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Poland's institutional cycles. Remarks on the historical roots of the contemporary institutional matrix²

Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify and evaluate institutional cycles (periods with a permanent predominance of dominant institutions that determine the entire political-economic system) in Poland's history and assess them in terms of the predominance of inclusive or extractive political and economic institutions. The Polish lands lying at the edge of Western civilisation were in the orbit of the influence of both West and East. It adopted institutions from both sides while creating its own, original organisations. Ultimately, Western institutions prevailed. However, over the course of Poland's more than 1,000-year history, extractive institutions predominated, making the country backward in relation to the West. The article applies theory derived from new institutional economics and historical analysis to explore Poland's institutional cycles.

Key words: Poland, institutional cycles, institutional matrix, inclusive and extractive institutions

Introduction

Institutions, as formal and informal norms of human behaviour, are important for sustainable economic and civilisational development (Fiedor 2015). Institutional cycles are periods in a country's history in

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² Artykuł powstał w ramach projektu finansowanego przez NCBR nr SzN/I/39/BaP/2022 "Białoruś i Polska. Od historycznych korzeni systemów polityczno-gospodarczych do planowania instytucjonalnego rozwoju".

which there is the relative dominance of a particular set of underlying institutions that define a country's institutional matrix. According to Kirdina (2003), the institutional matrix is a set of underlying, dominant institutions at a given time on three levels: political, economic and ideological. Acemoglu and Robinson (2008, 2013) identified inclusive and extractive political and economic institutions, the dominance of which determines the ability of the economic system to achieve its goals. According to them, 'inclusive economic institutions... are those that allow and encourage participation by the great mass of people in economic activities that make the best use of their talents and skills' (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012: 144). When a conflict arises over economic institutions, the events that occur will depend on which interest group wins in the political sphere. Political institutions are a key factor for the outcome of this contest—they shape the rules governing the incentives and initiatives in politics. Inclusive political institutions allow and encourage as many citizens as possible to participate in the governing process. In contrast, extractive political institutions limit or exclude most of society from this process. There is a strong synergy between economic and political institutions (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012: 73–83). Analysing the relationship between political and economic institutions, Acemoglu and Robinson (2019) assigned a decisive role to legal and political institutions. Economic institutions are critical in determining the effectiveness of an institutional system, and political institutions determine what economic institutions a country will have. In their recent work, they focused especially on understanding the realm of politics (Acemoglu and Robinson 2019).

The enumeration and attempted characterisation of institutional cycles in the history of Polish lands is, by its very nature, a synthesis. It is not possible to present all the roots of the current institutions. Therefore, the ensuing work will not be free of simplifications, generalisations and errors. However, I have tried to extract the most important political and economic institutions and the features of culture that influenced its development and prospects. In this case, the reference point for assessing Poland is the West. I have tried to show which institutions moved Poland closer or further away from the West.

The geographical location was important for the formation of institutions in these lands. The Roman historian Pomponius Mela drew the border between Europe and Asia precisely on the Vistula River (Matera 2015: 55–72), but the Roman Empire did not reach Poland's territory. The institutions of Greco-Roman civilisation came to Poland through intermediaries. The location, harsh climate, and shorter growing seasons than in Western and Southern Europe contributed to the lower popula-

tion density, which was reflected in the economy, cities and culture. The peripheral character in relation to the West was evident from the very beginning of the establishment of Polish statehood. In addition, Polish lands lay at the meeting point of two worlds: Germanic vs. Slavic and Roman Catholic vs. Orthodox.

Poland in the Middle Ages

First institutional cycle (X–XII)

I consider the baptism of Poland (966) to be the beginning of the first institutional cycle, which was of colossal importance in shaping the social, political and economic system. By accepting Christianity, Poland entered the circle of European civilisation (Morawski 2011: 11). From that time onwards, the process of importing and implementing Western institutions began: Christian religion in the Roman Catholic vein, Latin as the language of religion, law and legal customs, feudalism as an economic and political model and Western culture. It was a set of identifiers and meta-rules common to Western civilisation. Their adoption set Poland on a certain trajectory of development for centuries, marking the framework of its social system and human imagination. These meta-rules implemented by the adoption of Western Christianity would later have a significant impact on the differentiation of Poland in relation to its eastern neighbours, who adopted the Eastern version of Christianity (Winięcki 2012: 202–212).

