

*Aleksandra Zubrzycka-Czarnecka*¹

The Housing ‘Problem’ Representations in Polish Housing Policy Discourse from 2016 to 2023

Abstract

This paper utilises a Foucauldian-inspired policy discourse analysis, specifically employing Carol Bacchi’s ‘What’s the Problem Represented to Be’ approach, to explore the discursive construction of the housing ‘problem’. The focus of the research done for this paper was on housing policy discourse in Poland between 2016 and 2023. The study identifies two predominant representations of the housing ‘problem’: (1) the perception of an overly de-commodified public sector and an inadequately de-commodified private sector in housing; and (2) the insufficient support provided for middle-income families’ home-ownership. The reconstructed housing ‘problem’ representations relate to two political rationalities (discourse of sustainable development and housing rights, and neoliberal housing policy discourse) that shape the current housing policy in Poland. They have important implications for the housing domain (analysed as discursive effects, subjectification, and lived effects).

Keywords: housing ‘problem’, Foucauldian-inspired policy discourse analysis, Poland, WPR approach

JEL Classification Codes: Z18, R00, I38

¹ University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland, e-mail: a.zubrzycka@uw.edu.pl, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7765-1907>.

Sposoby prezentacji „problemu” mieszkaniowego w polskim dyskursie o polityce mieszkaniowej w latach 2016–2023

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest wzbogacenie dyskusji o dyskursywną konstrukcję „problemu” mieszkaniowego poprzez przeprowadzenie badania z zastosowaniem Foucaultowskiej analizy dyskursu politycznego (podejścia *What's the Problem Represented to Be* rozwijanego przez Carol Bacchi). Analizy zawarte w artykule dotyczą sposobu prezentacji „problemu” mieszkaniowego w dyskursie o polityce mieszkaniowej w Polsce w latach 2016–2023. Badanie przybliży dwa dominujące ujęcia „problemu” mieszkaniowego: (1) jako zbyt wysoki poziom dekomodyfikacji sektora publicznego i zbyt niski poziom dekomodyfikacji sektora prywatnego w mieszkalnictwie oraz (2) jako niewystarczające wsparcie dla gospodarstw domowych o średnich dochodach, które decydują się na nabycie na własność pierwszego mieszkania. Dwa zrekonstruowane ujęcia „problemu” mieszkaniowego odnoszą się do dwóch racjonalności politycznych (dyskursu zrównoważonego rozwoju i praw mieszkaniowych oraz dyskursu neoliberalnej polityki mieszkaniowej), kształtujących obecną politykę mieszkaniową w Polsce. Mają one istotne implikacje dla mieszkalnictwa (analizowane jako efekty dyskursywne, upodmiotowienie i efekty związane z życiem codziennym).

Słowa kluczowe: „problem” mieszkaniowy, Foucaultowska analiza dyskursu politycznego, Polska, podejście WPR

Kody klasyfikacji JEL: Z18, R00, I38

Introduction

Housing policy is recognised as a component of public policy (cf. Potůček and LeLoup, 2003). This study focuses on the formulation of housing policy. This stage of the policy process aims to develop policies that provide guidance for decision-making and action. It involves narrowing down the range of policy alternatives to address a problem, thereby facilitating the reduction of potential solutions during the preparation of the final policy programmes. At this stage, discussions, meanings, and clashes of various discourses, or the dominance of a single discourse, play a significant role.

Within this context, the notion that public policy is not merely a response to real problems but rather a product of discursively constructed issues emerged in the 1980 s, influenced by the discursive and poststructuralist turn (cf. Stone, 1988). This perspective encompasses theoretical and analytical frameworks that share a constructivist foundation. Two primary forms of constructivism exist: ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ (Miś, 2008); this paper aligns itself with the latter.

The author does not reject the existence of the material world beyond its constructions present in individuals' minds. Instead, it is assumed that access to the material world occurs through discourse, in which language and our intellectual constructions about the world (socially constructed knowledge) play a crucial role. In this study, it is posited that the housing policy discourse frames the housing policy itself. It indicates what is considered real and existing within the housing policy-making arena. The presentation of housing problems follows specific patterns, and these representations are socially constructed. With respect to this, the paper focuses on the conceptual foundations upon which housing policies are built. It critically questions the 'taken-for-granted assumptions that underlie government policies and policy proposals by scrutinising (problematizing) the 'problem' representations it reveals within them' (Bacchi, 2009: xv). Thus, it aligns itself with a 'problem-questioning' paradigm (Bacchi, 2009: xvii).

