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## *Opinions of Radomians on pro-family social programmes*

### *Summary*

The aim of the article is to show beliefs regarding the role of the state in family policy in the context of the fundamental Family 500+ Programme. Based on empirical research carried out in Radom, the author indicates the scale of approval for family support programmes, especially the Family 500+ Programme and its axiological roots.

The Family 500+ Programme changed the beliefs regarding the role of the state in family policy. There is a shift away from neo-liberal rhetoric and the conviction that the state has a duty to support citizens in the social sphere, especially family policy.

Of all the forms of support offered, the Family 500+ Programme is the most valued form of supporting families due to its universal, non-stigmatizing character.

**Key words:** social policy, social programmes, Family 500+ Programme, stigmatization

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## ***Introduction***

The dynamics of appearance of social problems, their scale and multi-faceted nature, both in the global and local dimension, make it necessary to search for new solutions in the sphere of social policy, one to relate to the practice of post-modern societies in a more adequate way. These transformations concern not only institutional solutions, but mainly values, attitudes and behaviours of the members of the community, whose needs, involvement and sense of co-responsibility create a social context for the changes introduced.

The aim of this study is to show the scale of approval for family support programmes, especially the Family 500+ Programme as a new instrument of family policy. The paper presents a fragment of the author's broader research on the influence of social policy on the local communities functioning. The study is local, which does not entitle to generalise the results for the entire population of Poles.

The article uses the method of a diagnostic survey, as well as the method of descriptive and analysis of the collected material (Sztumski, 2010, pp. 190–97, 248–267). The collected data were statistically analysed using Statistica 8.0 software.

The research was conducted using the structured questionnaire interview method on a selected sample of 966 inhabitants of Radom. The sample is representative taking into account the age and gender structure of the population. During data analysis, observations were weighed for compliance purposes.

### ***The role of value practices in social policy***

The particular role of social policy stems from the fact that it affects every individual and every community and inseparably combines theory and practice. Recognising that social policy is a targeted and conducted—within the framework of constitutional principles, including respect for and protection of freedom, human dignity and solidarity, as well as the principles of good governance—process of supporting citizens by public authorities and by social institutions, as well as investing in the shaping of living conditions, work, education, social security, health care and the development of the community, resulting from the implementation of changes beneficial for individuals and communities, including in particular those related to the improvement of their living standards, cohesion and security, including social security, it is obvious that there is a deep axiological rooting of all actions undertaken in this sphere.

Katarzyna Głąbicka stresses that axiological thinking permeates social policy at all levels. The necessity of solving social problems in the spirit of values makes it common to be aware of building and respecting a social space in which individuals and social groups have guaranteed rights, possibilities of their realisation and enforcement of rights. The features of social space understood in this way are: mutual permeation of values and principles, breaking barriers, permeation of rules of the game and humanist values, respect for human rights, social solidarity and search for life security, solid foundations of social legislation (Głąbicka, 2006).

Jolanta Supińska points to the processual character of reaching an axiological consensus in social policy, in which different values compete with each other from the phase of defining social problems, through their evaluation, constructing programs, to the detailed design and implementation of this policy. It stresses the need for broader social participation from the stage of defining the problem to be solved (Supińska, 2018, p. 94). The author points out that social policy has developed principles of operation which are a result of the most widely recognized values and proven rules of good work. Mixing and mutual support of axiology and praxeology occurs in the precision of principles such as self-help, solidarity, subsidiarity and participation

Adam Kurzynowski (2001, p. 11) points out that shaping pro-development social structures is possible thanks to the process of institutionalizing the rules of collective life, which they express:

- permanent elements of the state of functioning and behavioural course of persons, ensuring the existence, continuance and development of the community as a whole,
- regulated and sanctioned forms of activity,
- recognised ways of solving problems in interpersonal relations,
- formal organisations performing certain functions in the community,
- collective order based on cooperation and consensus.

Characterising the tasks of social policy, also Julian Auleytner emphasizes that the main role of the state in this field is to create a pro-development model of social structure, in which the share of dependent and marginalized groups is constantly and significantly reduced (Auleytner, 2007, pp. 334–335). Józef Orczyk stresses that during the transformation period, “social policy was purposeful, generating structural changes only in the case of the 1998 reforms and the 2012 pension reform. Other changes were of an ad hoc nature, resulting from political coercion or economic situation” (Orczyk, 2015, p. 2).

