations of its ambiguity? How should the concept of political culture be defined or what scope it should cover? Should it be merely descriptive or value-oriented? In what relations should it remain with the scopes of other concepts (such as politics, political system, culture)? How, by means of distinguishing which types of political culture, should its diversity be presented? How, by means of which methods, should political culture be studied? Answers given to these questions are the subject of this text. In the most general terms, it can be said that the vast majority of researchers are in favour of applying the concept by giving it a descriptive character. As far as the scope of the concept is concerned, four approaches can be distinguished: concepts seeking to narrow down Almond's approach, concepts that are broader than Almond's approach but fall within the realm of consciousness (behaviours are not part of the scope of political culture but constitute its indicator), concepts that add behaviours to the elements of consciousness and concepts that include multiple elements and approach or overlap with the scope of "politics". Several different typologies of political culture have been developed and views on the methods of studying it are diversified.

**Keywords:** political culture, theoretical problems, methodological problems, Polish political science

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## Introduction

Few Polish political scientists are interested in theoretical issues related to political culture. Individual researchers have been referring to the same studies for many years, and one gets the impression that the same issues are being addressed throughout the discussion of the theoretical aspects of political culture, for which no more widely agreed conclusions have been drawn. The far-reaching difficulties involved can be seen for example in the fact that the team investigating the political culture of Polish society in the 1980s decided that no concept of political culture would be assumed in advance, to be followed by all researchers, because, as Franciszek Ryszka, who headed that team, stated: “the dispute over the concept of «political culture» is ongoing and the team in charge of this interdepartmental problem cannot decide which definition is correct and which is erroneous” (Ryszka, 1987, p. 13).

In order to better define the object of interest in this text, one can use the findings of Zbigniew Blok, according to whom Polish research in this area is conducted on the basis of three perspectives: the historical and social perspective, the behavioural and psychological perspective, as well as the ideological and propaganda perspective (Blok, 2021, p. 61 et seq.). This text focuses primarily on research based on the second of the aforementioned perspectives, although I agree with Blok that placing psychological and behavioural issues in the same category is not correct. In contrast, what will be omitted is historical studies that largely fail to address theoretical issues<sup>2</sup>, as well as those of an ideological and propagandistic nature.

Attention will be concentrated on the period initiated by the presentation of Gabriel Almond’s concept (in an article published in 1956), subsequently developed by him and a group of his collaborators (including Bingham Powell, Sidney Verba and others) in the 1960s. This also initiated a discussion of the concept in Poland, intensified in the mid-1970s as a result of the research undertaken as part of the interdepartmental research project entitled “Model kultury politycznej społeczeństwa socjalistycznego” (“A model of a political culture of a socialist society”), although a number of attempts to develop a concept of political culture had already been made earlier (by political scientists such as Kazimierz Biskupski, Jerzy Wiatr, Władysław Markiewicz and Teodor Filipiak). The discussion has continued with the participation of many researchers, albeit with varying intensity, up to the present time; it addresses many issues, including those raised at its very beginning. An attempt to present this state of affairs will be made below.

Before that, however, what needs to be indicated is the main comments on and objections to the concept promoted by Almond and his collaborators. The most significant doubt concerned the relationship between political culture and

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<sup>2</sup> This is mentioned, among others, by Michał Śliwa (2016, p. 86).

culture in general, which is a social construct and an attribute of society, characterised, despite all the ambiguity of existing concepts, by its permanence, inclusion of both spiritual and material elements which, in order to become part of culture, must obviously be objectified and accepted. Other objections concerned the permanence of political attitudes and orientations, the individual nature of these elements, the fact that they are not something objectified and subject to communication. All in all, basically everyone who spoke on the subject claimed that the concept of culture was used in a very arbitrary way. Furthermore, it was argued that the scope of political culture as delineated by Almond's concept overlapped with that of the established and uncontroversial notion of political consciousness. Some of those speaking on the subject also stated that the concept covered too narrow a scope, leaving out, among other things, political behaviours or political structures. There was yet another doubt whether political culture is descriptive or normative. There were also concerns about the ability of the concept of political culture to fulfil its basic function, namely that of explaining political action. They were formulated, among others, by F. Ryszka, who wrote that political culture (declarations) does not necessarily express itself in political action and: "the study of political culture on the basis of either declared opinions or empirically identified attitudes is merely a study of opinions and attitudes, in which the concept of «political culture» is essentially a conventional one" (Ryszka, 1984, pp. 212–213). Stating that the basic shortcoming of Almond's concept is the omission of the behavioural aspect of consciousness, Leszek Sobkowiak asked the following question: "How can one explain the not infrequent differences, and sometimes contradictions, between the three elements: attitudes (mental orientations), verbal behaviours (in other words, verbal declarations of behaviours) and people's actual political behaviours?" (Sobkowiak, 2005, p. 106).

