

Jerzy Wilkin

Justice: A Salient Virtue of Social Institutions

Abstract:* Justice is an area of research and the subject of theoretical works, just like the categories of truth, beauty and rationality. Apart from some more general remarks on justice, the present text concentrates on issues of justice considered from the point of view of the interests and theoretical achievements of economics, and also on the problem of territorial justice. To the question: What is territorial justice?, I propose the following answer: Territorial justice is a form of social justice that, apart from the basic features of that notion, in relation to individuals and social groups takes into account their spatial circumstances, treating space (territory) as a potential and real-term barrier to accessing the principles of justice.

Keywords: territorial justice, efficiency, equality, institutions, rural areas.

1. Introduction

Everyone has some kind of conception of justice and considers it extremely important, whether they are a few or a few dozen years old. Even very young children have a sense of justice and injustice in relation to certain behaviours and situations. Justice is a privilege or something to which people are entitled, injustice is a wrong. The meaning of this notion has drawn many researchers to study it, not just philosophers and psychologists.

Andrzej Rosner considers justice to be one of the central notions in ethics, but also notes many other meanings and functions of this concept (Rosner 2022).

Jerzy Wilkin was a professor at the Institute of Rural and Agriculture Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences in 2002–2023.

* This abstract consists only of the sentences written by the author in the present article. These sentences as well as keywords were selected by the editorial team of the *Village and Agriculture* quarterly (footnote by the editorial team).



Utwór dostępny jest na licencji Creative Commons Uznanie autorstwa 4.0 Międzynarodowe.
[Creative Commons CC BY 4.0.](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Issues of justice are also increasingly attracting the attention of economists, who have come to discover and appreciate the practical implications of the principles of justice as well as other issues from the realm of ethics.

Apart from some more general remarks on justice, the present text concentrates on issues of justice considered from the point of view of the interests and theoretical achievements of economics, and also on the problem of territorial justice.

I have been interested in the correlations between economic development and justice from the start of my career. In 1996, I organised the seminar *Efficiency vs Justice*, and the papers presented there were published a year later by the publishing house Key Text (Wilkin [ed.] 1997). This was one of the first works issued in book form to discuss the relations between the principles of justice and the operation of an economy, published in Polish; the subject matter also started gaining in popularity in the international economic literature. The interest shown by economists and researchers from other social sciences in the connection between economic life and the implementation of principles of justice increased noticeably during the radical systemic and institutional changes accompanying the post-socialist transformation in Poland and other countries. It turned out that the shift to a market-oriented economy together with privatisation improved economic efficiency significantly, but also increased social inequalities and various forms of exclusion, which was at odds with a sense of justice.¹ In his work analysing the dilemmas of the first stage of the post-socialist transformation, Joseph E. Stiglitz recognised unjust distribution as one of the most important problems:

I stress the results on the link between issues of distribution and issues of efficiency, because some of the recent discussions of reform within Eastern Europe have stressed efficiency concerns, with limited regard to the consequences for distribution. Years from now this lack of concern for distribution, I will argue later, may come to haunt these economies, not just in the form of social unrest, but more narrowly in terms of long-run economic efficiency. At the very least, there is no intellectual foundation for the separation of efficiency and distributional concerns (Stiglitz 1994, pp. 49–50).

I fully agree with Stiglitz on this, and economic research as well as theoretical models (e.g. in social choice theory) confirm the above opinion, too. The human development indices (HDI) compiled by the World Bank show that countries with a moderate income distribution, e.g. measured by the Gini coefficient, and also based on a democratic institutional order guaranteeing their citizens a wide range

¹ One frequently cited illustration of the violation of principles of social justice during the post-socialist transformation is the situation of former state farm (PGR) communities in Poland.

of liberties and rights, have long been in the lead among countries judged using the HDI and similar multi-component development indicators.

2. Why Is Justice Important?

John Rawls, the author of one of the most important academic works on the theory and importance of justice, wrote that:

justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. [...] Being first virtues of human activities, truth and justice are uncompromising (Rawls 1994, p. 13).