Although in the past decades, the transformation process has not created a coherent paradigm of social policy in Poland, despite these difficulties, it has been more or less successful in performing tasks that allow to guarantee a sense of security. In model solutions, the role of the main social policy entity is more and more often assigned to the state and its social tasks are emphasized, either directly or through local governments or social organizations. Ryszard Szarfenberg emphasises the necessity of instrumental use of power in the state to achieve prosperity of all citizens. In his opinion, social policy is an activity of the state through authorities and administration (Szarfenberg, 2008, p. 34). The author sees the necessity of introducing non-market mechanisms, because even a policy aimed at sustainable economic success—understood as ensuring continuous growth of production, equalling the needs of citizens—is not enough to ensure comprehensive prosperity at an appropriate level for all citizens (Szarfenberg, 2008, p. 37). This task is described more broadly by J. Orczyk: “The goal of social policy in a state that has already achieved a certain level of prosperity (...) is not only to secure a certain minimum to enable citizens to live and function, but also to secure the existence of acceptable relations between different social groups in different dimensions, i.e. economic, social and political” (Orczyk, 2015, p. 3) .

Regardless of its actual form, social policy must be based on solid democratic foundations. They determine the accuracy of the adopted solutions to social problems. In the *Centesimus annus* encyclical, John Paul II states that democracy can only be a stable system if it is built on the foundation of moral values. Democracy is possible only under the rule of law and on the basis of a correct concept of the human person. It requires the fulfilment of the necessary conditions, such as education and formation in the spirit of true ideals, or the subjectivity of society through the creation of structures of participation and co-responsibility (John Paul II, 1991, no. 46).

Contemporary realities, which include not only economic development, the level of technology and organization, and a growing standard of living and aspirations, but also deepening social diversity and new social issues make it possible and necessary for citizens to participate in the life of their own communities and to create living conditions in their communities. In order to achieve these objectives, they should not only have the necessary skills to make the right decisions, but also the will to act and the awareness of their responsibility.

### ***Family 500+ Programme: objectives and assumptions***

The good economic situation, which has lasted several years, did not significantly reduce the scale of social problems. Social diversity resulting from the growth of individual entrepreneurship and wealth of the most active individuals, but also from the improvement of living conditions of the poorest which did not follow this growth, caused that contemporary families in post-modern society faced problems resulting from the lack of instruments supporting their functioning and development. As a result, many families struggle to fulfil their family and parental roles in a market economy. Social policy and social assistance, as institutions and main instruments at the disposal of the state, are to serve the elimination of social inequalities, and thus the implementation of the principle of social justice (Olech, 2012, p. 343). Social assistance as a system in itself and at the same time as one of the main components of social policy and as one of the elements of social security is a product of civilisational development and the growing role of the state in ensuring social protection of citizens (Szarfenberg, 2009, p. 34).

The statutory approach to social welfare as an element of social policy emphasizes the role that the state plays in organising and providing this assistance, it also expresses the responsibility of the state for the fate of the members of society. Social assistance is not a donation from the state to the citizens, but is its duty and obligation towards citizens in need of assistance. Family policy, which is one of the fundamental pillars of social policy aimed at supporting the professional activity of parents, income support and access to high quality social services at affordable prices. The paradigm of social investment policy, being one of the new trends of searching for an effective model of this policy, based on activation and developed social and professional integration and reintegration services, emphasizes the positive role of the state. It is not only active, but also plays a significant role of a regulator and financier of many social tasks and a guarantor of reconciling

productivity with social justice and greater inclusion and social cohesion (Grewiński, 2015, p. 64). Social innovations, defined as “new responses to pressing social demands, which affect the process of social interactions (...). They are innovations that are not only good for society but also enhance individuals’ capacity to act (...), [to] create new social relationships or collaborations” (European Commission 2013, p. 6), are an instrument to implement this approach.

One of such innovative undertakings on the Polish sound is the government programme Rodzina 500+ (Family 500+). The task of the government’s Family 500+ Programme is to help families raise children by granting childcare benefits. This form of state aid is based on the Act of 11 February 2016 on state aid in raising children, which entered into force on 1 April 2016. (Act of 11 February 2016 on state aid in raising children). From that moment on, the upbringing benefit is provided through the municipal body.

When analysing this new form of benefit, Szarfenberg pointed to fundamental differences determining its separation from other family benefits. Among them, he noted:

- Extended number of beneficiaries. Traditionally, the income criterion for the benefit system covers only the first child, which means that every family with more than one child is entitled to a childcare benefit.
- Family benefits are varied, while the upbringing benefit is permanent.
- Its design does not envision any additions that are typical of family allowances.
- Exceeding the income criteria for the first child automatically results in the loss of the whole upbringing benefit.
- According to the indicated criteria, the beneficiaries of the Family 500+ Programme may be only children up to 18 years of age, which is not exclusive from other forms of benefits.