The first cycle included the feudalisation of the agricultural system. In Poland, a fief hierarchy was not formed, but the ruler took over from the territorial and tribal communities' sovereignty with regards to land ownership. Subsequently, the rulers passed on this property to knights, nobles and the church. Thus formed, feudal property was free from interference by a ruler – in other words, private property was formed. Characteristic for Polish lands, along with the granting of land by the ruler was the granting of immunities excluding or limiting the prince's right to tax peasants and his judicial power over his subjects living on the feudal lord's property (Skodlarski 2007: 29–32). This process strengthened the position of the nobility towards the ruler, and later, the peasants became more dependent on feudal lords (peasant freedom significantly decreased). The feudal system took ownership of the land, leaving the serfs to work it (hereditary or temporary). The settlement of peasants was carried out under so-called Polish law. Peasant obligations were replaced

by an annuity in kind (Skodlarski 2007: 32–40). In general, there was a great diversity of laws and rules and of peasants, from free people to slaves (Modzelewski 1987).

During this period, an ecclesiastical structure was established, and the church slowly took root in local communities, hence becoming a transmitter of Western culture. The first monasteries in Poland also appeared, including the Cistercian Order (first half of the twelfth century), which contributed to the transfer of knowledge, agricultural technology and educated personnel (Morawski 2011: 13–15). The feudal system, which followed the lines of the Western model, was taking shape: Poland became a hereditary monarchy.

In general, the institutions shaped during this period, both political and economic, should be considered inclusive. Western institutions were introduced to Polish lands, and they incorporated Polish lands into the orbit of Western civilisation.

Second cycle (XIII–XV)

This period saw deeper institutional adaptation of the West. From the thirteenth century onwards, rulers and feudal lords encouraged colonists from Germany to settle in Poland. This settlement took place under so-called German law, a coherent set of laws and customs containing elements of civil and criminal law. Thus, more developed forms of political and legal systems were implemented, contributing to the growth of peasant self-reliance and the introduction of a Western legal culture (Skodlarski 2007: 41–43). It also contributed to the flourishing of cities. Around 700 new towns were founded in Poland between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, which had a considerable positive impact on all aspects of political, economic and cultural life (Bogucka, Samsonowicz 1986: 84).

In 1347, a law reform (*Statuty wiślickie*) was implemented that replaced custom-based law with legal principles based in large part on Roman law. The rights and duties of the various states comprising society were also identified and defined. This was a very important step confirming the adoption of a Western legal culture derived from Rome, which, compared with tribal culture where the will of the ruler was the law, was a step forward (Samsonowicz 1971).

Jews became a distinct nation. They flowed into Poland *en masse*, escaping from Western Europe as a result of the pogroms caused by the Black Death. They were granted privileges in Poland (1334, 1364, 1367)

and settled there; they contributed to the development of cities, the ethnic diversity of the Polish lands and consequent multiculturalism (Tomaszewski 2001).

Significant for the intellectual and cultural development of the Polish lands was the establishment of the Jagiellonian University (1364), which opened access to Western science and educated the country's elite for centuries.

Poland began to flourish in the last century of the Middle Ages and the gap with the West narrowed. By the end of the fourteenth century, Poland was united with the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Western legal solutions were introduced to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Poland opened up to the East, while colonisation pressure from the West decreased. During this time, Poland and Lithuania entered a period of political greatness (Morawski 2011: 28). The Eastern direction would come to dominate Polish political interests.

In general, the institutions at the time should be assessed as inclusive. However, in 1374, King Louis of Hungary and Poland bestowed on the nobility the privilege of reducing the land tax in return for the nobility's agreement to change the rules of succession to the Polish throne. In 1382, the king died without leaving a male descendant. The lords of Kraków decided whom his daughter, Jadwiga, would marry. The grateful chosen candidate, the Lithuanian Duke Władysław, (later King Władysław Jagiełło), bestowed numerous privileges on the Polish nobility. This strengthened the nobility politically, and the political system began to evolve in an unprecedented direction.