Problems of a theoretical nature raised throughout the discussion include the following, closely interrelated questions: Is the concept of political culture cognitively promising enough to be used in situations of its ambiguity? How should the concept of political culture be defined or what scope should it cover? Should it be merely descriptive or value-oriented? In what relations should it remain with the scopes of other concepts (such as politics, political system, culture)? How, by means of distinguishing which types of political culture, should its diversity be presented? How, by means of which methods, should political culture be studied? Answers provided to these questions by Polish political scientists are the subject of this text. Obviously, it is necessary to make some sort of selection from all the existing proposals. It is difficult, in my view, to indicate a criterion that allows for a relatively objective choice, which makes it subjective in character.

Besides the source texts, this article makes extensive use of existing studies presenting, among other things, overviews of the definitions used in the

concepts proposed by Polish researchers. This leads to the conclusion that the primary research method will be an analysis of the literature on the subject, and elements of the comparative method will be used to demonstrate the aforementioned features of the ongoing discussion. I would like to add that some parts of this text are necessarily taken from an earlier article of mine (Łabędź, 2016).

## The concept of political culture – useful or not

The problem of the usefulness and cognitive value of the concept of political culture is ignored by a considerable number of researchers, and the majority of those who address this issue unequivocally advocate the usefulness of this concept. It can also be argued that, over time, the belief in the usefulness of the concept has become more prevalent and its presence in the social sciences has become established.

As for those with a different view, for example Kazimierz Opalek was sceptical of the concept of political culture, believing that it ran the risk of being value-laden and obscured the concepts of political knowledge and interests, as well as political attitudes and orientations, which were well delineated and could be applied in research. He also argued that the notion of political culture should be closely correlated with the general notion of culture, a condition that political culture fails to fulfil by failing to embrace cultural products and by overlooking the socio-historical nature of culture, as well as its “globalness” and “complexity” (Opalek, 1976, pp. 30–31). Witold Zakrzewski was another researcher voicing his doubts. In his opinion, one cannot abstract from the general notion of culture (the starting point must be the assumption that political culture is situated within the general notion of culture), as this intensifies the misunderstandings already associated with the ambiguity of this notion (Zakrzewski, 1977, pp. 40–43).

Among political scientists currently dealing with political culture, Andrzej Czajowski sees no reason or need for using the concept of political culture. Analysing several approaches to political culture present in Polish political science, he points out problems with their interpretation and the artificiality of the concept itself. Generally speaking, this author states that political culture encompasses the same phenomena as those falling under the concept of politics, and that the questions of what is political culture and what is politics concern the same thing. Allowing for the use of the term “political culture” in colloquial language and its intuitive application, he proposes to eliminate it from science, writing, “I demand that this nonsense, which is information noise, a hallucination seducing researchers as if by magic, and sometimes a title used as a skeleton key for any story about politics, be eliminated” (Czajowski, n.d., pp. 10–11). At the same time, he adds that, despite his strongly critical stance towards the singling

out of political culture, he appreciates that researchers using this concept have recognised some new problems and, to a certain extent, extended the knowledge of politics.

On the other hand, the concept of political culture seems to have been one of the first to be adopted without much doubt by, among others, J. Wiatr and W. Markiewicz, although they found it necessary to modify Almond's definition. One may think that similar views were held by those authors who operationalised the concept of political culture and used it in research (e.g. Jan Garlicki, Grzegorz Nowacki and others). A strong statement on the subject was made by Z. Blok, who stated that "the usefulness of the category of «political culture» is indisputable and hence should be preserved by limiting the scope of its meaning" (Blok, 2005, p. 45).