The objective of the paper is to contribute to the ongoing debate on the influence of policy discourse on the formulation of housing policy (cf. McIntyre, McKee, 2008; Manzi, 2015; Flint, 2015). The article provides further evidence that highlights the discursive construction of the housing 'problem' in housing policy formulation in Poland. The study period was chosen because of the change in housing policy announced in 2015 by the conservative party, Law and Justice (PiS), and the subsequent response from the liberal party, Civic Platform (PO). The study includes discursive representations of the housing 'problem' from these two major political parties. The proposals of other political parties are omitted as they have a limited impact on the practice of housing policy in Poland. The study offers a fresh perspective on the discursive representation of the housing 'problem' by utilising the 'What's the Problem Represented to Be' approach. While contemplating an appropriate design for the study, the author conducted a search for existing analyses of housing policy discourse (cf. Zubrzycka-Czarnecka, 2019). To the best of the author's knowledge, similar policy analyses (regarding housing 'problem' representations) have not been conducted for Poland or Central and Eastern Europe, and none have adopted Bacchi's WPR approach thus far. Critical discourse analysis has been employed in the majority of previous discourse studies on housing policy. In contrast, this approach, unlike Foucauldian discourse analysis, places greater emphasis on the agency of social actors (how individuals interpret, construct, and shape meanings and problematisations) rather than the rationalities that legitimise discourses (how something has been problematised as a product of governmental practices grounded in deep-seated conceptualisations of 'problems'). My research fills this gap.

The article is organised as follows: first, a theoretical framework is presented in which the concept of the housing 'problem' is defined from a Foucauldian-inspired

perspective. The research methods and findings of the original empirical study are then explored. The final section discusses the contributions of the study.

A Foucauldian-inspired approach to the housing ‘problem’

Following the Foucauldian tradition, housing policy can be treated as a ‘problematisation’ that encompasses ‘implied problems’ (Bacchi, 2018). As manifested in policy proposals, reforms, and interventions, housing policy is constructed in relation to the dominant housing policy discourse, which encompasses and disseminates representations of the housing ‘problem’. These representations establish the framework for understanding what is feasible and the extent of flexibility available. Based on this perspective, this article builds on the premise that there exists a strong connection between housing policy discourse – understood in Foucauldian terms as a way of perceiving the world expressed through language and associated with social practice; it compels a particular group of individuals to accept a specific definition of truth and falsehood, good and evil, normality and dysfunction (Bacchi, Goodwin, 2016: 8) – and the shaping of the housing ‘problem’. In Foucauldian terms, the housing ‘problem’ is emphasised as a socially constructed and represents just one way of conceptualising a housing issue (Bacchi, Goodwin, 2016: 6). This paper focuses on housing policy at the macro (state) level.

In public policy research, there is a long-standing tradition of employing Foucauldian-inspired analyses (Stone, 1988; Bevir, 2011; Zittoun, 2013; Schneider, Ingram, deLeon, 2014). However, these analytical frameworks are often seen to lack systematicity (Jacobs, 2019). The ‘What’s the Problem Represented to Be’ (WPR) approach developed by Carol Bacchi, an Australian political scientist, was therefore adopted for this paper. WPR is considered one of the more structured frameworks in Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis.

Data and methods of analysis

Regarding the housing situation in Poland (Better Life Index, 2020), the country ranked 35th out of the 41 OECD countries in terms of the number of rooms per person in 2020. Additionally, it ranked 26th in terms of the number of dwellings with basic facilities and 29th in terms of the cost of housing. Availability, unaffordable housing and overcrowding pose significant challenges in meeting housing needs. Homelessness affects over 30,000 people (Ministry of Family and Social Policy, 2019).

However, the policy efforts aimed at addressing the housing crisis in Poland have made limited improvements to the poor housing conditions experienced by middle- and low-income individuals. This situation raises concerns about how the housing 'problem' has been defined and whether the understanding of the housing 'problem' is undergoing any changes. This paper focuses on the housing policy discourse in Poland between 2016 and 2023 (before the parliamentary elections).

