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EVALUATION IN PUBLIC MANAGEMENT IN POLAND

The aim of this article is to analyze the role of evaluation in public management in Poland in the content of the realization of the «good governance» principle and strengthening of democracy processes. Among functions of evaluation, functions related to the provisions of information and knowledge about social programs, promotion of this knowledge both among decision makers and among different groups of users and stakeholders of these programs and the strengthening of participation in the co-government of social programs and co-responsibility for their effects are most accented.

Key words: *evaluation, public management, sociology.*

Today's Polish society is influenced by many social processes such as development of modern information and communication technologies and the process of globalization related to these technologies, as well as European integration and increase of social mobility. They change the Polish society in almost every area of life. This has an impact on the country, method of its governance, politics and administration. Democratic forms of government, organizations of state and local administration are also influenced by social changes. These changes create new socio-political environments and generate new expectations from leaders, which should be recognized and included in the public management process.

Anthony Giddens [3, p. 12–16] points out three factors, which shape contemporary political life in the greatest extent. In his opinion, the most important factor is globalization, understood as «distance action» related to the development and dissemination of information and communication technologies, as well as mass transport. As the second factor, he lists the emergence of post-traditional social order. The order, «in which tradition changes its status. Traditions must explain themselves, open to debate or discussion (...). In a globalizing and culturally cosmopolitan society, traditions must be open to view: their sources or justifications must be known» [3, p. 13–14]. The third factor of changes in modern societies is the widening of social reflectiveness. According to Anthony Giddens, the rise in social reflectiveness leads to a disruption of the relationship between knowledge and power. This is manifested by political reconstruction postulates and dissatisfaction with classical mechanisms of governance, as well as emphasis on grassroots decision making [3, p. 12–16]. Anthony Giddens draws attention to the shortcomings of liberal democracy in a globalizing and reflective social order. He postulates the need for more advanced political form by «democratization of democracy» and implementation of dialogue democracy and generative policy, which (in his opinion) is better suited to the prevailing social conditions. Particularly interesting is the concept of generative policy, which is

described by him in the following way: «it seeks to ensure that individuals and groups may affect the course of affairs rather than to make things happen in the context of general aspirations and social tasks. Generative policy is a defense of public policy, but it does not situate itself in the old opposition between the state and the market. It works by ensuring material conditions and organizational frameworks for marking decisions by individuals and groups in a broader social order that expresses the policy of life» [3, p. 24].

Another important element affecting the shape of political life and development of the public sphere is the formation of information society and increase of information resources and social communication. The emergence of information society requires from individuals the ability to use information in life decisions, its selection and verification. Similarly, policymakers of public institutions face the difficult task of dealing with the flood of data and information, as well as information chaos and noise. Usually, they are not able to handle with this situation. Nowadays, the problem is more often the excess of information rather than the lack of information.

These issues, which illustrate challenges for the management related to the formation of information society in the XXI century, were described, among other things, by Peter Drucker. He characterized changes in the management, which are forced, *inter alia*, by information revolution. His analysis was not only related to private companies, but also to the public sphere. He argued that management is equally applicable to these institutions, and differences concerning the specific nature of each organization constitute no more than 10% of management problems, while the remaining 90% of problems come down to the same issues [1, p. 111–113]. According to Peter Drucker, the information revolution requires the ability to manage information presented by decision makers. Key information will mainly include information about the environment, not about the organization. Knowledge employees will be required to do this work, because without proper organization of work, this data will not become information [1, p. 153–196]. Managers more and more often rely on information about the public opinion collected with the use of modern technologies. However, the decision itself and the responsibility for this decision do not belong to the public opinion, but it belongs to managers.