## The concept of political culture – descriptive or evaluative

Deciding whether the concept of political culture should be descriptive or normative is not a straightforward task. There seem to be three positions on this subject: the predominant non-evaluative position, sometimes referring to an anthropological (general) understanding of culture; the position which distinguishes between the normative and factual aspects of political culture; and the valuing position, which is closest to popular perceptions.

The third position does not occur very often and can be considered an unscientific view. Indeed, if we accept that culture means "appropriate behaviour", then individuals or collectivities behaving differently have no culture. The resultant problem is to define what behaviour is "appropriate". In practice, it depends on standards adopted by the evaluator (i.e. an assessment is subjective) or standards adopted in a particular group, which may be specific to that group only (i.e. it is difficult to relate them to other groups). Thus, every time a perceived "lack" of culture is something discretionary. Some impetus for the adoption of a normative point of view was given by the creators of the concept of political culture, who, defining the term in one publication, stated that it is "a pattern of individual attitudes and orientations". As K. Opalek rightly pointed out, "pattern" can mean the actual, statistically prevalent way of behaving in a given group, but sometimes differences between "pattern" and "standard" are blurred (Opalek, 1976, p. 31).

The evaluative character that makes it possible to speak of a lack of political culture was given to this notion by F. Ryszka. Among the conditions that must be met in order to speak of a political culture, he listed identity (a sense of belonging to a collective), legitimacy (the recognition by citizens of the continuity of the state over a long period of time), rule of law (the willingness to obey the law regardless of one's attitude towards the government), and loyalty (as a two-way

relationship between citizens and the government, including in matters not regulated by the law). It is only when a political actor recognises legitimacy in the political process, if they have a genuine claim to the rule of law, if they are prepared to be loyal in the name of a previously recognised group identity, that one can speak of such an actor's political culture (Ryszka, 1984, pp. 232–246).

Clearly in favour of giving political culture an evaluative character was Andrzej de Lazari, who, citing the statements of a number of people (both columnists and specialists such as Andrzej Zoll), concluded that “for me, «political culture» (...) will always be positively characterised and I will insist that it is nonsensical to suggest that its absence is also «political culture», but differently” (Lazari, 2016, p. 122). Other authors adopted similar positions. For example, Dorota Symonides wrote: “I have been able to observe the lack of political culture on many occasions during my long parliamentary tenure” and provided numerous examples to support this thesis (Symonides, 2004, p. 167).

Marek Sobolewski wrote that two approaches can be adopted in discussions on political culture, one of which is a normative pattern of such culture inherent in a given system, while the other is a study of attitudes towards politics, whether average or the most widespread (Sobolewski, 1977a, pp. 15–16). Among normative (called for) models, he listed a model of attitudes formulated by the prevailing ideology (which has been given legal protection), a systemic model containing the attitudes the most suitable for the proper functioning of a system, and a model of attitudes that are dysfunctional with regard to system (Sobolewski, 1977b). The author also developed a model of socialist political culture. At the same time a normative model of young people's political culture (based on the doctrinal and programme principles of the Polish United Workers' Party and the young socialists' movement) was created by Jerzy Jaskiernia. The presence of a normative approach can also be found in the publications of other authors, such as Teodor Filipiak and Bronisław Gołębiowski.

It is worth mentioning that a normative model, but understood rather as an analytical tool, is mentioned by Maria Borucka-Arctowa, who identifies the possibilities of referring conclusions on legal consciousness to research on political consciousness. In this sense, it can be considered that a normative model is one of the criteria for assessing political consciousness (which can be equated with political culture), serving as a reference point for the model accepted or called for by society, i.e. the actually occurring knowledge, attitudes, views and demands. The author put it in the following words:

In theoretical considerations we can distinguish: a normative model reconstructed from legal acts, statutes, programmes, declarations; a model actually implemented, resulting from decisions made, the way in which adopted programmes are implemented, whose creation must often be supplemented by additional materials and requires specially undertaken research; a model accepted or called for by society,

which can be reconstructed on the basis of research on political consciousness. (Borucka-Arctowa, 1977, p. 83)

However, the majority of scholars writing on political culture, including J. Wiatr, J. Garlicki, Z. Blok and R. Stemplowski adopt a non-evaluative stance, in line with anthropological concepts of culture.