The paper applies the WPR analytical framework (Bacchi, 1999, 2009). While Bacchi recommends a comprehensive application of her framework, including all six questions and step 7, an extensive analysis was not possible within this small-scale study. The selective approach to the application of the WPR framework is commonly employed by researchers (cf. Abdi, 2020). To establish a well-defined research approach, the author opted to narrow down the study's focus. This involved elucidating the depictions of the housing 'problem', deconstructing these representations, and subjecting them to critical analysis, taking into account their discursive effects, subjectification, and lived effects. This analysis also considered certain aspects of what has not been discussed (the silences). It is important to note that the author did not undertake a comprehensive exploration of the genealogy of Polish housing policy, the processes behind the production, dissemination, and defence of housing 'problem' representations, nor did she position herself within this analysis. The research questions, based on the first, second, and fifth questions of Carol Bacchi's WPR approach (2009), are formulated as follows: How has the housing 'problem' been represented in the housing policy discourse in Poland between 2016 and 2023 (before the parliamentary elections)? What underlying presuppositions or assumptions shape these representations of the housing 'problem'? And what effects are produced by these representations of the housing 'problem'? The research material has been narrowed down to the following housing programmes: the National Housing Programme, the Apartment without Your Contribution, the 2% Safe Mortgage, and the 0% Mortgage Programme. The following were examined during the research process: Resolution no. 115/2016 on the adoption of the National Housing Programme, five research papers, a policy report from Poland's Supreme Audit Office, two policy documents published on government websites, five transcripts of politicians' meetings with voters, and three press articles.

In the process of data analysis and interpretation, firstly, the first step involved conducting a textual analysis of the corpora to identify and describe the representations of the housing 'problem'. This involved examining the problematisations that were reconstructed from the texts. The texts were read twice, each time using open coding. Previous codes were revisited and compared with later ones to achieve a deeper, more comprehensive understanding of the texts' content. Secondly, a 'work

backward' approach (Bacchi, 2009: 4) was employed to analyse the content of these representations. This entailed tracing the solutions proposed in the policy and using them as indicators of the perceived gaps, weaknesses, limitations, and errors that the policy aims to address. The implementation of the policy proposals was examined to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the housing 'problem'. This analysis aimed to uncover the discursive construction of the housing 'problem' in the formulation of housing policy.

Furthermore, the construction of the 'problem' representations within dominant rationalities was described, with a focus on identifying contradictions, complexities, and paradoxes both within and between the depictions of the housing 'problem'. The research employed the concept of paradox to capture the unexpected and contradictory aspects of the housing 'problem' as reflected in policy discourse (cf. Karwat, 2007: 53).

Lastly, the author made an effort to understand the diverse consequences the housing 'problem' representations have on different societal groups. There are three interrelated categories of effects that span both symbolic and material dimensions, requiring careful attention from analysts: discursive, subjectification, and lived effects. Discursive effects arise from the way policy discourse and problem representations define what is considered 'thinkable and sayable'. These effects result from the endorsement of certain perspectives on the 'problem' while marginalising alternative viewpoints. Therefore, it is essential to examine the impact of silencing, as discursive effects influence how problem representations are framed and the proposed solutions for initiating change. Subjectification effects are generated by problem representations, shaping and constraining available subject positions. This necessitates an examination of how problem representations function to govern and formulate expectations about the roles individuals should adopt. Lived effects encompass the tangible consequences resulting from problem representations, affecting the financial, emotional, and physical aspects of individuals' lives.

Throughout the research process, adherence to the Polish Sociologists' Code of Ethics was maintained, reflecting the rules outlined in the code during the research.

Clarifying the housing 'problem'

This section demonstrates how policy texts and practices construct housing issues through discourse. It reconstructs representations of the housing 'problem' based on solutions outlined in policy documents and programmes.

The housing 'problem' representation, characterised by an imbalance between an overly decommodified public housing sector and an inadequately decommodi-

fied private housing sector, was evident in the Introduction to the National Housing Programme (NPM) for 2017–2030. Officially ending in 2023, the NPM consists of six programmes, one of which is the Apartment+ Package (Mieszkanie+). This supply-side housing programme, comprises two sections: a social section aimed at providing affordable rental flats for low-income individuals, and a market section intended to address the housing needs of middle-income individuals lacking creditworthiness. Notably, both sections underwent various changes throughout the implementation process.

Changes to the regulations governing council housing stock were implemented within the social section of the Apartment+ Package (Mieszkanie+). Some of these changes aimed to limit unfair privileges enjoyed by tenants, such as the inheritance of council flats. At the same time, it became easier to evict pregnant women, children, and the elderly without guaranteeing their right to social rent tenancy. In such cases, the right to council housing was made conditional on a court decision. These changes align with the rationality of addressing the perceived issue of an overly de-commodified public sector. The result was a re-commodification of council housing.