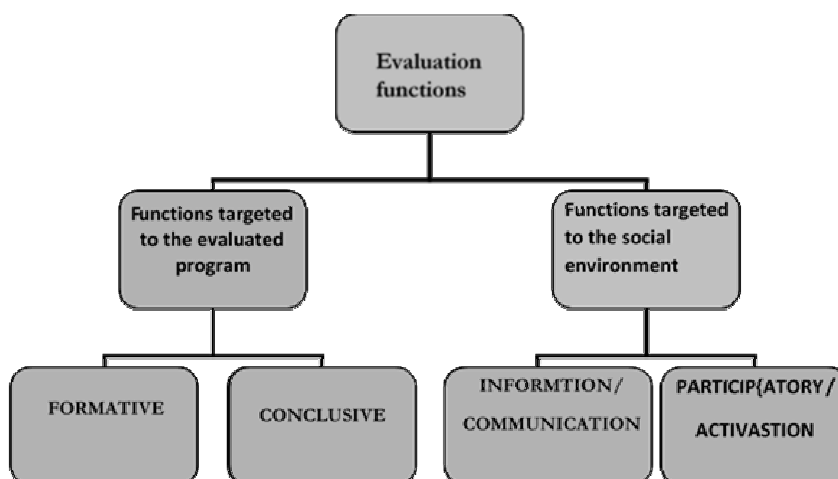
Evaluation is a process of systematic examination of values for a certain object (social program) leading to support the decision-making process or take the opinion. IN the area of public management, it is defined as: «the use of researches for learning, asking questions and seeking answers supported by convincing evidences about directions and implementation of public programs, which will help to achieve better results» [6, p. 52]. The objectives of evaluation are not only connected with its final effect, which constitutes the evaluation of values for a certain action, but also with the while social process that is started, its course, changes of consciousness and interpersonal relationships, which are part of it [5, p. 71–90].

The objectives of evaluation were clearly identified by M.Q. Patton. He considers the evaluation as a process with a mission to provide its users such information, which is necessary to make a decision/assessment and further action. He included the objectives of evaluation is three short questions that could be extended by the interpretation in Polish:

- What? (diagnosis: What was done? What does data say?)
- So what? (judgement: How to interpret this data? What does it matter?)
- Now what? (recommendations: And what next? How should we act after taking into account this data?) [7, p. 4–6].

Among the evaluation functions, there are two main categories: firstly, functions targeted to the evaluated program, which are related with the ability to influence its course by providing information about the desired changes, so mainly related to the format function, as well as functions of evaluating the value of a program and the impact of its results determined as conclusive functions. And secondly, the functions addressed to the social environment, in which the program is carried out. This is primarily an information and communication function, which informs about the implementation and effects of the program and strengthens communication between environments, groups of stakeholders, beneficiaries, potential beneficiaries and users, in which the program is performed. There is also a participatory and an activation function aimed at increasing the involvement of different environments in the realization of the program and empowerment of these environments, which were previously treated as passive recipients of the program.

Figure 1. Evaluation functions



Source: own study

The functions of evaluation in the area of public management include, among other things: improvement of planning by ensuring the adequacy of intervention actions to the needs of beneficiaries and rationality of objectives; improvement of implementation and current quality by rationalization of program's

management, monitoring; strengthening a sense of partnership and co-ownership through the reinforcement of relationship between participants of the program and their activation; enrichment of knowledge about the program by explaining the factors that affect its success or failure, collection of knowledge about the program; settlement and strengthening of responsibility by presenting effects of the program for public opinion and evaluation of program value [2, p. 20].

Among the functions of evaluation, the most accented are functions related to the provision of information and knowledge, promotion of this knowledge both among decision makers and various groups of users and stakeholders of the program and with the strengthening of participation in co-government and co-responsibility for the program. They correspond to these aspects, which in today's political life are a developing area, subject to wider social processes: development of the information society, as well as the increase of social reflectiveness and the needs for dialogue democracy.