The author summarizes the consequences of the introduction of this benefit and states that “500+ significantly increased the substantial scope and the level of benefits for families with children in comparison with family benefits. However, it is not a universal benefit for all children” (Szarfenberg, 2017, p. 1–2).

One of the important objectives of the Family 500+ Programme is to increase the fertility rate in the Polish families. The authors of the programme assume that the solution proposed by them should significantly influence the decision to have children, both in families already with children and encourage families without children and young couples to have the first and subsequent children (Kawecka, 2016, p. 15).

The next objective of the Family 500+ Programme is to help the state to cover the costs of maintaining children. These expenditures are related to care as well as to satisfying the life needs of children in the family (for the first child, according to the income criterion). It was assumed that this programme would have a significant impact on the situation of families with children, as well as raise the material level of families with children receiving social assistance. Its hybrid nature stems from the adjustment of this pro-family tool to the actual possibilities of the State budget (Rymsza, 2017, p. 13).

The programme is producing tangible results. According to data from the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, by the end of June 2018, over 3.74 million children under 18 years

of age had already been supported under the governmental Family 500+ Programme (Szarfenberg, 2018, pp. 11–17). Since the start of this year, over 2.45 million families have received over PLN 11.3 billion. The largest share is held by families with two children, which in June 2018 was over 1.5 million, and their share in the total number of families amounted to 61.4%. Another group consists of families with one child—569.8 thousand with 23.2% share in the total number of families in the Programme. In June 2018, families with many children constituted a group of 376.2 thousand families, with 15.3% share in the total number of families in the Programme. The number of families meeting the income criterion for the first child in June amounted to over 1.33 million families (which constitutes 54.5% of all families receiving benefits). 5% of all families are families with a disabled child, with an agreed right to parental benefit for the first child. In the group of families receiving benefits for the first child (over 1.33 million families), 120.6 thousand families are families with a disabled child. In 2018, families received over PLN 11.4 billion (The Family 500+ Report, 2018).

Despite the observable benefits, this programme is subject to very intense criticism. Its focus are the following issues: the pro-demographic nature of the programme, its costs, rules of participation and the impact on professional deactivation<sup>2</sup>.

### ***Intergenerational solidarity in the context of the Family 500+ Programme —research objective and method***

The effective pursuit of social policy objectives, in particular family policy, requires that the needs of the various social categories be taken into account and that public resources be distributed among the generations in such a way as to correspond to a sense of social justice, while at the same time guaranteeing, in a spirit of social solidarity, the continuity and sustainability of society as a whole.

The concept of solidarity in intergenerational relations—as noted by Piotr Szukalski—is a new approach to social policy. The author sees its sources in the development of new theories in gerontology, such as the political economy of the ageing process or the economy of morality, and in the processes of “refamilisation” of social policy, which „at a time of economic shortages, recognizes the family as an institution to which more responsibilities towards those most in need of support—children and seniors— should be transferred” (Szukalski, 2012, p. 55).

In practice, intergenerational solidarity stands for a set of measures taken to ensure that, in the long term, the various generations support each other in a spirit of social peace. Among the many dimensions of intergenerational solidarity in the context of the new Family 500+ Programme, particular emphasis should be placed on it:

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<sup>2</sup> For a more detailed discussion of this aspect, see, among others, Topolewska, 2016, pp. 6–15; Kowalczyk, 2016, pp. 65, 80–86; Chaczko, 2016, p. 92; Chrzanowska, Landmesser, 2017, pp. 38–45.

- a family policy that takes account of the diversity of marital and family life forms and the diversity of needs that appear in them,
- ensuring a decent standard of living for all ages (especially for those without income, including children),
- promoting grassroots, citizen initiatives aimed at strengthening solidarity between the generations (Szukalski, 2012, p. 57–58).

The value of social programs shows the process of their implementation. Two years of the programme's operation are certainly not long enough to draw generalised conclusions, but they will make it possible to identify the emerging trends in the attitude of citizens towards this social innovation in social policy. The starting point for the analysis was the assumption that children are not a private but a public good. According to M. Rymysza, this is the most important normative change brought to social policy by the Family 500+ Programme (Rymysza, 2017, pp. 11).

The empirical basis for the presented analysis is the author's own research on the influence of the state on local social policy conducted by means of a structured questionnaire interview in May and June 2018. The questionnaire contained 28 questions (20 closed questions, 4 semi-open questions and 4 conditional questions),<sup>3</sup> and demographics (10 questions). The Likert's scale was used in the interview.