## Types, scope and definitions of the concept of "political culture"

Discussing these issues, one can start by noting that many texts on political culture simply do not define this notion. Existing concepts and definitions, on the other hand, have repeatedly been the subject of various typologies. The author of one of the first divisions of Polish definitions of political culture was K. Opalek, who in 1976 distinguished two tendencies in Polish political literature: a tendency towards "everythingism" and a tendency to perceive political culture in terms of society's attitude towards politics. He mentioned Włodzimirz Knobelsdorf as one of the representatives of the former, who recognised the following as elements of political culture: "– standards, principles and laws of social and political development as well as society's knowledge of them, – political behaviours of individuals and social groups determined by group, class, national or state interests, – objects of human behaviours, i.e. a system of organisation of state authorities" (Opalek, 1976, p. 37). In his commentary, K. Opalek stated that virtually all subjects dealt with by political science had been enumerated (Opalek, 1976, p. 37).

T. Filipiak was another representative of this tendency referred to by Opalek. Filipiak's definition gave the impression of a narrower approach: "By political culture we understand such standards, principles, values and patterns of human activity that serve to achieve certain goals by social classes or groups and individuals, and relate to the structure and mechanism of functioning of state authorities" (Filipiak, 2008, p. 226), but the elements of political culture listed by Filipiak went beyond this definition (political and legal doctrines and ideas, the influence of political leadership on views of individuals, groups and social classes, the behaviour of citizens according to the principles of social coexistence in a socialist state, the maximum development of people's activity, as well as self-reliant and critical thinking in social and political affairs). Speaking on T. Filipiak's take on political culture, one may add that many years later he proposed the separation of the science of political culture as a separate subject of scientific inquiry. In his understanding, political culture is a totality (combining different political sub-cultures) encompassing the entire space of politics (Filipiak, 2008, p. 226).

It is worth mentioning that the breadth of meaning was also the quality of a rarely cited proposal by W. Zakrzewski, who, referring to K. Opalek's statement

about the lack of sense in concepts giving political culture the same scope as the concept of politics, stated that it made sense to give political culture a scope broader than that attributed to politics. He wrote that “politics” is only political actions and their forms, outside its scope are all phenomena related to political life which are not actions, “which do not make up the various forms of political actions, and which are expressed only in the knowledge of these actions, attitudes towards them, views, etc.” (Zakrzewski, 1977, p. 50). Taken together, this is the proposed scope of political culture. W. Zakrzewski, writing on the existing concepts, stated that there are two opposing currents in the approach to what political culture is. In the first approach, “culture” is regarded as a source notion for the narrower and derived notion of political culture. In the other approach, which the author attributed to G. Almond, the notion of “political culture” is used in a casual and conventional way, without much attention being paid to its relationship with the generally accepted understanding of culture.

Among the more recent concepts, a wide range of phenomena is covered by Karol B. Janowski’s proposition according to which political culture encompasses all forms and manifestations of human political activity and can be defined as:

collective, permanent, objectified and holistically integrated achievements, embedded in time and space, available to the experience of the whole collective or at least certain groups, being the result of the creative and processing effort of generations, comprising the tangible and intangible products of human activities, including value systems and behavioural patterns the nucleus of which is politics, including particularly power, its acquisition, maintenance and its exercise. (Janowski, 2020, p. 31)

In the book in which this definition was presented, the author confirms that political culture encompasses basically everything that he considers appropriate to include, that is, according to a very broad scope of the definition. At the same time, it is a good example of how the concepts of a broad understanding of political culture do not serve to distinguish the object of interest with any relative precision.

The second tendency mentioned by K. Opałek, in which political culture is perceived as society’s attitude towards politics, comprises cognitive, evaluative and affective elements, as well as active political engagement (participation). According to Opałek, this tendency is represented, “with some simplification”, by the definitions proposed by Władysław Markiewicz, Czesław Mojsiewicz and Jerzy Wiatr (“to some extent”). The first of the three researchers wrote: “We understand the political culture of society as those elements in globally perceived culture that concern the values recognised and desired by a particular group (...) and relating to the system of state power”. He went on to add that culture understood in this way, “objectifies itself in the form of specific public institutions and

devices, set up to organise collective actions and to exercise control over the behaviour of members of the community (...)" (Markiewicz, 1972, p. 321).

