

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

1. Title of the dissertation: THE INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE IDEA OF THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN POLISH PUBLIC POLICY IN THE YEARS 2015–2025
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5. Summary:

The aim of the doctoral dissertation is to identify the process of institutionalisation of the idea of the circular economy (CE) in national public policy in Poland in the years 2015–2025. The scientific problem addressed in the dissertation is to explain how the idea of the circular economy is adopted and becomes institutionalised in public policy, as well as how this process unfolds over time.

The dissertation is grounded in the approach of discursive institutionalism, which assumes that public policies are co-shaped through processes of meaning-making in discourse. The analysis encompasses three interrelated dimensions: the characteristics of the idea, the actors involved, and the contextual conditions, enabling the institutionalisation process to be examined as a dynamic phenomenon embedded in political practice.

The empirical basis consists of an analysis of 1,327 statements containing references to the circular economy, covering both coordinative (political) and communicative (media) discourse, supplemented by interviews with participants involved in the process under study. The adopted approach enabled the reconstruction of the course of institutionalisation of the CE idea in relation to successive stages of public policy formalisation.

The study identifies four phases of CE policy formalisation. The findings demonstrate that the circular economy functions in Polish discourse as an idea with a relatively stable core meaning, accompanied by variability in its interpretations and a predominance of descriptive definitions.

The analysis reveals the instability of hierarchical relations between the circular economy and co-occurring concepts in discourse, reflected in the shifting positioning of the idea as either superordinate or subordinate to other categories, as well as a lack of coherence between political and media discourse. It also identifies a differentiated structure of actors, with the dominant role of central government administration in coordinative discourse and of media and business representatives in communicative discourse.

The findings indicate that the institutionalisation of the circular economy in Poland is non-uniform and non-linear, with its trajectory evolving over time and depending on the ways the idea is defined and the contexts in which it is embedded. Consequently, the circular economy has reached the level of partial institutionalisation.

The dissertation provides an original solution to the scientific problem by explaining the process of institutionalisation of an idea in public policy and contributes to the field of political science and public administration by demonstrating the relevance of discursive institutionalism for the study of public policy processes.