The area covered by the research was the city of Radom community. The main objective of the study was to determine selected aspects of the effects of social programs implemented at national level on the beliefs concerning the role of aid in restoring the ability to function properly in the community. This paper will discuss the selected specific objectives of the study.

The aim of the analyses undertaken in the article was to show the scale of approval for family support programmes, especially the Family 500+ Programme as a new instrument of family policy.

The main research problem is the answer to the question whether the beliefs concerning the obligation to support families are shared and how they influence the assessment of selected institutional family support instruments, especially the Family 500+ programme, and their social consequences.

The following detailed research questions stem from that key hypothesis:

1. Is there a general consensus on the state's duty to support families?
2. Has the introduction of new aid programmes influenced the interest in changes in the social policy of the state?
3. How is the effectiveness of support from public institutions and access to assistance from various organisations assessed?
4. Does the Family 500+ programme contribute to improving the functioning of families?
5. How are initiatives to create a solidarity fund by taxing rich citizens evaluated?

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<sup>3</sup> Conditional (alternative) questions—questions to which the respondent answers or not, depending on the answer given to the previous question.

6. What is the significance—in the subjective feeling of the respondents—of the forms of support offered within the framework of family policy?
7. What are the effects of the offered support instruments, especially the Family 500+ programme?

The research assumes that the community of Radom is composed of all citizens who live here, satisfy their needs in the local environment and interact with others in this process, creating strong social bonds and social capital. The research has a local dimension, which does not entitle to generalize the results for the entire population of Poles.

The empirical research was conducted using the structured questionnaire interview method on a selected sample of 966 inhabitants of Radom. The collected data were compiled statistically using the Statistica 8.0 software.

The sample is representative taking into account the age and gender structure of the population. During the data analysis, weighing of the observations was carried out<sup>4</sup> for the purpose of compliance. After weighing the observations, slightly more than half of the respondents are women—55%, and men—45% of the respondents.

The sample structure corresponds to the population structure also in terms of age—respondents below 19 years consist of 3% of the sample, respondents between 19 and 30 years consists of 35% of the sample, 31 to 40 consist of 12%, 41 to 50 consists of 27%, 51 to 65 consist of 12% and respondents above 65 years consist of 11% of the sample.

The educational structure also shows the changing nature of this post-industrial centre. Most of the respondents have secondary education—38%. People with higher education constitute almost one third of the sample—14% with a bachelor's degree and 18% with a master's degree. Every fifth resident has vocational training (20%). Relatively high share in the sample of people with primary (8%) and lower secondary (2%) education results from the fact that the survey involved people over 18 years of age, so people with primary and lower secondary education who continue their education and in the near future will achieve a higher level of education.

The study also took into account the marital status of individuals in the belief that it determines the attitudes and behaviours of individuals towards family policy. The structure of the sample shows that although almost half of the surveyed population is still in formal unions (48%), the number of people running households on their own is increasing (singles 29%, divorced 8%, and widowers 8%), which poses new challenges for social policy, especially in view of the population ageing.

### ***Discussion of results—the role of the state and aid programmes in the light of own research***

The belief that the state plays a significant role in social policy in social policy is shared by researchers, practitioners and beneficiaries alike. In the last quarter of a century, however,

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<sup>4</sup> Weighting is a calculation procedure of which the main purpose is to adjust the studied sample so that it is as representative as possible of the population from which it is taken.

there has been a clear tendency for the state to withdraw from social tasks and to transfer responsibility for social matters to the citizens. Social support was limited to those individuals and social groups that could not solve their problems on their own. The practice that lasted for over two decades, combined with the discourse on social problems in the spirit of neoliberal rhetoric, shaped the convictions and social attitudes of citizens (Rymsza, 2017, p. 13).

The selection of variables determining family support for the survey was based on the analysis of CBOS reports, the Supreme Audit Office, the Social Welfare Act, the Act on Social Benefits, the assumptions of the Family 500+ programme, and Dobry Start (Head Start) 300+. The study also took into account variables appearing in diagnoses of many contemporary researchers (Rymsza, 2017, Szarfenberg, 2017, Kudlińska, Kacprzak, 2011, Chrzanowska, 2017, Kowalczyk, 2016, Topolewska, 2016, Chaczko, 2016). Twenty-two observable variables were taken into account and their basic descriptive statistics, the results of which are included in Table 1, were analysed.