The modern era

Third cycle (XVI)

In this cycle, the most important role was played by the specific development of political institutions that gave direction for the next three centuries (Piatkowski 2018: 46–55). Jagiełło became the first elected king of Poland. The fact that power would be assumed by his descendants was no longer taken for granted. Successors had to court the nobility by granting numerous privileges, which strengthened the nobility to the point of political monopoly. From the moment when the last king of the Jagiellonian dynasty died childless (1572), the Polish nobility democratically elected kings, and Poland became an electoral monarchy (Jędruch

1998: 72–114). Between 1388 and 1573, the nobility obtained more than twenty important privileges (Piatkowski 2018: 65–67). The characteristic feature of this system was the complete equality of the members of the landowning class. A free democracy and property rights prevailed only within the nobility (six to eight percent of the population). In practice, the election of a king was a political bargain in which power was given away for further privileges, leading to even greater freedom and domination by the nobles. Over time, the aristocracy effectively took control of the political process. The main features of this system became the political monopoly of the nobility and the decentralisation of power— that is, the weak position of the king.

The nobility's political monopoly allowed it to effectively subjugate the peasants and create a system of economic exploitation known as the manor farm economy. Hence, the peasants were gradually deprived of their rights and personal freedom. In 1518, the king relinquished jurisdiction over disputes between feudal lords and peasants, so the peasants were left under the jurisdiction of their lords. Their land was taken away from them, and the size of their annuity— that is, serfdom—was increased. A refeudalisation of social relations was taking place. The peasants had no political rights. Contemporary literature has even talked of this time as 'Polish slavery' (Janicki 2021). In 1538, burghers were forbidden to buy land outside the city, and in 1550, the nobility was forbidden to participate in city trade (Jędruch 1998: 66). Towns lost part of their independence and were subordinated to the nobility. In this cycle, Poland went in the opposite direction to the West (so-called agrarian dualism).

In the sixteenth century, the Reformation came to Poland. The intellectual ferment it caused had a positive impact on the development of the Polish language, science and culture. In Poland, however, it did not have a mass character (Małłek 2012).

Both the political and economic system contained a decisive preponderance of extractive institutions.

Fourth cycle (XVII–XVIII)

This cycle developed in the aftermath of the institutions that had been established in the previous period. Although Poland entered the modern era as a political power, the power of the king was increasingly weak and Poland resembled a loose association of magnate quasi-states. The enslavement of peasants reached its peak. Serfdom increased to six

days a week. The economic system in the Polish countryside prevented the progress and economic development of the country as a whole: it restricted social mobility almost completely, prevented increases in labour productivity, innovation, motivation to invest, urban development, destruction of the ethos of work and discouragement of education of the masses – in a word, it effectively limited the possibilities of utilising the vast human capital locked in the feudal corset (Leszczyński 2020, Pobłocki 2021). The nobility was conservative. Oligarchic political structures that provided a monopoly on power, ensuring the nobility's control over resources, were a perfect example of the synergy of extractive political and economic institutions.

The intellectual ferment that the Reformation brought contributed to criticism of Poland's social system. Many reformist ideas arose, including the social views of the Polish Brothers, which were modern for the time. However, the Counter-Reformation was effective. In the indigenous Polish lands, Catholicism remained the dominant religion, and in the eastern borderlands, it remained the religion of the nobility. The lack of religious competition contributed to intellectual stagnation (Tazbir 1996).

Being an eminently agricultural country with a feudal social structure, Poland strengthened its position as a peripheral country to Western Europe. Complete political weakness eventually led to the First Partition of Poland between Russia, Prussia and Austria-Hungary. However, the group of reformers was too small and weak to make effective reforms. In 1795, Poland disappeared from the map of Europe.

Poland without the state

Fifth cycle (XIX – the beginning of XX)

Throughout the nineteenth century until 1918 (with the exception of the Duchy of Warsaw 1807–1813, founded by Napoleon), Polish lands were ruled by three partitioners. Most modern capitalist institutions were established after the partitions and against the will of most of the nobility.

