

THE DESIRED PUBLIC POLICY MODEL FOR POLAND DURING THE TRANSFORMATION PERIOD

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While entering the transformation period, Poland started changes in economics, which was run by the state and was characterized by the lack of market equilibrium and low degree of satisfying the nation's needs¹. The change of the state's role in the economic system became the major challenge for Poland, which started transformations of the system in 1989. The ending of this major phase of transformation can be gauged not only by the degree of state's withdrawal from the role of the owner and a manager, and replacing this role by a stable set of systemic rules, but also by introducing new market organizing institutions and the degree of financial independence of economic entities from the domination of politics.²

¹ Polish people expected a lot with the end of communist rule era and also with a new knowledge of western life styles. More on this by R. Siemińska "Społeczeństwo polskie wobec wartości materialistycznych i niematerialistycznych – w perspektywie międzynarodowej." *Studia socjologiczne*, no. 4, 1988.

² It should be added that the change of the state's role is profound, not proportionate in various areas and not entirely consequent. It should be understood that some areas (e.g. freeing the economy and increase of Polish share within the international division of work, privatization, fiscal policy) for several years a number of European countries use systems, which are typical for developed countries, and in other countries where development is slower (industrial policy, social policy) or the old methods are used but were only renamed. Footnote by M. S.

See: B. Błaszczuk, M. Borowiec, M. Antczak: *Rola państwa w gospodarce. Polityka gospodarcza, rozwiązania instytucjonalne i procesy realne*. In: *Raport o rozwoju społecznym. Zmieniająca się rola państwa. Polska'97*. Warszawa 1997, pp. 38–83.

Conducting social policy, which is based on limiting of the state's role and introducing mechanisms and procedures of mutual deciding and cooperating between the state and non governmental agencies became politically the most difficult task. A similar situation applied to adjusting the social infrastructure to the level of existing requirements of the population.³

Transformation of social politics in Poland happened through a step from the socialist model of social policies from the Polish People's Republic(PRL) period into promotion of the market economics of the Third Polish Republic.

The social politics of the socialism was full of weaknesses of the system, and became the challenge to find a new, proper model, for the conditions of market economics.

The character of social, economic, political and cultural changes that occurred in the nineties in Poland caused an ideological revision of guidelines in social policy. It should be noted, that the point of reference in the evaluation of changes that occurred after 1989 is the true picture of socialist system, which limited individual peoples' initiatives, deprived people of self supporting opportunities, and made people accustomed to be asking for assistance and leading a passive life style. Socialism allowed people not to bear any responsibility for their actions, and to be morally infantile while giving them a false sense of social and ideological safety. The state and the communist party members took care of citizens' feelings, as subjects, limiting their sense of privacy and freedom.⁴

The changes that began in our country after 1989, it was the time when economic changes took place. These changes include creating and realizations of stabilizing programs, privatization processes and above all making the privately owned sector of the economy market competitive.⁵ These changes aimed (among others things)

³ Social infrastructure in social politics as understood is a social-economic subsystem, which performs its goals through rendering paid and unpaid services often named as social services in the area of education, upbringing, health care, social care etc. See: Kroszel: *Infrastruktura społeczna w systemie polityki społecznej wobec rodzin*. Edited by A. Kurzynowski: *Rodzina w okresie transformacji systemowej*. Warszawa 1995, pp. 107–147.

⁴ According to Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski, "someone who was imprisoned for a long time, after becoming free, feels lost, helpless, like just orphaned...In social setting a similar type of phenomenon can be observed on a massive scale...The totalitarian system controlled our lives from the crib to the grave". E. Wnuk-Lipiński: *Wyuczona bezradność*, "Nowe Życie Gospodarcze" 23 XI 1995.