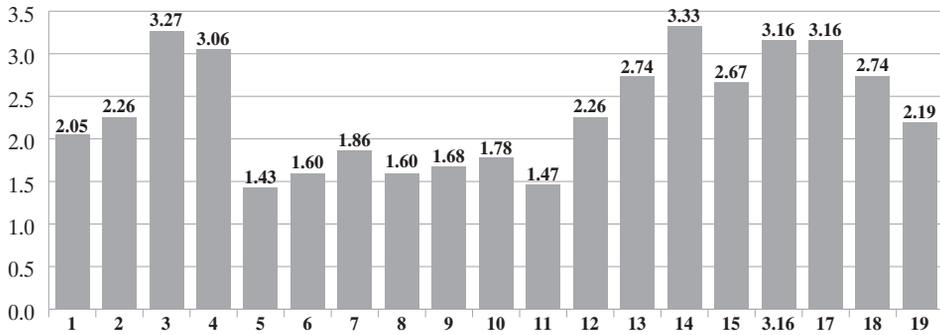
**Table 1. Descriptive statistics of observable variables**

No.	Variable (claim)	Average $\bar{x}$	Standard deviation	Vs variation coefficient
1	State's obligation to support families as children are common goods	2.05	0.49	0.24
2	Interest in changes in the state's social policy.	2.26	1.07	0.47
3	Effectiveness of support for public institutions	3.27	1.27	0.39
4	Access to assistance from different organisations	3.06	1.10	0.36
5	The need to raise taxes for the rich in order to create a solidarity fund	1.43	0.61	0.43
6	Importance of family allowances for low-income earners	1.60	0.63	0.39
7	State responsibility to support the large families	1.86	1.03	0.55
8	Relevance of in-kind support (clothes, food)	1.60	0.68	0.43
9	Relevance of social pensions	1.68	0.69	0.41
10	Relevance of housing allowances	1.78	0.64	0.36
11	Relevance of housing assistance	1.47	0.59	0.40
12	Positive impact of the 500+ programme on the performing parental roles	2.26	1.03	0.46
13	Positive impact of the Family 500+ programme on the rate of fertility	2.74	1.02	0.37
14	Positive impact of the Family 500+ programme on limiting the use of the social assistance	3.33	1.04	0.31
15	Positive impact of the Family 500+ programme on development of human capital	2.67	1.15	0.43

**Table 1. Cont.**

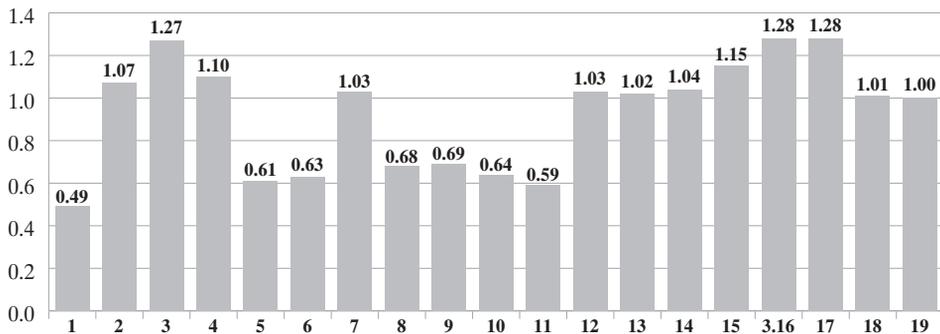
No.	Variable (claim)	Average $\bar{x}$	Standard deviation	Vs variation coefficient
16	Positive impact of the Family 500+ programme on increasing the share of low-income people in social activity	3.16	1.28	0.42
17	Increased sense of social security	3.16	1.28	0.40
18	Parasitism (slyness and comfort)	2.74	1.01	0.36
19	Increase in a demanding attitude	2.19	1.00	0.46

Source: own work.



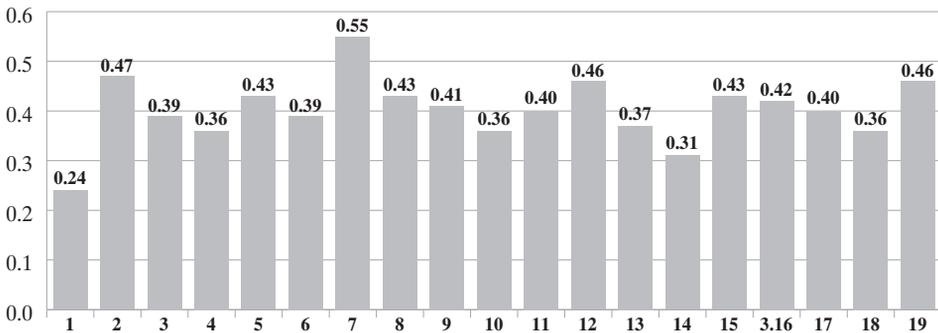
**Figure 1. Averages of observable variables measuring beliefs concerning institutional support for families**

Source: own work.