The modern institutions of the capitalist economy and modern society differed in terms of formal and legal details and, above all, the timing of their introduction, depending on the partitioning power. Even in the brief episode of the existence of the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–1813), modern law was implemented in the form of Napoleon's codices (civil

and criminal), and serfdom was abolished. The existence of the Duchy, however, did not last long. In the Kingdom of Poland (part of the Russian Empire) during a period of relative autonomy (1815–1830), Polish reformers promoted modern legal and administrative solutions and industrialisation, actively involving state resources because they saw industrialisation as a way out of backwardness (Morawski 2011: 97–106). The abolition of serfdom and enfranchisement of peasants took place at the earliest in the Prussian partition (1807/1808), then in the Austrian partition (1848/1848) and at the latest in the Russian partition (1861/1864) (Skodlarski 2007: 116–124). Gradually, basic modern institutions were introduced in all parts of Poland: personal freedom, equality of civil rights (Jews did not gain civil rights until 1862 in the Russian lands (Ziomek 1998: 96)) and free competition. In general, the earliest modern capitalist institutions were introduced in western Poland – in the Prussian partition. Next, reforms were experienced in southern Poland – the Austro-Hungarian partition. Last was central and eastern Poland – the Russian partition, where the extreme authoritarian rulers of Russia naturally delayed reforms that would deconstruct the feudal system (Pieczeński 2019: 112–130).

It should be added that the peasants under Austrian and Russian rule were among the last in Europe to be enfranchised. Nevertheless, the institutional conditions that gave rise to the capitalist system were finally put in place. The second half of the nineteenth century saw accelerated economic development.

During the nineteenth century, the Polish nation was formed, and a modern Polish culture created. Initially, this process involved the nobility and, later, the peasant masses. The nobility, as a superior and educated stratum, dictated the tone of these processes (Jedlicki 2002). At the same time, the nobility could not cope with the new conditions of the emerging capitalist economy. The land estates were in debt and went bankrupt, and the nobility moved to the cities, forming the new intelligentsia. The result was the emergence of a specific culture (Kizwalter 1991). Polish culture, being stuck in the feudal past, was not conducive to capitalism. It was characterised by praise for traditional village life, accompanied by isolationism and dislike of cities, dislike of the bourgeoisie, anti-intellectualism, dislike of all novelties, contempt for the rule of law and a disregard for education, hence being almost the complete opposite of bourgeois values (Piatkowski 2018: 72–79).

The Industrial Revolution reached Polish lands and led to accelerated economic growth. After enfranchisement, social mobility increased, the population in existing towns grew, and new urban centres were es-

tablished. The economy and society, from being predominantly agricultural, were transformed into an agricultural-industrial model. Polish nobility did not naturally transform into a bourgeoisie. It began to be formed by Jewish entrepreneurs and foreign arrivals (mainly from Germany and other Western countries). The Polish nobility engaged only sporadically in capitalist activity (Skodlarski 2007: 171).

The period of partitions further diversified the development of Polish lands. The wealthiest part of Poland belonged to Prussia, the next to the Russian Empire, and the poorest the Austro-Hungarian part. The greatest rate of economic growth was recorded in the Russian partition (Bukowski, Koryś, Leszczyńska, Tymiński, Wolf 2019). Despite significant differences, I consider *en masse* the institutions introduced by the partitioners to transform society and the economy towards capitalism to be inclusive.

Independent Poland in the interwar period

Sixth cycle (1918–1939)

In 1918, Poland gained independence. In the political process, a constitution, which was relatively forward-thinking for the time, was adopted, ensuring the right to life, liberty and property for all without distinction regarding origin, nationality, language, race or religion, though Catholicism was privileged. Hence, the formal institutions put in place can be considered inclusive (Bębnowski, Matera 2018). Unfortunately, the old oligarchic structures in which the landowning class protected its interests were largely restored, and the new bureaucratic and military elites adapted to this arrangement. In 1926, Pilsudski and his supporters staged a coup d'état, ending the very brief period of parliamentary democracy. The oligarchic political structures were consequently strengthened (Porter-Szucs 2021: 175–186).