The second author defined the political culture of society as:

this society's knowledge of the standards, principles and laws governing social development and politics, enabling it to assess the progressive or regressive nature of politics as well as the forces creating and implementing specific policies. Political culture manifests itself in the manner of political behaviour, in the degree of participation in the political life of a country (...). (Opalek, 1976, p. 39)

Meanwhile, J. Wiatr defined political culture as follows (according to the 1999 edition):

Political culture is the totality [in an earlier 1965 edition, the author wrote "the totality of (...) prevailing in a given society", which raises the question of what "prevailing" means – K.Ł.] of attitudes, values and patterns of behaviours concerning the mutual relations between those in power and citizens. Thus political culture includes: – knowledge of politics, knowledge of facts, interest in them; – assessment of political phenomena, value judgements about how power should be exercised; – emotional aspects of political attitudes, such as love of one's fatherland, hatred of enemies; – patterns of political behaviours accepted in society, which determine how one can and should act in political life. (Wiatr, 1999, p. 189)

In our literature, this is probably the most popular (also one of the earliest) definition on political culture, consistent with Almond's understanding of this concept, but introducing important modifications giving it a character more in line with the general understanding of culture (values, patterns of behaviours).

Including political behaviours within the scope of this notion, J. Garlicki defined political culture as follows:

(...) variable over time, created mainly under the influence of historical tradition, the structure of political institutions and the rules of a given system, the entirety of the orientation of a society, a social group or individuals towards politics. It is the subjective sphere of politics (internal beliefs) manifesting itself in concrete and verbal behaviours. It consists of: 1) interests in politics, knowledge of politics and knowledge of political facts; 2) recognised and desired values concerning the political system and the mechanisms of functioning of its institutions; 3) assessment of political phenomena and value judgements about political institutions; 4) recognised patterns of behaviours in the political sphere as well as tried and tested types of political actions. (Garlicki, 1991, p. 26)

About the behavioural component, the author wrote rather enigmatically that it includes types of political actions, but the fact that political culture includes behaviours and actions is shown in a figure attached to this publication (Garlicki, 1991, pp. 26 and 30). In contrast, the book co-authored by Artur Noga-Bogomilski stated:

If a behaviour takes on the characteristics of conscious activity it becomes an action. It consists in consciously participating in a political event, or refusing to participate in the implementation of the political decisions of the centres of power, or opposing them, being active in the work of parties or other political organisations, or consciously renouncing any relationships with them. (Garlicki, Noga-Bogomilski, 2004, p. 48)

J. Garlicki's concept was verified in empirical research in which, besides the basic method of a questionnaire survey, participatory and revealing observations, content analysis of student diaries, documentation analysis and the results of other studies were used.

What, in my opinion, stands out in contemporary Polish theoretical reflections on political culture is the concepts proposed by Z. Blok and R. Stemplowski. The former accepts, following Almond, that political culture is psychological in nature, does not go beyond consciousness, but, modifying the original concept, he seeks to narrow and clarify the scope of the notion and indicates how it should be operationalised. Blok defines political culture as:

a part of the social consciousness of either groups or individuals that is capable of eliminating, modifying or organising political behaviours as well as political decisions and ways of thinking about politics. (Blok, 2005, p. 45)

It is a filter that modifies external stimuli and their effects in the form of political behaviours. He also lists four key elements that need to be operationalised and researched in order to define types of political culture: political ideas, values and standards; political habits, traditions and patterns; emotions towards political facts and processes; assessments of political facts, phenomena and processes (in a later text, Z. Blok stated that this set could be expanded). Subsequently, each of these elements can be broken down into parts, their manifestations and dimensions can be indicated (in the form of pairs of extreme concepts) and they can be given a form that is understandable to research subjects. The undoubted merit of this concept is its comprehensiveness (from the adoption of theoretical premises to the establishment of a form directly enabling the conduct of research), as well as methodological consistency and correctness. On the other hand, doubts may arise from the problem of how to take into account the trait of stability of particular features of political culture in specific studies (which, it can be expected, are intended to be rather comprehensive).