**Figure 2. Standard deviations of observable variables measuring beliefs about institutional family support**

Source: own work.



**Figure 3. Coefficient of observable variables variability in measuring beliefs concerning institutional support of families**

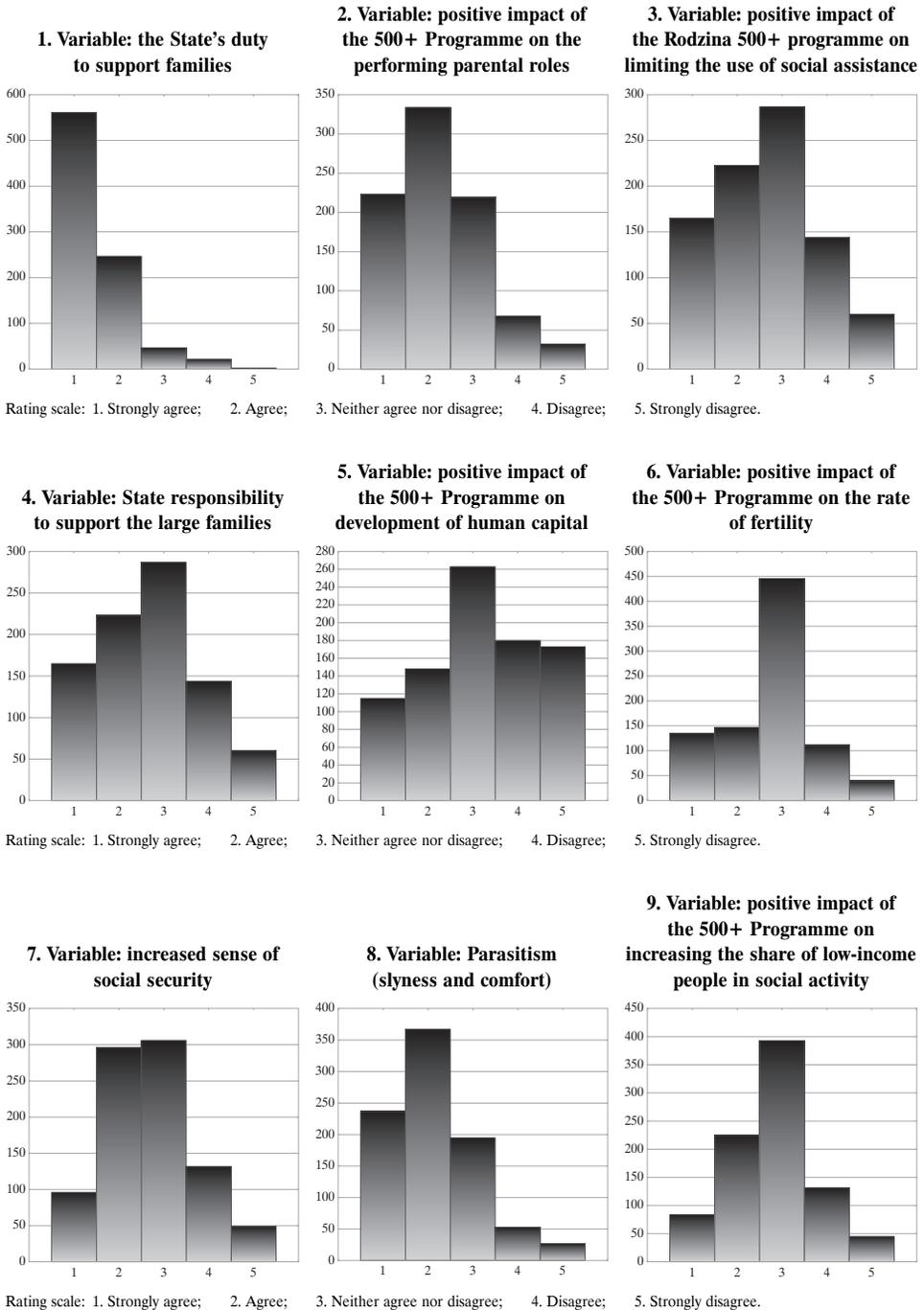
Source: own work.