At the beginning of the Polish state, almost 70% of its citizens lived in the countryside, which was poor, illiterate (Landy-Tołwińska 1961) and overpopulated (so-called agrarian unemployment), while vast areas of the land lay fallow in the noble latifundia. The implementation of reform was at first delayed and brought about no significant change in the structure of land ownership. (Jeziński, Leszczyńska 1998: 265–270). This was not in the interests of the elites. As a result, most peasants continued to live in abject poverty, limiting the demand for industrial goods;

this hampered the development of domestic industry and blocked the development of local markets. Entrepreneurship was constrained by numerous barriers, including a lack of capital, monopolies and bureaucracy. Cartels and monopolies accounted for two-thirds of all industrial production (Piatkowski 2018: 96–100). In addition, during the Great Depression, Polish industry and banking became highly stratified, giving political power an even greater direct influence over the country's economic resources (Skodlarski 2007: 301–302).

WWII and real socialism

The seventh cycle (1939–1989)

The great equalisers of social opportunity and income tend to be shocks of violence (wars, revolutions causing political transformations or collapses of states) and deadly pandemics (Scheidel 2017). The Second World War, the collapse of the Polish state and the introduction of communism were such shocks that radically changed the country's institutional matrix. Poles had little or no influence on what was happening to them (Leder 2014). First and foremost, Poland suffered enormous losses in human capital (especially as a result of the Holocaust and the repression of the intelligentsia) and its borders were changed (moving from East to West). This was followed by large-scale population relocation from the East and from the centre of prewar Poland to the West (Kosiński 1968). Poland became an almost mononational state. Above all, the communists carried out a great social and economic revolution, taking the land belonging to the nobility and distributing it among peasants (1944–1948) (Skodlarski 2007: 371–375).

The communists took over political power in the country (the presence of the Red Army in Poland was not insignificant), and held a monopoly on power. Radical systemic changes were then launched, transforming the Polish economy towards real socialism (nationalization of industry and wholesale supply). Private ownership in Polish agriculture was defended and survived until the end of communism (more than 80% of agricultural land belonged to private family farms). This made Poland an exception in the Soviet bloc and had a positive impact on systemic transformation in the 1990s. A free market and free competition were replaced by central planning. The state took control of prices and wages. In parallel, the industrialisa-

tion and the fight against illiteracy were pushed for. The Sovietisation of culture had begun.

Poland's institutional matrix took the form of a socialist country. In the political dimension, there was an authoritarian system with a definite predominance of extractive institutions: monopolisation of power by one party, limited personal freedom and a lack of media freedom. In the economic dimension, socialist economics prevailed, as characterised by the lack of private ownership of the means of production (except for agriculture and small crafts), the absence of economic freedom, the replacement of the free market and competition by central planning and control of prices and wages. All of these main features of the system can be counted as extractive institutions. In the ideological sphere, communism reinforced a number of pathologies embodied in the *Homo Sovieticus* pattern. However, socialism succeeded in removing the oligarchic institutions that had prevailed in Poland since the Middle Ages, abolished illiteracy, raised the level of education of society and reduced the level of social inequality. It levelled the playing field and increased the level of opportunities for social advancement for broad masses of people (Piatkowski 2018: 124–139).

Polish transition and EU membership

The eighth cycle (1989–now)

Communism came to an end in Poland as a result of peaceful change. The vast majority of society was convinced that socialism had failed and that Poland had to follow the path set by the West. This was when Poland's transformation began in the political sphere. In 1989, partially free parliamentary elections were held (the communists retained a specific block of seats). Thus, Poland became the first country in the Eastern bloc in which the political opposition had an influence on the government. Subsequently, Poland rapidly transformed the political system of an authoritarian country into a liberal democracy. Almost simultaneously, the process of transformation of the economic system began—named after its creator, the 'Balcerowicz Plan'—which was later dubbed 'Shock Therapy' because of its speed and radicalism. This process was completely opposite to the direction of the 1944–1949 transformation (Kaliński 2009: 11–24). Poland quickly established the institutional foundations of a market economy: private ownership of the means of production, free competition, an economy open to the

world, a strong and convertible currency and a reduction in the role of the state in the economy. After the initial transformation slump, Poland's economy began to develop dynamically and quickly made up for the centuries-long backwardness in comparison to the West (Skodlarski 2012: 537–543). The implementation of such radical changes was based on a strong public conviction of their necessity, making the systemic transformation possible and successful (Pieczewski, Sidarava: 2022: 168–198).