On the other hand, efforts were made to introduce changes to the housing market within the programme's market section. There was an expectation that market actors would contribute to the programme's social objectives by relinquishing some profit incentives. Regulations pertaining to the selection of locations for new investments and the process of selecting architectural designs, however, reinforced centralisation and paternalism within the housing market. This aspect of the Apartment+ Package reflected the rationality of addressing the perceived issue of an insufficiently de-commodified private housing sector. As a result, attempts were made to promote the de-commodification of the housing market.

The second representation of the housing 'problem' relates to the insufficient support provided to middle-income families aspiring to become homeowners, as well as to banks and developers seeking to attract new customers. This representation is evident in recent demand-side housing programmes including Apartment without Your Contribution (2021), the 2% Safe Mortgage (2023; a component of the First Home Programme), and the 0% Mortgage Programme (2023). These programmes partially cover the mortgage costs for individuals under 45 years old who do not currently own a property or have rights to a cooperative flat or house (Apartment without your contribution 2021; 2% Safe Mortgage 2023; Recording of a meeting with voters in Pabianice on February 27, 2023). While some additional support is provided to local authorities for the renovation of council housing and tenants, these measures are relatively modest compared to the assistance aimed at promoting homeownership. The focus of these programmes is primarily on facilitating access to mortgages

and supporting the purchase of flats or houses, primarily benefiting middle-income families and the interests of banks and developers.

Deconstructing the housing ‘problem’

The two dominant rationalities that shape the current housing policy in Poland and contribute to the construction of housing ‘problems’ are analysed in this section.

The first rationality is the discourse of sustainable development and housing rights, examined as a policy paradigm that views housing as a social right (Bohle and Seabrooke 2020: 414). The recognition of housing as a human right is established in various international documents, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1949, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, and the Revised European Social Charter of 1996. The sustainable development approach to housing emerged from the Brundtland Report of 1987 and gained further prominence with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, specifically, the 11th Sustainable Development Goal – Sustainable Cities and Communities, in 2015.

What is distinct in the Polish context is the combination of the aforementioned housing approach with the politics of empathy. This discourse in housing policy is sometimes referred to as the politics of ‘compassion’, ‘kindness’, or ‘care’. This approach gained particular relevance during the Covid-19 pandemic. The politics of compassion (Nussbaum, 1996) involves reframing caring and compassionate values and relationships, extending them from the private sphere of individuals to the social and public realm (Bierre and Howden-Chapman, 2022: 3). This rationality is relevant in discussing the representation of the housing ‘problem’ as an imbalance between an overly decommodified public sector and an inadequately decommodified private sector in housing.

The National Housing Programme, implemented by the conservative Law and Justice party from 2016 to 2023, aligned with the rationality of sustainable development and housing rights. The programme attributed the housing supply gap to the negative consequences of previous neoliberal housing policies and called for a shift in the development paradigm towards “sustainable social and regional development” (Resolution No. 115/2016: 3) in Polish public policy. The programme emphasised concepts such as “personal and family development”, “personal and family satisfaction”, and “life quality.” These themes became central in the housing policy discourse.

In accordance with sustainable development and housing rights rationality, housing was regarded as “one of the fundamental functions of the state” (Resolu-

tion No. 115/2016: 3). However, the representation of the housing 'problem' within this framework was somewhat incoherent, with internal contradictions in its discursive construction coming to light. The conservative Law and Justice party acknowledged that actors in the private housing market, adhering to neoliberal approaches, could potentially achieve housing goals aligned with the sustainable development paradigm – a perspective not necessarily embraced by social actors. This perplexing assumption may be traced to the notion that within the politics of empathy, empathy serves as an essential bridge for “imperfect citizens” to transition from self-interest to just conduct (Nussbaum 1996: 57). The attempt to replace the neoliberal discourse in housing policy with a newer approach based on sustainable development, human rights, and the politics of empathy resulted in a representation of the housing 'problem' that implied the re-commodification of certain aspects of housing policy (e.g., council housing) at the expense of the de-commodification of others (e.g., the housing market).