A distinctive feature of R. Stemplowski's concept is its alternative character, the presentation of two variants of a definition, which, depending on possibilities, can be used in particular studies. The first variant does not go beyond the sphere of awareness, while the other one has a much broader scope and includes actions of central governing bodies and citizens. In both cases, the author emphasises the need to take into account the stability of the elements of political culture.

Both variants, which in the author's opinion only constitute preliminary propositions of a definition, are based on the assumption that political culture results from the intertwining of cultural, economic and political factors, which necessitates very extensive interdisciplinary research. In the first variant:

Political culture in a given state and period is a set of relatively permanent beliefs and patterns of behaviours common to the majority of members of main social groups and the majority of people holding public power: a) relating to the state system, b) related to the individual or group identities of citizens and to the collective identity of all of them as a political nation, c) observable in interactions among individual citizens, in their various social roles, as well as among social groups, public authorities and offices, political parties, trade unions (...). (Stemplowski, 2016, p. 200)

Although this definition states that political culture comprises relatively enduring beliefs and patterns of behaviours, it differs significantly from other definitions limited to the sphere of consciousness. This is evidenced by the sentences referring to the way in which political culture is studied – for the author states that questionnaire surveys must be combined with research contextualising survey data, allowing for an understanding of the results obtained, which “may ensue from the perception of the results of basic research supported by questionnaire surveys rather than replaced by routine public opinion surveys about everything (...)” (Stemplowski, 2016, p. 210).

This approach to the study of political culture becomes fully apparent in the second variant of the definition:

Political culture in a given state and period is conduct, individualistic or group-based, identifiable as: a) activities of the central organs of state (legislative, executive, judiciary) power, especially the resulting legal standards and their application, as well as decisions concerning the state's policies and their implementation; b) the most common conduct of citizens with regard to the formation and activities of the said organs and their consequences. (Stemplowski, 2016, p. 210)

This is a broad approach which, in the author's view, allows political culture to be treated as an objectified manifestation of social relations.

In my opinion, using, among others, the distinctions made by K. Opalek and L. Sobkowiak, the definitions of political culture can be divided into four groups: the concepts tending to narrow down Almond's definition (Z. Blok), the concepts that are broader than Almond's but remaining within the sphere of consciousness (behaviours do not belong to the scope of political culture but constitute its indicators, e.g. J. Wiatr's definition), the concepts that add behaviours to the elements of consciousness (e.g. J. Garlicki's definition) and the concepts that encompass many elements and approach or overlap with the scope of “politics” (definitions proposed by T. Filipiak, W. Zakrzewski, and R. Stemplowski).

## Typologies of political culture

In the Polish scholarly literature there are few typologies of political cultures, i.e. ways of representing and naming the diversity of political cultures of individual societies and the diversity within the political culture of a given society. Some authors undertaking empirical studies used Almond's and Verba's typology, while others did not attempt to systematise the existing differences by indicating any specific types of political culture. A few selected typologies based on different premises are presented below.

The author of one of the first attempts to develop a typology of political cultures is J. Wiatr, for whom the starting point was "a historical, concrete account of political culture as related to political systems and their underlying socio-political formations" (Wiatr, 1999, p. 192). Based on this, he distinguished: traditional political culture (corresponding to the slave and feudal systems, comprising three sub-types), political culture of class democracy (of the patriciate or the nobility) and mass political culture comprising the democratic and autocratic types (characteristic of societies that allow all citizens to participate in political life), either being further divided into two sub-types. It seems that while this typology can perform functions of a historiosophic nature, it is less useful for an analysis of any specific society.

Similar premises were adopted by T. Filipiak, who, because of the relationship between the type of a political system and political culture, distinguished the following: bourgeois political culture characteristic of developed capitalism (which includes acceptance of basic civil rights and freedoms, free play of political forces, but also certain restrictions, for example ones related to property, making political participation difficult for some; it comprises two varieties: liberal-progressive and autocratic-conservative); totalitarian and authoritarian political culture (which includes patterns of subordination, radical restriction of freedoms and rights, sometimes ideologisation of political culture, citizen activity limited to participation in official ceremonies organised by non-democratic political institutions); political culture in civil society (with patterns of orientation and values conforming to democratic and humanistic standards, acceptance of political pluralism, belief in the value of free play of political forces, concern for adherence to the rules of a democratic state, sensitivity to issues of legitimacy of political power) (Filipiak, 1999, pp. 316–318; after Garlicki, Noga-Bogomilski, 2004, pp. 56–57).