⁵ I accord with W. Morawski that a free market, which was being organized at the beginning of the 90-ties in Poland, was marked by the loss of control of the state over economy, or its radical reduction of this control to the level of handling public goods. Comp. M Morawski *Zmiana instytucjonalna*. Warszawa 2000, pp. 96–101

at exiting from the country's economic and social crisis and failed economy. This radical economic strategy is effective, but its high social price has to be paid.⁶

This is why in the first years of the nineties unemployment, prices grew, and this was accompanied by a drop in real wages and cutting various social benefits. The result was impoverishment of the people in general, and a drop of life standard for large groups of the nation, growth of poverty and a large decrease in satisfaction of the basic needs.⁷ On the other hand, however, the economic and political system transformation process caused a "cleansing" of economic categories from social consideration elements. The main goal was to eliminate subsidizing production of basic goods and education and culture. Numerous institutions dealing with social policy and needs lost money from the state budget and increasing prices and fees for social services brought about a radical drop in demand for them.⁸

Social policies started to be limited to increasing monetary benefits, for which a high degree of peoples' and political pressures were present, due to the increased costs of living accompanied by shrinking employment. The main concern of the economic policy and the people was unemployment.⁹ Limitation of labor sector caused a real problem for public finances. This in turn caused limiting social services and reverting monetary benefits for numerous groups of people becoming increasingly impoverished.¹⁰ Social policy found itself under pressure of requests and expectations from individuals and groups, who forced the issue of lost compensations, which they lost. A protective shield against recession and harsh market economy reality were also issues.

⁶ I understand the radical strategy term as so called "shock therapy" of Polish economy (aka. Balcerowicz's Program), which was based on restrictive monetary and credit policy, eliminating governmental subsidies, freeing prices, exchangeable Polish currency, liberalization of foreign trade and restrictive income policy. More on this in: L. Balcerowicz, B. Błaszczuk: *The Polish Way to the Market Economy*. London 1996; *Podstawowe kierunki prywatyzacji*. "Monitor Polski" no. 13/1990; *Ocena przebiegu procesów gospodarczych w 1995 r. na tle lat 1990–1994*. Centralny Urząd Planowania Warszawa 1996.

⁷ See J. Danecki: *Świadectwo danych*. "Polityka społeczna" no. 11/12 1992r.

⁸ For example: until recently overcrowded nurseries, preschool centers, hospitals, state run resorts, culture community centers became empty. Przyp. M. S.

⁹ There was a change in the formula of a welfare state, abandoning the principle of full employment, a stop was put on welfare and using State economic system to deal with social issues. More on this: M. Dąbrowski: *polityka gospodarcza okresu transformacji*. Warszawa 1995.

¹⁰ See S. Golimowska: *Polityka społeczna państwa w gospodarce rynkowej*. Warszawa 1994, pp. 205–211.

Reforming changes within the social policy pertain to activities of numerous institutions.¹¹ The state run institutions stopped being the sole entities protecting the Polish citizens from results of social dangers. The newly created decentralized social policy passed this responsibility to agencies at the level of voivodships, counties and communities, and these agencies were to take over this responsibility, a previously exclusively belonging to the state.¹²

Since 1989 we can notice three main sorts of activities, which were taken up in response to the challenges of transformation of national economics and politics that faced the social politics.¹³ The first item was the attempt to create an effective system of social protections and forms of guaranteed financial assistance, unknown until that time in the Polish system of social aids, such as unemployment benefits and housing expenses assistance; implementing the reform of social aid;¹⁴ improving the mechanisms of social benefits and wages indexing¹⁵ and elimination administrative limitations (introduced by the former system), as well as self help and charitable activities, which were linked with stimulating outside governmental activities. As the second item a complex program combating unemployment and job protection was being created.¹⁶ The third aim of the new social policy was adjusting the new

¹¹ During the period of real socialism a typical organizational system was a hierarchic system of administrative institutions managing social services entities such as (schools, hospitals, social services centers). Under such conditions the state was responsible for delivering social services help and at the same time it acted like “Santa Claus” providing social help for free or minimal payments. Footnote by M. S.

¹² Unfortunately when the state abandons its social services obligations, no other entities pick them up. Despite elimination many administrative limitations for outside government institutions, there were no attempts by the state to stimulate charitable activities. Compare. N. Barr: *Ekonomika polityki społecznej*. Poznań 1993.

¹³ Comp. M Książkowski: *Kryzys systemu socjalistycznych gwarancji w polityce społecznej. W Zagrożenia i szanse polityki społecznej w Polsce w okresie transformacji*. Edited by M. Książkowski, J. Supińska, Warszawa 1993, pp. 7–17.

¹⁴ This reform contained an assumption that social help is basically available for all citizens in poverty and not as up to this time, practically only to those who were past productive age or the handicapped. Footnote by M. S.

