

Assume that you need to solve a serious public problem. Is it better to set up a strict plan and stick to it consistently? Or maybe it will be more effective to draft a very general plan and provide space for experimentation with the specific solutions, hoping that such a step will unleash creativity and by the means of trial-and-error approach will lead you into the most effective way to deal with the problem you face? In the context of public policies, these questions are far from being trivial. And the existing literature does not provide a clear answer: one may provide solid arguments for both mentioned options.

The outlined dilemma lies at the heart of the proposed project. Our attempt to shed a new light on the dilemma will be based on the analysis of the policy response of Polish public authorities to the migration crisis caused by the escalation of Russian aggression against Ukraine on 24 February 2022. Poland became the main host country for Ukrainian refugees. Poland's public authorities were quick to adopt a special law establishing the overall framework for policy response aimed at dealing with the influx of refugees leaving Ukraine. The law legalized the stay of refugees for the period of 1,5 years (with the possibility of prolongation), thus drafting the basic timeframe for the policy response. Also, it outlined the scope of the policy response by regulating the most fundamental issues in three domains: (a) provision of material support; (b) access to public services, such as education and healthcare; (c) access to the labor market. At the same time, there is a wide space left for specific solutions designed by the local authorities in the mentioned three domains. Within the framework of this project, we aim to take under scrutiny specific policy solutions designed by the local authorities of 12 metropolitan cities aligned in the Union of Polish Metropolises: Bialystok, Bydgoszcz, Gdansk, Katowice, Krakow, Lublin, Lodz, Poznan, Rzeszow, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wroclaw. Our aim is to assess the variability of these solutions and understand the impact of the identified scale of variability on the overall effectiveness of policy response at the national level.

Our research will have two major outcomes. First, the project will advance our understanding of the significance of consistency of public solutions designed to face urgent social challenges. By doing so, it may enrich the "policy toolbox" available to policy designers dealing with similar challenges throughout the world. Second, the project will provide new insights into policy response by Polish authorities to the migration crisis caused by the escalation of Russian aggression against Ukraine. This is a novel and still undiscovered issue, which is not covered by academic publications so far. In other words the project is aimed at studying the unique situation that emerged after 24 February 2022 and learn the lessons taught by it - both theoretical and practical ones.