This thinking outlined by Rawls gave me the idea for the title of my text, since I agree with it completely.

Justice is aptly tied in with social institutions, as the shape, cohesion and quality of the institutions forming the regulatory framework of human behaviours and government and business activity enable or hinder, or even prevent, the realisation of justice as a value. Social institutions are formed both in a spontaneous and evolutionary process and by way of intentional, deliberate construction by private and public entities. Justice may thus be defined and enforced in various ways. Considering these complex sources and interpretations, answering the question “what is justice” is not easy – neither for theoreticians nor for ordinary people. This difficulty also concerns many other fundamental values: truth, good, beauty, rationality etc., and is largely due to historical and cultural variability as well as the achievements of science, which also keep changing and growing.

The American ethicist Alasdair MacIntyre wrote that “since there are a diversity of traditions of enquiry, with histories, there are, so it will turn out, rationalities rather than rationality, just as it will also turn out that there are justices rather than justice” (MacIntyre 2007, p. 57). Not only theoretical researchers have different definitions and concepts of justice. In fact, by and large, everyone has them. This is how Thomas Piketty, the author of a very famous and widely discussed work entitled *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, sees it:

Peasant and noble, worker and factory owner, waiter and banker: each has his or her own unique vantage point and sees important aspects of how other people live and what relations of power and domination exist between social groups, and these observations shape each person's judgment of what

is and is not just. Hence there will always be a fundamentally subjective and psychological dimension to inequality, which inevitably gives rise to political conflict that no purportedly scientific analysis can alleviate. Democracy will never be supplanted by a republic of experts (Piketty 2015, pp. 12–13).

Nevertheless, justice is an area of research and the subject of theoretical works, just like the categories of truth, beauty and rationality. Achievements in this area not only have theoretical and intellectual significance, but sometimes are conducive to finding practical solutions. This is the character and significance of Rawls' theoretical output. His concept of justice as fairness has not only gained wide popularity, it has also inspired a search for such social institutions that would enable the principles of justice to be put into practice better and more fully. According to Rawls:

A just social system defines the scope within which individuals must develop their aims, and it provides a framework of rights and opportunities and the means of satisfaction within and by the use of which these ends may be equitably pursued. The priority of justice is accounted for, in part, by holding that the interests requiring the violation of justice have no value. Having no merit in the first place, they cannot override its claims. This priority of the right over the good in justice as fairness turns out to be a central feature of the conception (Rawls 1994, p. 49).

Access to what he calls primary goods has a particularly important position in Rawls' theory, including "the primary good of self-respect". This good requires not only liberties and social rights, but also an appropriate distribution of income and wealth.

It took a long time for economists to discover the importance of justice, and also to find constructive and development-friendly ties between efficiency, rationality and justice. A pioneering role in the discussion on the relationship between efficiency and justice, including equality, was played by the famous macroeconomist Arthur Okun's publication *Equality and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff* (1975). Many economists have referenced this work, among them Paul Samuelson. Economists mostly did not question the need to reduce inequalities of income and wealth, but they indicated that this was taking place at the cost of efficiency. The "leaky bucket" became a metaphor for this. Carrying income from certain social groups to others with the aim of improving the level of egalitarianism of distribution causes a loss of part of the income or resources in question. Simply put, redistribution comes at a price. One might say that there are transaction costs involved, incurred by both private and public entities. Both Okun and most mainstream economists believed

that the dilemma between equality and efficiency was the fundamental socio-economic problem of our times. According to Okun, one of the arguments in favour of diminishing the excessive spread of income in society was that inequality of income translated into inequality of civil rights and limited democracy, which would be a very undesirable outcome. As Okun pointed out:

Democratic capitalist societies would continue to seek ways of separating the realm of money from the realm of civil rights, and significant progress could be achieved here. However, he continued, we should not delude ourselves: this will not solve the problem completely, for a conflict between the principle of equality and the principle of economic efficiency is unavoidable. In this sense, capitalism and democracy need each other so as to add some rationality to the issue of equality and some humanitarianism to the issue of efficiency (Okun 1975, p. 33).