Usability is a fundamental function of evaluation that should be the basis for its entire planning and organization. This is pointed out by Joseph S. Wholey, Harry P. Hatry and Kathryn E. Newcomer in their new book on evaluation programming [10, p. 5–29], by asking the question: how to choose an evaluation program? Suggested criteria/questions, which should be taken into account before selecting a program for evaluation:

1. *Whether the results of evaluation will affect decisions concerning the program?* The evaluation should enable/support the answer to the question: whether the program is worth continuing? Does it require any modifications? A program, whose evaluation serves only to obtain the political support, does not meet the first criterion.

2. *Whether the evaluation will be done in time to be useful?* Time plays an important role in the evaluation, because of the fact that many decisions have to be made at certain deadlines.

3. *Is the program significant enough to perform evaluation?* Significant evaluation may concern, for example, the program, which consume the largest amount of resources. However, it can be an evaluation of the program that is perceived as the least effective/efficient.

4. *Is program's realization perceived as problematic?* Each program has its own group of beneficiaries, users and personnel, who can also benefit from the evaluation, especially when there are problems with the implementation process and data for the justification of continuation, modification, extension or liquidation of the program are necessary.

5. *Where are we with the realization of the program?* The best and most useful are early stage programs, new programs or programs bringing unknown benefits [10, p. 2–29].

The properly applied evaluation in the area of public management can also be a method of democratizing this process and legitimizing decisions. This issue is discussed by Ernest R. House. He shows the role of evaluation under the

conditions of liberal democracy. «Evaluation itself is not a procedure for making social decisions – it is a part of the procedure for making decisions concerning the application of funds. It anticipates some kind of situations, in which social decisions are made. In this process, the role of evaluation is limited to rational persuasion based on common principles and values» [4, p. 229].

In fact, it is rarely possible to work out a decision that will satisfy all interested parties, but the aim of the evaluation is not a decision in itself, but an improvement in the manner of its making. In public management, the evaluation enables the change understood as a development in the desired direction. Modern management methods talk the change management, and the evaluator should play a role of the leader of change. Thanks to the evaluation, this change can support the improvement of methods and tools for public management. The evaluator provides knowledge about social conditions and needs, so we can find out about the expected and desired changes.

The idea of practice of evaluation in the field of public management in Poland was widespread in the first years of the XXI century. Its origin was related to the implementation of pre-accession funds and accession to the European Union, when Poland became a beneficiary of EU cohesion policy and structural funds. Furthermore, financial instruments of the World Bank (appearing in Poland) implemented their procedures for assessing the use of funds provided by the World Bank and determined standards for public management that are required for further access to these funds. The «good governance» principle presented to as good governance – refers to the method and effects of governance. The implementation of the «good governance» concept is connected with the improvement of governance quality both by developing the idea of good governance (defining values and criteria for their verification) and methods of its realization.

This concept appeared in the 1990s in documents of the World Bank in connection with support program implemented by this institution for developing countries. It was a response to the postulates of improving the effectiveness of their functioning in terms of achieving determined development goals. The idea was connected with the raise of the effectiveness level of using external aid by improving the quality of government and developing management methods in public institutions. These actions were supposed to lead to the improvement of political conditions and strengthening of the democratic system, as well as improvement of the economic conditions in beneficiary countries. The concept of «governance» was analyzed in two dimensions: as the functioning of administration of political authorities (at all levels of government) and as inclusion in decision-making process of interest groups and social organizations [11, p. 7–10].

This rule is based on several basic values. These are primarily: *government effectiveness*: the ability of public authorities and administration to carry out public policies in an effective, fair and cost effective manner; *economic development*: the ability to create high-quality economic policies; *democratization*:

clearness and transparency of the functioning of authorities, as well as the ability to include citizens, including social and non-governmental organizations, on the basis of appropriate representativeness and pluralism.