Roman Bäcker starts from completely different premises, accepting that one of the most important criteria for distinguishing political cultures is types of thinking (based on Vilfred Pareto's concept) that determine the ways in which reality is perceived. Adopting this premise, he distinguished the following types of political culture:

- rationalist-mythical culture based on ideological-religious thinking, universalist, capable of self-correction and based on hierarchies of values;
- tribal culture with a clearly marked division of the world into “us” and “them”;
- post-tribal, epigonic culture with a clearly marked division of the world, but with a very primitive value system;
- fundamentalist culture, derived from tribalism with a very sharp division between the friendly world and the hostile world, using the lexical resource of a particular ideology or religion;
- vegetative culture based on the individual’s quest for survival;
- totalitarian culture based on political gnosis (imagined subject, objective enemy, pursuit of saving the world from evil) (Bäcker, 2018, pp. 39–40).

Yet another typology was proposed by Andrzej W. Jabłoński, who stated that the cultural characteristics considered important by researchers for the typology of political cultures include attitudes towards the group (individualism, collectivism), attitudes towards the political system (servile, participatory, civil), attitudes towards equality (egalitarianism, elitism), approaches to regulating social conflict (democracy, authoritarianism) and the degree of modernisation of the cultural value system (traditional cultures, modern cultures). Subsequently, based on the predominance of the indicated characteristics, the author distinguished four types of cultures with a predominance of individualistic, collectivistic, egalitarian, elitist attitudes, and singled out a democratic culture (capable of rationalising conflict, rather individualistic and egalitarian) as opposed to a culture based on intolerance, a highly hierarchical type of relationships and strong subordination to authority (this type was not named) (Jabłoński, 1997, pp. 182–187).

The author of the last proposal for a typology of political culture is Z. Blok. He assumes that, in practice (notwithstanding the fact that it is possible to speak of political culture of groups, nations or societies), research can only be concerned with individuals and should consist in determining the place of the individual in the space of extreme determinants – political ideas, values and standards; political habits, traditions and patterns; emotions towards politics; and assessments of politics. A researcher can adopt their own sequence of determinants of interest and determine the place of the individual on each axis, which can take for example ten values between the extremes (e.g. individualism – collectivism, freedom – equality, justice – injustice, democracy – totalitarianism, etc.). In the next step, points resulting from individual choices are combined. In this way, very many types of political culture can be distinguished, and the type of collective entities can be calculated as a median or modal of individual choices (Blok, Pająk-Patkowska, 2016, pp. 35–37). This proposal is very concrete and consistent with the whole concept of research on political culture; it also narrows the scope of the concept.

## Issues related to research methodologies

In my view, the fundamental difficulties with the concept and notion of political culture concern their use in research practice, including answering the question of how political culture should be studied. This question accommodates a number of more specific queries, the first of which concerns the manner of describing the various elements present in definitions of political culture and the manner of adopting their indicators, which should result in operational definitions and give the concept of political culture an empirical sense. Unfortunately, many authors do not reach this stage, contenting themselves with reviewing the existing definitions and formulating their own ones. Very few authors consistently follow the adopted premises in empirical studies. Another question, which is virtually unresolved in practice, concerns the manner of determining the degree of stability of the various elements of political culture, a feature present in the concepts of most authors. Writing about this, R. Stemplowski stated that a measure of the stability of beliefs and patterns of behaviour should be their presence at the beginning and at the end of a certain distinguishing period in the history of a given state, and not only the state existing at a given point in time (Stemplowski, 2016, p. 201). In order to determine stability, it is therefore necessary to carry out research of a dynamic nature, i.e. taking into account a specific period of time. The most correct way to do this would be to conduct repeatable panel studies, preferably on the same sample. Of course, this is basically impossible, primarily due to time and technical constraints. On the other hand, there are ways of obtaining similar results, namely studies of trends, i.e. changes occurring in a given population over a certain period of time, based on the results of studies conducted earlier, as well as studies of age or generation groups (demographic cohorts) to determine whether changes are occurring, and thus the degree of stability of various elements.