Subsequently, the dilemma of justice (or equality) versus efficiency was approached differently by economists. It turned out, also as a result of empirical studies, that distribution, which is closely tied to justice, includes some major sources both of improving efficiency and having a favourable impact on socio-economic development. Justice can work for the benefit of efficiency!

3. What Is Justice According to Economists?

Justice is definitely among the most important ethical, moral and social values (Rosner 2022). As a category, it very often appears in academic papers, literature and documents concerning the organisation of the state and society. We can find many remarks about it in the Bible, in ancient and contemporary philosophy, in the law, political treatises, economics, the social teachings of the Church and many other documents, publications and public and private statements. Justice should thus have a place next to the traditional philosophical triad of good, truth and beauty. Dealing with it academically inclines the scholar to take an interdisciplinary approach, and in fact that is the character of most theoretical studies on justice.

Economists were not very willing to consider the issue of justice until recently, because for this group of social researchers and practical constructors of economic solutions, the most important notion was efficiency. Justice was a vague and slightly suspect concept to them, among other things because it was often burdened with many adjectives, to mention social, socialist, distributive, or historical. Even today, if they use the notion of justice, many economists avoid adding any adjectives, thus questioning the sense of social justice, for example.

However, I consider social justice to be the most important type of justice, because whether something is just or unjust is most often decided or judged by society, or by the social group that a particular issue concerns, as I mentioned earlier, also referencing other scholars. Allow me to cite an example of a situation from the real socialism period. A crew meeting was taking place at a large industrial plant in Warsaw (I forget the exact date and the factory's name). One works committee member said everyone was okay with the general director making five times more money than the average wage at the enterprise, but they would not accept him earning 30 times more. What would that worker have said if he had been employed at a large multinational corporation whose president makes 300 times more than that corporation's average wage? Under socialism, egalitarian tendencies were very strong, and the notion of social justice was different from what it was under capitalism.

However, economists are increasingly often discovering correlations between the operation of an economy and justice, including positive correlations between efficiency and justice. The well-known Spanish economist Jesus Huerta De Soto explains these relations as follows:

The contradiction between efficiency and justice is false. What is just cannot be inefficient, and what is efficient cannot be unjust. A dynamic analysis reveals that justice and efficiency are but two sides of the same coin, which also confirms the consistent, integrated order that exists in the social realm. Consequently, our study of dynamic efficiency allows us to discover which ethical principles make this type of efficiency possible (De Soto 2010, pp. 48–49).

Dynamic efficiency, which holds a particularly prominent place in the cited work and also in this approach to justice, requires appropriate institutions. They are the factor that can ensure that growing efficiency will foster the implementation of principles of justice or restrict justice.

It is true that the development of various trends in institutional economics not only nudged economists closer to the output of philosophy, law, social psychology and sociology, but also helped incorporate justice as an issue into the mainstream of contemporary economics. Serge-Christophe Kolm, the author of an extensive and comprehensive analysis of the notion of justice in philosophy and the social sciences, offered this opinion: “The modern theory of justice is the product of the necessary new alliance between economics and philosophy. It can be thought of as a philosophical mind in an economic body” (Kolm 1996, p. 3).

One of the most important concepts of contemporary economics, on which the foundations of microeconomics are built, is that of *homo oeconomicus*, i.e.

humans as agents who are rational, strive for maximisation of benefits, and are selfish by nature. *Homo oeconomicus* does not think about justice; he is occupied with the problem of efficiency, maximisation of personal benefits, and a special kind of balance. However, this concept of humans as agents is being questioned more and more often, also by economists.