There was also almost universal agreement in society and among political elites of all options that Poland's strategic orientation should be the West. As early as 1991, Poland signed an association agreement with the European Union (then: European Economic Community). It then began negotiations to join NATO. The process of integration with the West was of colossal importance, and there was an intensive importation of modern, inclusive Western formal institutions. Poland was also free to open up to Western culture. It received—and continues to receive—substantial financial assistance from European funds. Poland became a full member of NATO in 1999 and of the EU in 2004, thus returning to the orbit of Western influence, which created the conditions for development in every sphere that had not been seen for centuries.

Poland took advantage of the extremely favourable conditions, made the transformation and began to develop and catch up with its civilisational backwardness in relation to the West. Poland's transformation has been described as a great success. Polish culture was also changing, albeit slowly, becoming increasingly secular, liberal and European (Piatkowski 2018: 255–260).

Poland's institutional matrix has changed radically as a result of the transition and process of integration with Western structures. The extractive political and economic institutions of real socialism have been replaced by inclusive modern institutions from Western Europe. The least progress has been made in the evolution of culture, which is natural because, at its core, it consists of informal institutions of incredible durability. The political sphere is also not one of Poland's strengths and can be seen as a barrier to development.

Conclusion

I have distinguished eight major institutional cycles in the 1,000-plus-year history of the Polish state. The first cycle (tenth–twelfth centuries) and the second (thirteenth–fifteenth centuries) were of great

importance in shaping Poland's institutional matrix for the next millennium. This time period was associated with the adoption of Western-type Christianity, Western feudal and legal customs and Latin script. The institutions adopted, compared with the tribal customs in place earlier, should be considered inclusive. The third cycle (sixteenth century) was of great importance in determining the further trajectories of Poland's development. Political monopoly was gained by the Polish nobility, and the role of the king was diminishing. The nobility, using its political monopoly, subjugated the other states and then appropriated the country's economic resources (land ownership). The peasants lost their personal freedom, which led to the refeudalisation of the country. In the fourth cycle (seventeenth–eighteenth centuries), Polish political, economic and cultural institutions consistently developed in the opposite direction to those in the West. Poland's institutional matrix was dominated by extractive institutions, which eventually led to the total collapse of the Polish state (late eighteenth century). In the fifth cycle (nineteenth century and early twentieth), Polish lands came under the rule of three partitioners (Prussia, Austria-Hungary and Russia), finding themselves influenced by three different institutional environments and political cultures. This cycle saw revolutionary institutional changes: enfranchisement of the peasants (against the will of the nobility) and the introduction of a capitalist economy. The sixth cycle covered the interwar period. After regaining independence, initially, a democratic political system arose but the most of inclusive institutions gave way after the coup in 1926. Radical changes took place in the seventh cycle (1939–1989) because of the losses caused by WWII and forcible introduction of socialism. The communists completely changed Poland's institutional matrix, replacing the free market with state regulation and private ownership of the means of production with state ownership (most agriculture remained in private hands). Freedom disappeared, and the political system was a dictatorship. Poland's institutional matrix was dominated by extractive institutions. However, communism eliminated illiteracy and levelled the playing field. The eighth cycle (from 1989 to the present day) is related to the attainment of freedom, the transformation and Poland's entry into NATO and the EU. In this cycle, liberal democracy became the political system, and the economy was based on the free market and private property. Polish politicians and society almost unanimously turned towards the West. The EU accession process forced the implementation of modern inclusive institutions in every sphere. Poland embarked on a path of growth and rapprochement with the West.

An analysis of the institutional cycles shows that Poland's history has been dominated (apart from the exceptional first and second cycle and the contemporary one) by extractive institutions. Inclusive institutions were introduced with great difficulty and delay in relation to the West. For a synthetic summary of Poland's institutional cycles, see the Appendix.