Based on the analysis of data contained in Table 1 and Figures 1-3, it results that the average scores of individual observable variables determining the beliefs concerning the obligation to support families exceeded 1.43 and ranged from the lowest 1.43 for variable number 6 referring to the need to increase the tax for the rich to create a solidarity fund up to 3.27 for variable number 14 concerning the limiting use of the social assistance. Such a diversity of averages indicates that all the studied variables were assessed heterogeneously, having a number of low and high values. The lowest average values were obtained by the variables numbered 5, 6, 8 and 11, where the average values did not exceed 1.6. On the other hand, the highest average values were obtained by variables numbered 5 and 3, where average values exceeded 3.06. The highest average values were obtained by variables numbered 3, 4, 14, 16, and 17, where average values exceeded 3.06.

On the other hand, the obtained standard deviations of observable standard variables showed that the standard deviations were within the range  $<0.59; 1.28>$ . Therefore, these variables are assessed in a stable way, hence the coefficient of variation was additionally calculated, which for all variables did not exceed 0.55, which means that in most cases there was low volatility. Among the surveyed variables, the least differentiation of responses was recorded for variables 1, 4, 10, 14, and 18. The standard deviation values amounted to 0.49; 1.10, 1.78, 1.04 and 1.01, respectively. On the other hand, the greatest differences in scores were recorded for variables 16, 17 and 3, where they amounted to 1.28, 1.28 and 1.27, respectively. It should be noted, however, that the same variables also received one of the highest average marks in the study.

Then, using histograms of selected variables from Table 1, measuring the beliefs concerning institutional support of families, the values at which most of the results are located were indicated and whether there is any asymmetry between them.

The analysis of histograms presented in Fig. 4 for selected observable variables shows that all of them present an asymmetrical type, which means that the mean value is clearly visible on one side of the distribution in which most of the observations are concentrated.



**Figure 4. Histograms of selected observable variables 1–9**

Source: own work.

Variables: the state's duty to support families, the positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on the performing parental roles, positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on limiting the use of social assistance, state responsibility to support the large families, and positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on the rate of fertility, increased sense of social security, presented in the above histograms are right-handedly asymmetrical, which means that the majority of the results are located above the average. On the other hand, the variable, positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on development of human capital as a result of family support seems rather symmetrical.

It should be emphasized that in the case of variables: positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on limiting the use of social assistance, state responsibility to support the large families, positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on human development, positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on the rate of fertility, positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme on increasing the share of low-income people in social activity, the dominant is in the middle of the scale—neither agree nor disagree. This shows that a significant group of respondents do not have crystallized views on these aspects of family policy or present ambivalent attitudes.

Despite this, the Family 500+ Programme Childcare Service is considered to be the best or one of the best ways to support families in almost all socio-demographic groups. It is most strongly emphasized by young people and seniors, which shows a strong generational bond and a belief in the special role of support for children and their parents. Other activities aimed at supporting families are also generally accepted by society.

The presented research results indicate that the role of family policy is growing in the opinion of Poles and, consequently, the expectations in this area are growing. Social policy towards the family is an area in which the scale of neglect—contrary to the declarations made politically—is significant. It was confirmed by the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) *Koordinacja polityki rodzinnej w Polsce* (Family Policy Coordination in Poland). In the opinion of the SAO, the Polish state has not developed a comprehensive and long-term family policy, concentrating its activities on ad hoc solutions without ensuring proper coordination. The framework for family policy is not defined and its objectives and related activities are not specified. There is also a lack of systematic analysis of the effects achieved in relation to the expenditures incurred (NIK 2015).

This opinion was confirmed by the TNS Poland survey (TNS Report, 2014) conducted on behalf of NIK, which showed that society perceived the state's actions in favour of families as ad hoc and remedial solutions, serving only those families who already have children and additionally offered them selectively: mainly to families with many children and those in a difficult life situation. Respondents emphasized that for families the most important thing is to ensure economic security and create jobs for young people. More than one fifth of the respondents pointed out that the family policy measures offered at that time could not be considered as a significant element at the time of planning children.

The introduction of a new instrument, such as the Family 500+ programme examined in the presented study, has significantly changed the assessment of this policy. A year after its implementation, more than half of the respondents (52%) assessed the policy

of supporting families by the state as good, and more than 10% of them as very good. The level of acceptance of the benefit itself was very high (77%), with 20% disapproval (Study 322, CBOS, 2017).

This trend is still continuing, as confirmed by another study of this centre (CBOS, 2018) carried out at the same time as the author's study. The results show not only a high level of approval for the state's family policy, but also the conviction that state support should cover all families raising children, regardless of their income (54%). Among the three most useful family support instruments that can encourage people to have children, the following have been mentioned: the parental benefit from the Family 500+ programme, assistance for young married couples in obtaining housing (e.g. through inexpensive and accessible loans or the implementation of the Housing plus programme) and tax benefits for families with children.