There is a commendable exception in economists' discussions on the problem of justice, namely the output of the Austrian school of economics, and especially the concepts of Friedrich August von Hayek. But even economists representing this trend in economics take a very conservative and rather narrow approach to the question of justice. Above all, they reject the notion of social justice. Hayek believed that "the demand for social justice is indeed an expression of revolt of the tribal spirit against the abstract requirements of the coherence of the Great Society" and, as Krzysztof Kostro points out, in Hayek social justice was a synonym of distributive justice, and "people who make use of it perceive society as a designed organisation subordinated to specific goals and implementing a certain model of distribution that is called just" (Kostro 1997, pp. 85–86). Economists from the Austrian school were ardent opponents of increasing the influence of the government and its role in the functioning of the economy. They considered this a threat, both to personal and economic freedom. In his most important work, *The Constitution of Liberty*, Hayek wrote that "distributive justice requires an allocation of all resources by a central authority; it requires that people be told what to do and what ends to serve" (Hayek 2007, p. 232). I consider this view to be unfounded, at least with regard to contemporary states based on democracy and a market economy. In such countries, the redistribution of income and wealth is treated as a supplementary and corrective mechanism, not an all-encompassing and predominant one. Representatives of the economics mainstream also consider an appropriate symbiosis and complementariness of government and market, including public and market regulation, to be the right solution, conducive both to economic development and to the fulfilment of principles of justice.

Justice is one of the most important social values forming the axiological foundation of the state, society, and the economy. I agree with the idea formulated by Jerzy Hausner, among others, that values are produced socially; they are the result of a social process (Hausner 2019). And that is why they are variable.

I have always thought that justice can be either divine, formulated by God, e.g. in the Bible or in other religious doctrines, or social – defined, perceived and implemented by society.

Justice is sometimes confused with equality, and although they are not the same, there are many connections between them. Some forms of equality are a basis for justice. For example, no one questions the idea that equality before the law or

equal treatment of everyone regardless of gender, religion and race are compatible with the definition and sense of justice. More often than in justice, economists are interested in the problem of equality and issues of the distribution of value produced, including their relation to efficiency. One example might be the very interesting collection of papers by Polish authors in a volume dedicated to Professor Grzegorz Gorzelak: *Równość czy efektywność rozwoju* [Equality or Efficiency of Development] (Olechnicka and Herbst [eds.], 2019), especially the chapters by Witold M. Orłowski, Iwona Sagan, Jerzy Bański, Paweł Churski, Katarzyna Zawalińska, Janusz Hryniewicz and Piotr Dutkiewicz.

Discussions on justice have long suggested the importance of the following forms of equality as a foundation of social justice (Wilkin [ed.] 1997):

- equality of measures (equality before the law, the same civil rights for all, no racial, religious or gender discrimination, the same evaluation criteria for the same employee categories etc.);
- equality of opportunities (as regards access to education, using public resources, taking advantage of civil rights, pursuing talents, aspirations etc.);
- equality of situation (in relation to wealth, social standing, using goods and services etc.).

The third aspect of equality, i.e. equality of situation, causes the most doubt and controversy. It does not imply that everyone should have similar incomes, live in homes of similar quality and have the same standard of living. The point here is to realise that large inequalities in financial standing, wealth and income restrict the ability to take advantage of other measures of equality, especially equality of opportunities, but sometimes also equality of measures. This was already discussed many years ago by Okun, the economist cited earlier:

In fact, money can buy a great many things that are not supposed to be for sale in our democracy. Performance and principle contrast sharply. The marketplace transgresses on virtually every right. Money buys legal services that can obtain preferred treatment before the law; it buys platforms that give extra weight to the owner's freedom of speech; it buys influence with elected officials and thus compromises the principle of one person, one vote. The market is permitted to legislate life and death, as evidenced, for example, by infant mortality rates for the poor that are more than one and one-half times those for middle-income Americans (Okun 1975, p. 22).

This measure of equality is also invoked by Rawls in the context of just access to primary goods as well as self-respect.