Appendix. Synthetic summary of Poland's institutional cycles.

Załącznik. Syntetyczne podsumowanie cykli instytucjonalnych w Polsce

Cycle number, century/years	Characteristics (key features of the system or event)	Evaluation of the underlying institutions of the institutional matrix
<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
First cycle (tenth–twelfth)	Adoption of the Western version of Christianity and basic principles of the feudal system.	Political, economic and culture institutions generally inclusive (but delayed).
Second cycle (thirteenth–fifteenth)	Settlement on the German law, replacing custom-based law with legal law, influx of Jews, establishing Jagiellonian University, privileges of the nobility.	Generally all institutions highly inclusive. In the political sphere, privileges of the nobility contribute to the future monopolisation of politics by the nobility (extractive).
Third cycle (sixteenth)	Monopolisation of politics by the nobility, Poland an elected monarchy, subordination of other social groups to the nobility, refeudalisation, Reformation.	Turning point: extractive political institutions (monopoly of power of the nobility) leads to the creation of extractive economic institutions. Intellectual ferment caused by the Reformation: inclusive.
Fourth cycle (seventeenth–eighteenth)	Decentralisation and weakening of the state, depriving peasants of most of their rights ('quasi-slavery'), victory of the Counter-Reformation. Collapse of the state: Poland disappears from the map of Europe.	Preservation of oligarchic political and extractive economic institutions. In the cultural sphere: the Counter-Reformation prevails, conservatism dominates.

<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>
Fifth cycle (nineteenth–beginning of twentieth)	Poland located in three different institutional environments (Prussia, Russia, Austria-Hungary). Radical changes of institutions: enfranchisement of peasants, introduction of capitalist institutions made at different times and rules. Nation-building processes.	Economic institutions inclusive but highly delayed, political institutions: Extractive. Culture: various currents, conservatism dominates.
Sixth cycle (1918–1939)	In the beginning, liberal democracy, a modern constitution, land reform. After the coup d'état (1926): authoritarianisation of power, slowing down of reforms. Monopolisation and stratification of the economy.	Prevalence of extractive institutions in politics and the economy. The reproduction of oligarchic patterns. Different currents in culture. Conservatism still dominant. 'The Extended Middle Ages'.
Seventh cycle (1939–1989)	The great loss of human capital and then introduction of the institutions of real socialism: negation of the free market, central planning, price and wage controls and state ownership of the means of production (except for most agriculture). In politics: communist authoritarian rule. Attempted Sovietisation of culture.	In politics and economics: extractive institutions dominate. In culture: Polish conservatism resists Sovietisation. Positives: abolished illiteracy, equalisation of social opportunities.
Eighth cycle (1989–)	Transformation to liberal democracy, free market and private property. Accession process and Poland's entry into NATO and the EU. Importation of modern institutions from the West. EU financial assistance. Unfettered access to Western culture.	Political and economic institutions: definitely inclusive. Culture: Changes towards liberalisation and Westernisation. Conservatism still dominates.

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Cykle instytucjonalne w historii Polski – uwagi na temat korzeni współczesnej matrycy instytucjonalnej

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja i ocena cykli instytucjonalnych (okresów o trwałe przewadze pewnych instytucji decydujących o charakterze całego systemu polityczno-gospodarczego) w historii Polski. Autor podejmuje próbę ich oceny pod kątem przewagi włączających lub ekstraktywnych instytucji politycznych i gospodarczych. Ziemie polskie leżące na skraju cywilizacji zachodniej znajdowały się w orbicie wpływów Zachodu i Wschodu. Przyjmowały instytucje z obu stron i tworzyły własne, oryginalne. Przeważały instytucje zachodnie. W ciągu ponad 1000-letniej historii Polski dominowały jednak instytucje wykluczające, czyniąc kraj zacofanym w stosunku do Zachodu. W artykule zastosowano teorię wywodzącą się z nowej ekonomii instytucjonalnej oraz analizę historyczną.

Słowa kluczowe: Polska, cykle instytucjonalne, matryca instytucjonalna, instytucje włączające i wykluczające