The neoliberal housing policy discourse in Poland emerged from a cross-party consensus during the Round Table Talks in 1989. Social actors affiliated with the “Solidarity” movement and those associated with the Communist Party (PZPR) expressed their support for a neoliberal approach to housing policy. Under this discourse, a house or flat was primarily seen as a commodity, while its social dimension as a public good was disregarded. This neoliberal housing policy discourse can be characterised as a “housing as an asset” policy paradigm (Bohle and Seabrooke 2020: 415). To understand the foundations of political proposals on housing formulated by the conservative Law and Justice party and the liberal party, Civic Platform, after 2021, this neoliberal housing policy discourse must be examined. In these documents, the housing 'problem' is depicted as a lack of support for medium-income small families or households aspiring to purchase a flat and become homeowners. However, this representation ultimately recognises the gap in supporting banks and developers, who will be the ultimate beneficiaries of public funds (Hammam, 2013). The proposed solutions in this policy entail significant expenditures from the state budget, estimated to be over PLN 100 billion (\$23,255 million) (Wójcik, 2023), to facilitate homeownership for a small portion of the Polish population. Furthermore, the increase in rent allowances for tenants is expected to primarily benefit landlords, who may simply raise rent prices to absorb a portion of the housing allowance (Wójcik, 2023; Kangasharju, 2010). It is surprising that the conservative PiS and the more liberal PO, two parties that often engage in fierce rivalry and highlight their differences, have a similar discursive representation of the housing 'problem'. Even though PO invokes the discourse of sustainable development, housing rights, and the politics of empathy (albeit cynically and instrumentally), it still perpetuates the neoliberal representation of the housing 'problem', much like PiS.

Critical analysis of the implications of housing ‘problem’ representations

This section examines three interconnected categories of effects stemming from representations of the housing ‘problem’ within the discourse of Polish housing policy from 2016 to 2023: 1) discursive effects, 2) subjectification, and 3) lived effects.

Regarding the National Housing Programme, which was implemented by the conservative Law and Justice Party from 2016 to 2023, it employs a binary approach by juxtaposing two housing policy paradigms – the earlier, criticised paradigm and the current, promoted paradigm. The old paradigm is attributed to increasing sub-standard housing stock; the absence of a comprehensive long-term housing policy vision; weak housing policy institutions; a lack of stable financing frameworks, and a lack of continuity in policy implementation. Such framing serves as a starting point for shaping a second paradigm of housing policy that aims to reinforce the legitimacy of actions undertaken in the housing sector by the conservative Law and Justice Party. The new housing policy paradigm is intertwined with the concept of sustainable social and regional development. This paradigm is presented as a positive response to the shortcomings of the previous paradigm. It aims to encourage long-term housing savings, placing a greater emphasis on the role of the state as a leader in housing, responsible for supporting citizens’ housing needs. Other actors (market and third-sector actors) are subordinated to the state and managed by it. This paradigm downplays the notion of multi-sectoral involvement and, consequently, dialogue and cooperation. The state assumes a dominant position. Therefore, it is not surprising that the implementation of the National Housing Programme strongly emphasised the inadequately decommodified private sector in housing. Furthermore, the implementation of the housing policy based on the new paradigm was entrusted to political actors affiliated with construction, spatial planning, and regional development. Political actors associated with social assistance, for instance, were omitted. This resulted in a downplaying of the most social aspects of housing. The new paradigm was intended to address the needs of individuals with moderate and low incomes but remained silent on the needs of those with no income. In this context, as previously indicated in the analysis of the National Housing Programme’s implementation, the new paradigm suggests that the public sector in housing is excessively decommodified.

Regarding the subjectification effect, the housing ‘problem’ representation as an imbalance between an overly decommodified public sector and an inadequately decommodified private sector in housing divides society into three groups. The first

group comprises “the more well-off part of society”, which has benefited the most from Poland’s economic development. These individuals primarily derive their income mainly from non-salary sources, such as capital, and receive substantial support from the state. The second group consists of the working class, who earn their income from employment. Despite their efforts, they have not seen an improvement in their living conditions and often accrue debt through housing loans. Their access to housing is limited, with approximately 30–40% lacking creditworthiness. The last group consists of marginalised individuals, those without income, who are often overlooked. Thus, the examined representation of the housing ‘problem’ shapes social relations by neglecting the housing needs of the most impoverished individuals.

To delve into the lived effects of the discussed housing ‘problem’ representation would require an analysis beyond the scope of this paper, as it demands reflection on how people’s lives are impacted financially, emotionally, and physically. However, the author would like to focus on the lived effect on the future development of housing policy in Poland (thus, not directly affecting individuals but rather indirectly through housing policy processes). The failure of this housing policy, based on the aforementioned ‘problem’ representation and sustainable development & housing rights rationality, presents challenges to arguments opposing neoliberal perspectives on housing. There is a risk that an ineffective housing policy, centred on the dominant role of the state, may legitimise and perpetuate neoliberal approaches. It may discourage future experimentation with a more pro-social vision of housing policy.