During a discussion on strategies of rural and agricultural development in the early 1990s, Leszek Balcerowicz stated that:

the irrational demand for *equality of situation* [italics – J.W.] needs to be distinguished from the legitimate demand for *equality of opportunities* [italics – J.W.]. As regards rural issues, this means striving for a situation in which rural children will have similar chances of development as similarly talented and hard-working children born in urban areas. One's place of birth should not be cause for discrimination, just like race, gender or worldview. And it is the demand to create equal opportunities precisely that should be the foundation of policies – not so much towards agriculture as towards rural areas (Balcerowicz 1993, p. 12).

As Okun as well as many other researchers of issues of equality and justice have shown, equality of opportunities cannot be achieved without actions fostering equality of situation, understood non-literally and non-dogmatically.

Considering the correlations outlined above, democratic countries, which attach importance to the ideas of equality and justice, treat the regulatory mechanisms at the disposal of public authorities as necessary components of good governance in a properly organised state. The redistribution of income and wealth via the tax system and government-regulated transfers is a widespread practice. Among other things, it serves to provide citizens with what are known as primary goods. What are primary goods? These goods have an important place in Rawls' theory of justice. He defines them as follows: "All social values – liberty and opportunity, income and wealth, and the bases of self-respect – are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any, or all, of these values is to everyone's advantage. Injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all" (Rawls 1994, p. 89). Rawls considers these goods to be the social primary goods. "Other primary goods such as health and vigour, intelligence and imagination, are natural goods" (Rawls 1994, p. 89).

The equal distribution of income and wealth may raise serious and widespread doubts. In this case, the issue is the equality of possibilities and principles of access to these goods (non-discrimination in institutional conditions) rather than any "artificial egalitarianism" of the kind demanded by communists. Rawls allows diversification of income and wealth, but the kind that serves to improve living conditions for all citizens, particularly those whose level of satisfaction of needs is lowest. This is related to the "maximin" criterion proposed by Rawls.

The suggestion that it is necessary to create "the bases of self-respect" deserves special interest and consideration in the discussion about justice. Rawls gives it a central place in the set of social primary goods. This is an apt and underestimated approach to justice. Political, social and cultural discrimination, restriction of freedom (including economic freedom), civil rights, access to jobs, education and healthcare, life in permanent poverty demolishes the bases of self-respect and destroys the bases of justice.

The conversation between Jesus and Pontius Pilate on truth is an example. This is what we read in Saint John's Gospel: "Jesus: '[...] for this cause I came into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice.' [...] Pilate: 'What is truth?'" (John 18:37–38). Pilate assumes a philosopher's stance towards Jesus. Questions about what justice is, just like those about what truth is, are mainly the domain of philosophy, but not only. What is justice – that great value so important to every human being but interpreted in so many different ways? The concept of justice and the implementation of the principles of justice is also a practical question. Among other things, it is very important for building a just and democratic political order.

Justice is fundamental for a well-organised state. In his book *The Law of Peoples*, Rawls wrote:

There is a family of reasonable liberal conceptions of justice, each of which has the following three characteristic principles:

- the first enumerates basic rights and liberties of the kind familiar from a constitutional regime;
- the second assigns these rights, liberties, and opportunities a special priority, especially with respect to the claims of the general good and perfectionism values, and;
- the third assures for all citizens the requisite primary goods to enable them to make intelligent and effective use of their freedoms.

[...] These liberalisms contain substantive principles of justice, and hence cover more than procedural justice (Rawls 2001, pp. 25–26).

For several decades now, a field of knowledge called social choice theory has been developed in the sociological and economic literature. Its most important part is the theory of fair allocation of goods. As Poland's leading researcher in this field, Grzegorz Lissowski puts it: "Social choice theory is a normative theory, and studying the principles of allocation of goods involves determining what qualities individual principles have, which enables different principles to be compared, thus making it possible to choose a principle of justice that is rationally justified and well adjusted to a given situation. This kind of study is objective, free of ideological and ethical beliefs" (Lissowski 2008, p. 13). Social choice theory mostly assumes a mathematical form. It seeks logical bases for a formal choice. This distinguishes it from public choice theory, which has an empirical foundation, invoking political choices and social values. Public choice theory is also called the economic theory of politics (Wilkin 2012). However, social choice theory may be considered part of public choice theory in a broad sense. Both theories share the fact that they make use of the achievements of game theory, as authors such as Ewa Kiryłuk-Dryjska (2014) have shown so clearly.