The presented results of both own and national studies confirm the thesis of a fundamental change in expectations in the field of state policy. In particular, the impact of the programme on the material conditions of families is viewed positively. It is clear that there is a need for support for all families, and not just for the most vulnerable. The author's research also emphasized the value of subjectivity and autonomy in the spending of funds from the benefit, which was considered an added value of this programme.

## *Conclusion*

Embedding social policy in values recognized and accepted by the members of the community is a prerequisite for its effectiveness. J. Orczyk states that "social policy can only be accepted if its effects are positively assessed not only by the enigmatic majority of citizens, but also, and above all, by its current and future beneficiaries" (Orczyk, 2015, p. 2). J. Supińska also draws attention to the need to take into account common beliefs in creating solutions to social problems. The author recommends taking into account in the reconstruction of disputes concerning the main issues of social policy such colloquial views that affect the social imagination (Supińska, 2014, p. 47–48).

The Family 500+ Programme met the expectations of stronger financial support. It can be said that there is a shift away from neoliberal rhetoric (Rymsza, 2017, p. 13) and that the conviction that the state has a duty to support its citizens in the social sphere, especially in family policy, is becoming stronger.

Of all the forms of support offered, the Family 500+ Programme is the most valued form of supporting families due to its universal, non-stigmatising character. This programme began a new way of perceiving the social policy of the state and its obligations towards families, not only those who are not able to meet their educational obligations on their own. He reinforced the conviction that the family is not a private matter, and that bringing up children is a task in which parents should be supported in the interests of society.

The results of the author's research conducted in an environment that perceives the effects of transformation more from the perspective of losers than winners, show approval for the current direction of changes in family policy. In particular, the impact of this policy

on the material conditions of families is viewed positively. It is clear that there is a need for support for all families, and not just for the most vulnerable.

Although, as the analyses presented above show, all the examined variables were evaluated heterogeneously, having a number of low and high values, the obtained standard deviations of observable variables show that these variables are evaluated in a stable way. This is additionally confirmed by the calculated coefficient of variation, which for all variables did not exceed 0.54, which means low variability in most cases. Two forms of family support—the Family 500+ Programme and the importance of housing care—received the highest scores in the study. On the other hand, the greatest differences in assessments were noted for the variables, namely the dignity aspect of support, the effectiveness of support for public institutions, and the creation of a solidarity fund through taxation of the richest people. It should be noted, however, that the same variables also received one of the highest average marks in the study.

The Family 500+ Programme, fundamental to this policy (which I would like to emphasise once again), reinforces the conviction that the family is not a private matter, and raising children is a task in which parents should be supported in the interests of society. The author's research also emphasized the value of subjectivity and autonomy in the spending of funds from the benefit, which was considered an additional value of this program.

To conclude, it can be stated that mindful of the visible polarisation of opinions on the issue of detailed solutions in the field of social policy instruments, one can see approval for such solutions which take into account the interests and aspirations of significant social groups and environments. The positive impact of the Family 500+ Programme is, in the opinion of the respondents, its unquestionable legitimacy.

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#### Normative acts

- The Act of 12 March 2004 on social assistance. Journal of Laws of 2008 No. 115, item 728 with later amendments.
- The Act of 24 July 2015 amending the Act on family benefits and certain other acts from August 21, 2015, item 1217.
- The Act of 11 February 2016 on state aid in raising children. Journal of Laws of 2016, item 195 with later amendments.

### *Opinie Radomian o prorodzinnych programach socjalnych*

#### *Streszczenie*

Celem artykułu jest ukazanie oceny roli państwa w polityce rodzinnej w kontekście fundamentalnego programu „Rodzina 500+”. Na podstawie przeprowadzonych w Radomiu badań empirycznych autorka wskazuje skalę poparcia dla programów wsparcia rodzin, szczególnie programu „Rodzina 500+” i jego aksjologicznych korzeni. Programy „Rodzina 500+” i „Dobry Start” (potocznie nazywany „300+”) zmieniły przekonania dotyczące roli państwa w polityce rodzinnej. Zaznacza się odejście od neoliberalnej retoryki i umacnia się przekonanie, że państwo ma obowiązek wspierania obywateli w sferze socjalnej, szczególnie w polityce rodzinnej. Ze wszystkich oferowanych form wsparcia program „Rodzina 500+” jest najwyżej cenioną formą wspierania rodzin ze względu na jego uniwersalny, niestygmatyzujący charakter.

**Słowa kluczowe:** polityka społeczna, programy socjalne, program „Rodzina 500+”, stygmatyzacja