Next, depending on the concept adopted, intended study methods and techniques should be defined. In this respect, it is important to state that, with few exceptions, empirical research was carried out on the basis of the concept proposed by Almond and his collaborators or other authors specialising in this topic. This often led to studies on political culture becoming similar to public opinion surveys, particularly in terms of the dominant study methods and techniques such as surveys and questionnaires that rely exclusively or mostly on closed questions. If this is the case, it is difficult to claim that the subject of research is culture, i.e. elements that are relatively stable, accepted (i.e. previously objectified) and as such present in social communication. Consequently, the question of what methods should be used remains open.

Answering this question, one can start by considering the relationship between consciousness and political behaviours, which are assumed to be an explanandum. In specific cases, it is difficult to identify all the components of

a condition sufficient to explain behaviours; in general, it can be pointed out that, besides views, beliefs and political attitudes, these components include also other attitudes (primarily central attitudes) and interests of the individual as well as situational factors. Furthermore, there is also the issue of the relationship between actual views and verbal behaviours, which, with regard to the distinction made by Stanisław Ossowski, may be indicative of accepted values (whose declarations correspond to the expectations of the environment), rather than being the result of felt values that influence particular factual behaviours. It appears that Z. Blok's concept comes closest to this. Problems of this nature were addressed by, among others, F. Ryszka and L. Sobkowiak. The latter distinguished three layers of culture: declared, realised and postulated. Declared or verbal political culture is the elements of knowledge, assessment of emotions, etc. that are normative in nature; realised culture includes those elements that materialise in the form of behaviours; and postulated culture concerns the state desired primarily by political elites (Sobkowiak, 2005, p. 105 et seq.).

From the reasoning presented above, it follows, in my view, that political culture, regardless of the concept adopted, should be studied using a variety of methods and techniques characteristic of different disciplines of science.

In the case of political culture, i.e. an attribute of not only the individual but also social groups and collectivities of various sizes, the question arises as to how one is to determine the characteristics of this culture in relation to the whole or, in other words, the scope of the community. For Almond, it was first the entirety of individual attitudes and orientations, then the pattern (which should probably be understood as the most common, although, as mentioned above, this was not entirely clear); W. Pluskiewicz wrote about typical features, other authors about dominant features, Z. Blok about some kind of average; R. Stemplowski stated that it is about "a set of relatively stable beliefs and patterns of behaviours shared by the majority in the largest social groups and the majority of people exercising public power" (Stemplowski, 2016, pp. 202–203).

## Conclusions

With regard to the questions posed in the introductory part of the text, it is worth stating which of the answers provided by the Polish researchers can be considered sufficient and in which cases the problems were not sufficiently addressed (which is the case for most of them). Among the problems of the first type is first and foremost the issue of the use of the concept of political culture: the fact that it is no longer possible to stop using this concept was determined by the actual situation, namely the spread of its use by representatives of various scientific disciplines. A similar answer, albeit less emphatic, can be given with regard to

giving this concept a descriptive, non-evaluative character. For the majority of researchers, political culture exists wherever we deal with politics, and making its existence dependent on the fulfilment of specific requirements is (as already mentioned) unscientific. On the other hand, the activity of developing normative models is acceptable if such models are close in nature to the ideal types created by Max Weber and have been developed as a result of observing many cases of a particular phenomenon.

As far as the other issues are concerned, they still need to be discussed and new concepts and definitions need to be sought because the existing ones have not been more widely agreed and adopted. With few exceptions, little new has emerged in this field since the 1970s. The various concepts differ considerably from one another in terms of the scope of the notion of political culture and thus the determination of the phenomena it encompasses. There are different ways of defining it, although definitions enumerating different elements prevail. It can probably be said of the few typologies that exist that they do a better job of indicating differences of a historical nature rather than differences occurring in a particular society in a particular period of time. This is an area that requires further research.

Related to the above is the issue of far-reaching differences (or rather, mostly ignorance) regarding the way in which political culture is studied. On the one hand (once the awareness-based concept is adopted), we have the predominant use of the same methods as for public opinion surveys; on the other hand, we have very few systematic studies using other methods and basically no studies using different methods as a baseline.

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