4. Territorial Justice: An Underestimated Aspect of Justice

In numerous analyses involving justice, this category is studied and described in relation to various groups: social groups, classes, the population divided by age, gender, education, occupation, workplace, and many other criteria. Researchers are above all interested in the extent and depth of exclusion of the groups thus distinguished, in their marginalisation and restricted access to the aforementioned basic or primary goods. However, one important but underappreciated and insufficiently studied factor that affects the implementation of the principles of justice is the location of individuals and social groups within a specific territory. Such territories: villages, cities of various size, settlements, hamlets, communes, counties or regions, are characterised by conditions and features that may facilitate or impede, or even prevent people from taking advantage of the special good we call social justice. Territorial justice may thus be defined as social justice considered in its territorial aspect. The relatively few scholars who study territorial justice usually refer to the concept of justice offered by Rawls. He was the one who concluded that the inevitable diversification of income and wealth may be acceptable and just if the income and wealth situation of the poorest groups improves at a pace no slower than that for wealthy groups. However, this is not happening, as Piketty has shown based on a large set of data and long temporal periods. This author pointed to the particularly diversified accumulation of wealth. Concluding his extensive work, he wrote:

The overall conclusion of this study is that a market economy based on private property, if left to itself, contains powerful forces of convergence, associated in particular with the diffusion of knowledge and skills; but it also contains powerful forces of divergence, which are potentially threatening to democratic societies and to the values of social justice on which they are based. The principal destabilising force has to do with the fact that the private rate of return on capital, r , can be significantly higher for long periods of time than the rate of growth of income and output, g . The inequality $r > g$ implies that wealth accumulated in the past grows more rapidly than output and wages (Piketty 2015, p. 723).

The international literature on territorial justice mentions alternative or complementary notions such as spatial justice, geographical equity, welfare geography, regional balance, marginalisation and exclusion, territorial inequality, environmental justice, socio-economic cohesion, and others.

In Poland, social justice analysed in a spatial/territorial approach is mainly studied by specialists in socio-economic geography and in spatial and regional

development. Examples include recently published works by Grzegorz Gorzelak (2021) and Bolesław Domański (2021). However, these works do not use the term territorial justice or spatial justice.

Does rural development in Poland, despite the great progress that has taken place over the past dozen or so years, deserve to be called development according to the principles of territorial justice? Unfortunately the answer to this question is not positive. Here are some examples as an illustration:

- rural areas in Poland are very diverse, not only in terms of natural conditions but also their demographic, economic, infrastructural, social, political etc. situation. We show this in successive reports on rural Poland (Foundation for the Development of Polish Agriculture – FDPA) and in the rural development monitoring project (European Fund for the Development of Polish Villages – EFRWP);
- the rural population has been growing and the urban population has been shrinking (since 2000). The countryside is becoming an attractive place to live. However, this attractiveness is observed in only about one-third of villages; the rest are seeing depopulation, which creates many problems. Fewer people in rural areas means smaller education opportunities for children and teenagers (the predominant and correct opinion is that when the school dies in a village, the village will also die after a time), smaller chances for good roads, access to healthcare and jobs. Sometimes the depopulation of rural areas does not lead to exclusion, deprivation and worsened access to public services, Opolskie province being an example, but in other cases it does, e.g. in eastern Poland;
- in the criteria of territorial justice (but not only there), the issue of access (access replaces ownership) is of fundamental importance, i.e. access to education, healthcare, jobs, housing, transport, cultural resources, participation in political life, expression of views etc. This access is very varied, and particularly so in rural areas. Sometimes the main barrier is a lack of knowledge and motivation, but sometimes it is a lack of internet access, decent roads and public transport. The availability of basic services and development opportunities is the responsibility of public authorities at various levels of the country's organisation. The European Union, to which our country belongs, is also involved in this task. What actions should be undertaken in this respect by particular levels of organisation of society, starting from local, through regional and national, to EU levels, has to be compatible with the axiological and praxiological principle of subsidiarity;
- painful enclaves of poverty and exclusion still exist, the legacy of collapsed former state-run farms (PGRs). This area of problems that are not just historical but also still relevant, leaving their mark on the existential condition of many

local communities, is the subject of interdisciplinary research at the Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWiR PAN).