The World Bank has developed a list of basic performance indicators for the good governance principle: *voice and accountability* – understood as the extent of citizens' participation in works of the government, democratic process of electing the authorities, as well as ensuing civil freedoms (e.g. freedom of expression and media freedom, freedom of association); *political stability and non-violence* – defined as the probability of stable government, security of citizens and ensuring peace, as well as counteracting terrorist threats; *government effectiveness* – determined by the indicator of government's administrative potential for effective implementation of policies and public services; *regulatory quality* – refers to the formulation and implementation of regulations, which are mainly connected with the development of the private sector in the economy; *rule of law* – involving the creation of legal conditions for the respect of property, realization of contracts in business activity and efficiency of the police and judicial system; *control of corruption* – determined by the indicator for perception of corruption risks [11, p. 12–16].

The «good governance» principle was introduced in Poland as one of the elements of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). The subject of the evaluation was the impact of the NSRF on the building of public administration's potential and realization of the «good governance» principles, as well as the ability to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of tasks within the framework of public policies. Within the «good governance» area, the following elements were assessed: processes for the realization of policies, coordination and cooperation of the involved institutions and their ability to program, implement, monitor and evaluate development projects [9]. The sector of evaluation researches in Poland grows up. According to the Polish Evaluation Association, contracts for the public sector in 2010 accounted for 10% of the value of the Polish market for research services, and revenues from evaluations amounted to more than 10 million PLN [9].

Evaluation researches of cohesion policy usually concerned the following issues: evaluation of the management and implementation system for ESF programs; evaluation of the acceptance of applications process; analysis of information and promotion activities; research of public knowledge and opinion about the availability and use of ESF resources; examination of access barriers and use of funds; analysis of indicators.

Both the subject matter and the scope of already performed evaluations in the area of «good governance» largely seek to evaluate the implementation of already set standards of public management and «good governance» principles. A part of studies, especially those related to the definition of indicators and procedures for the acceptance of applications and management methods aim to improve methods and practices in the area of public management. Only a small

part of the already carried out evaluations deal with issues related to the development of the good governance idea, attempts to their identification and define I the consciousness of different social groups, as well as the issue of further improvement of evaluation methods (i.e. meta-evaluation).

Realization of the «good governance» concept is connected with raising the quality of governance and management by: development of the idea of good governance and adapting it to the requirements of a changing society (determination of its values and criteria of their verification); improvement of methods for its realization; evaluation of public institutions' actions.

Co-government and co-responsibility are the most important dimensions of evaluation. They differentiate it from the approaches used in traditional public management concept and from the concepts of new public management.

The obligation to improve the evaluation in the area of public management should take into account such social processes as: development of the knowledge society, development of social reflectiveness, democratization, dialogue of democracy and recognition of pluralism's values. It should be accompanied by the requirement of meta-evaluation, critical look at the evaluation methods and evaluation strategies. This commitment will enable the implementation of the principle of good governance, as well as its improvement and adaptation to the needs of Polish society.

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Соберай І. Оцінка в державному менеджменті в Польщі

В статті проаналізовано роль оцінки в державному управлінні в Польщі, зокрема в ході реалізації принципу «добре управління». Акцентовано на тому, що при поси-

ленні демократичних процесів, функції оцінювання пов'язані із забезпеченістю інформацією та знанням про соціальні програми. Доведено, що просування цього знання як серед вирішальних продуцентів цих програм, так і серед різних груп користувачів і посередників зміцнює їх участь і спільну відповідальність за ефективну реалізацію державних соціальних програм.

Ключові слова: оцінка, державний менеджмент, соціологія.

Соберай И. Оценка в государственном менеджменте в Польше

В статье проанализирована роль оценки в государственном управлении в Польше, в частности в ходе реализации принципа «хорошее управление». Акцентировано на том, что при усилении демократических процессов функции оценки связываются с обеспеченностью информацией и знанием о социальных программах. Доказано, что продвижение этого знания как среди решающих продуцентов этих программ, так и среди разных групп пользователей и посредников усиливает их участие и общую ответственность за эффективную реализацию государственных социальных программ.

Ключевые слова: оценка, государственный менеджмент, социология.