In relation to housing programmes proposed after 2021 by both the conservative Law and Justice Party (the Apartment without Your Contribution and the 2% Safe Mortgage) and the liberal party, Civic Platform (the 0% Mortgage Programme), the created housing ‘problem’ representation (as the inadequate support provided to middle-income families aspiring to become homeowners, as well as to banks and developers seeking to attract new customers) imposes limits on what is considered ‘thinkable and sayable’. All of these housing programmes are promoted as satisfying housing needs through homeownership. Purchasing the first home is portrayed as the realisation of a “dream”. Owning a home is depicted as a condition for life stability and rootedness in one’s place of residence. It is a challenging strategy to achieve, yet it is perceived as valuable, ambitious, and deserving of state support. Other strategies for meeting housing needs, such as market rentals or social housing, are glossed over.

The subjectification effect of the analysed housing ‘problem’ representation is that the state is portrayed as an institution with obligations towards citizens who are employed. The state supports those who have incomes. This is a group of citizens preferred by the state; the message is “just work to have a home”. Simultaneously, it serves as a form of discipline and reward from the state. Another promoted

characteristic is the ability to repay a mortgage, which is tied to income generation. The promoted group of citizens is the target of housing policy, worthy of attention, and acknowledged. Inactive individuals in the workforce, those without the ability to repay a mortgage, and those uninterested in the strategy of homeownership are omitted. This group of citizens does not capture the attention of political actors.

Similar to the earlier housing 'problem' representation, the author would like to focus on the lived effects on the future development of housing policy in Poland (thus, not directly for individuals but rather indirectly through housing policy processes). It seems that the housing 'problem' representation expressed in the Apartment without Your Contribution, the 2% Safe Mortgage, and the 0% Mortgage Programme poses challenges for the future development of housing policy in Poland, as it appears unlikely that a housing policy built on the above-presented rationales will effectively address the social needs of the Polish population. In the short term, it contributes to further destabilising the housing market, reducing the supply of homes as demand increases, and resulting in rising housing prices. However, and more importantly, in the long term, it is concerning that the two largest political parties are unanimous in promoting homeownership primarily for well-off citizens, at the expense of other strategies for meeting housing needs and addressing the challenges faced by those in the most difficult social and housing situations. This solidifies the previously discussed neoliberal discourse on housing in Poland, which has the potential to become a hegemonic discourse. It remains uncertain whether, after the elections in 2023 and the possible formation of coalitions, other political parties with a more pro-social vision of housing policy will be able to challenge this dominant housing perspective.

Conclusion

This paper describes and contextualises the discursive representations of the housing 'problem' in the Polish housing policy discourse between 2016 and 2023. It assesses the complexities, contradictions, and conceptual foundations underlying these representations and clarifies the implications of these representations for the housing domain.

The study contributes to the literature in two significant ways. Firstly, it adopts a political science perspective on housing policy, a perspective often marginalised in housing studies over the past few decades (Bengtsson, 2015: 677). However, the role of political processes in defining and addressing housing problems remains significant. By focusing on the rationalities that legitimise housing policy discourses, this paper complements existing perspectives on housing policy. It utilises a discursive

sive approach to housing, drawing inspiration from Foucauldian frameworks. Additionally, it incorporates Carol Bacchi's 'What's the Problem Represented to Be' (WPR) approach, a structured framework in Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis. This research tool is rarely employed in housing-related studies, but it holds promise for analysing the role of policy discourse in shaping housing policy, thus, responding to Bo Bengtsson's call in 2009 to apply research conceptions from political science theory to the field of housing studies (2009: 19).

Secondly, the study contributes to the ongoing debate on the housing 'problem'. It provides nuanced insights into how this 'problem' is represented within the discourse of housing policy. Through analysis, it sheds light on the framing used to construct the housing 'problem' in Poland and enhances our understanding of how this 'problem' is addressed. By critically examining the conceptual premises underlying Polish housing policy, the study promotes reflexivity in housing policymaking.

Author Contributions

The author confirms being the sole contributor of this work and has approved it for publication.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Ethics Statement

The author certifies that the research published in the text was carried out in accordance with the research ethics of the affiliated university.

Research Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article.

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