After presenting an overview of research and literature on territorial justice and equality, Martin Powell and George Boyne have concluded that relatively little is known about the spatial division of welfare and the spatial strategy for improving equality; this limited knowledge is the effect of conceptual and empirical problems (Powell and Boyne 2001, p. 190). Piketty's research cited earlier does not resolve these problems, as it considered whole countries. A diagnosis and assessment of territorial justice has to be based on disaggregated data related to territorial units, especially local ones, with varied administrative status (including urban and rural localities) and lying in different parts of the country.

To the question: What is territorial justice?, I propose the following answer: **Territorial justice is a form of social justice that, apart from the basic features of that notion, in relation to individuals and social groups takes into account their spatial circumstances, treating space (territory) as a potential and real-term barrier to accessing the principles of justice.**

How can the standards of territorial justice be improved? The main conclusions and recommendations are:

- first of all, recognising that territorial (spatial) justice is one of the most important forms of social justice, until now neglected and ignored in government policies. One commendable exception in this regard is the actions undertaken by EU member states, mostly financed from EU funds, under the cohesion policy;
- in the initial stage of research on this phenomenon, it is necessary to propose a set of criteria and indicators that would be used to produce a diagnosis of the situation as well as to monitor changes weakening and strengthening the state of territorial justice;
- one extremely important and useful source of data that might be especially suitable for the diagnosis of the state of territorial justice in rural areas is the results of the rural development monitoring project carried out by a team of IRWiR PAN researchers with financial support from the EFRWP (Stanny, Rosner and Komorowski 2018). Three volumes of the monitoring results have been published so far (Stanny and Rosner 2016, 2014; Stanny, Rosner and Komorowski 2018). The virtues and unique features of this research project include a very rich set of data, a large part of which could be used to assess the state of territorial justice in rural Poland, because the data concern the local (gmina) level, which is rare in such a comprehensive analysis and shows changes over time and in a spatial approach;

- when studying territorial justice, it is essential to produce a diagnosis of the network of institutions responsible for improving the state of territorial justice. The state/government plays a key role in this network, but it needs to be remembered that the division of tasks and competences should follow the principles of subsidiarity, which are the basis of EU organisation;
- the principles of territorial justice should be taken into account in development planning and building a rural development strategy, as the situation of the rural population in a large part of rural areas creates the biggest difficulties in implementing the principles of territorial justice.

References

- Balcerowicz L. (1993). *Wież, rolnictwo, wolny rynek*. Warszawa: Fundacja im. Macieja Rataja.
- De Soto J.H. (2010). *Sprawiedliwość a efektywność*. Warszawa: Fijorr Publishing.
- Domański B. (2021). Sprawiedliwość społeczna a przestrzenne zróżnicowanie rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego Polski – kilka refleksji dyskusyjnych. *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, 2 (84), 109–116.
- Gorzela G. (2021). Różnice regionalne – preferencje polityczne – sprawiedliwość społeczna. *Studia Regionalne i Lokalne*, 2 (84), 117–127. DOI:10.7366/1509499528408.
- Hausner J. (2019). *Społeczna czasoprzestrzeń gospodarowania. W kierunku ekonomii wartości*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Nieoczywiste.
- Hayek von F.A. (2007). *Konstytucja wolności*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kiryłuk-Dryjska E. (2014). *Formalizacja decyzji wyboru publicznego. Zastosowanie do alokacji środków strukturalnych Wspólnej Polityki Rolnej UE w Polsce*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Kolm S.C. (1996). *Modern Theories of Justice*. Cambridge: MIT University Press.
- Kostro K. (1997). Koncepcja sprawiedliwości Friedricha Augusta von Hayeka. In: J. Wilkin (ed.), *Sprawiedliwość a efektywność* (pp. 73–99). Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Key Text.
- Lissowski G. (2008). *Zasady sprawiedliwego podziału dóbr*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- MacIntyre A. (2007). *Czyja sprawiedliwość? Jaka racjonalność?* Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Akademickie i Profesjonalne.
- Okun A.M. (1975). *Equity and Efficiency: The Big Tradeoff*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Olechnicka A., Herbst M. (eds.) (2019). *Równość czy efektywność rozwoju. Eseje inspirowane dorobkiem naukowym Grzegorza Gorzelaka*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Piketty T. (2015). *Kapitał w XXI wieku*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.
- Powell M., Boyne G. (2001). The spatial strategy of equality and the spatial division of welfare. *Social Policy and Administration*, 35 (2), 181–194. DOI:10.1111/1467-9515.00226.
- Rawls J. (2001). *Prawo ludów*. Warszawa: Fundacja Aletheia.

- Rawls J. (1994). *Teoria sprawiedliwości*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.
- Rosner A. (2022). On the notion of justice. *Więś i Rolnictwo*, 4 (197), 23–32. DOI:10.53098/wir042022/01b.
- Stanny M., Rosner A. (2016). *Monitoring rozwoju obszarów wiejskich. Etap II. Przestrzenne zróżnicowanie poziomu rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego obszarów wiejskich*. Warszawa: Fundacja Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Wsi Polskiej, Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa PAN. DOI:10.53098/9788389900579.
- Stanny M., Rosner A. (2014). *Monitoring rozwoju obszarów wiejskich. Etap I. Przestrzenne zróżnicowanie poziomu rozwoju społeczno-gospodarczego obszarów wiejskich w 2010 roku*. Warszawa: Fundacja Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Wsi Polskiej, Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa PAN. DOI:10.53098/9788393880614.
- Stanny M., Rosner A., Komorowski Ł. (2018). *Monitoring rozwoju obszarów wiejskich. Etap III. Struktury społeczno-gospodarcze, ich przestrzenne zróżnicowanie i dynamika*. Warszawa: Fundacja Europejski Fundusz Rozwoju Wsi Polskiej, Instytut Rozwoju Wsi i Rolnictwa PAN. DOI:10.7366/90066MROWIII.
- Stiglitz J.E. (1994). *Whither Socialism?* Cambridge: The MIT Press.
- Wilkin J. (ed.) (2012). *Teoria wyboru publicznego. Główne nurty i zastosowania*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.
- Wilkin J. (ed.) (1997). *Sprawiedliwość a efektywność*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Key Text.

Sprawiedliwość – najważniejsza cnota społecznych instytucji

Streszczenie: Sprawiedliwość jest obszarem badań naukowych i przedmiotem dzieł teoretycznych, podobnie jak kategorie prawdy, piękna czy racjonalności. W tym opracowaniu, poza niektórymi rozważaniami o sprawiedliwości o charakterze ogólnym, koncentruję się na problematyce sprawiedliwości z punktu widzenia zainteresowań i dorobku teoretycznego ekonomii, a także na zagadnieniu sprawiedliwości terytorialnej. Na pytanie: czym jest sprawiedliwość terytorialna? – propozycja mojej odpowiedzi jest następująca: sprawiedliwość terytorialna jest taką formą sprawiedliwości społecznej, która, oprócz podstawowych cech związanych z tym pojęciem, w odniesieniu do jednostek i grup społecznych bierze pod uwagę ich przestrzenne uwarunkowania, traktując przestrzeń (terytorium) jako potencjalną i realną barierę dostępu do zasad sprawiedliwości.

Słowa kluczowe: sprawiedliwość terytorialna, instytucje, równość, efektywność, obszary wiejskie.