¹⁵ Here this means increasing the frequency of retirement reevaluations and indexation of wages in the public sector and changes in minimal wages. Footnote by M. S.

¹⁶ It needs stating that the Polish legislation reacted quickly to changing conditions on job market. This is regulated by the Law of December 29, 1989 “O zatrudnieniu”, Dz. U. No. 75, poz. 446.; Ustawa z dnia 16 października 1991 r. “O zatrudnieniu i bezrobociu”, Dz. U. No. 106, poz. 475; Ustawa z dnia 14 grudnia 1994 r. “O zatrudnieniu i przeciwdziałaniu bezrobocia”, Dz. U. No. 1, poz. 1 z 1995 r.

social programs to the emerging market economy, which also meant the diminishing financial capabilities of the state.¹⁷

These changes resulted in three separate parallel strategies within the new social politics. The first was a paternalistic type, the second was a market strategy, and the third was bringing into being self-help and charitable type of activities.¹⁸

The paternalistic strategy emerged as the response to the strong pressures to hold on to, at least some forms of state interventions known in the former political system. This strategy allowed for preserving the system of social assistances in existence up to that time. Keeping these benefits was possible at the cost of degrading the service sector and various material benefits and also financial assistance for the unemployed people. The second strategy of social politics was based on bringing social issues into the market economy. Thus the attempt was to fit social programs into the market type economic system, and then there was an action of privatization of the system to satisfy population's needs.

The third strategy, and this is worth mentioning, that the emancipation of the citizens' initiatives began in the first period of the "Solidarity Movement" in the 80's, and then its eruption happened after 1989, and is one of the most important achievements of the transformation period, even though it is the least appreciated today. During the beginning phase of the political system changes, the general thinking was, that local government agencies would be the carrier of the social and political reforms.¹⁹ The rebuilding process of local government structures at the lowest level of a community²⁰ became the base of directing numerous projects, which had been done till that time by the central government and then passed to be executed by the local governments.²¹

¹⁷ The most important changes in this direction are: breaking the state monopoly in rendering social services, decreasing the engagement state and state run establishments in servicing people's needs in the area of housing, recreation, culture, child care, engaging other than state budget financing of social services, introducing partial or full payments for some services, increased payments for medicines, creating foundations etc. comp. M. Książkowski: *Kryzys systemu...* op.cit.

¹⁸ More on this: M. Rymcza (ed.): *Reformy społeczne. Bilans dekady*. Warszawa 2004 pp. 201–213.

¹⁹ E. Leś: *Organizacje obywatelskie w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej*. Word Alliance for Citizen Initiatives, CIVICUS, Waszyngton 1994, pp. 10–12

²⁰ Law of March 8, 1990. "O Samorządzie terytorialnym" Dz. U. No. 16, poz. 94,95 and pakiet ustaw "okołosamorządowych".

²¹ Since 1993 the dynamics of outside government organizations growth slowed down. Desired changes meet now numerous limitations (the end of 90 ties) financial and legislative. This author is convinced that these organizations request the State to define its attitude toward

The main idea of the Polish social policy was to decisively abandon the protective role of the state and place the individual responsibility of taking care of one's life and the future of the citizens. The adopted actions and strategies in this area called for changes in the existing at that time model of social policy.²² Creating of a defined social policy model resulted first of all from a conviction that there is an integral and mutual relationship between the economic and social development;²³ secondly there was a need to create such a social policy, which would make a smaller gap between the richest and the poorest Polish people by providing proper opportunities between these groups and preventing creation of unequal opportunities and thirdly there was a necessity to create such model that would account for values inherent to the Polish culture and at the same time it would be adjusting for the new socio-political system, then as the fourth consideration was the fact that Poland was to enter the European Union.²⁴

The next important challenge for the Polish politicians was the consciousness that building a new model of social policy should be based on deeply rooted teaching of Catholic church inherent to the Polish culture, its traditions, and principles. The instilled by the church teaching and values presents the view that the family and family politics assumes that social politics exist at all.²⁵

Under the conditions of market economy, a few models of social policies can be isolated. There were numerous works written, in which attempts were made to systemize social policies of various countries and finding common characteristics among such models functioning around the world.²⁶

them. In this phase the most important issue was that the State should not interfere and be a partner. Footnote by M. S.

²² I wish to remind September 1989 expose of the Prime Minister Mr. Mazowiecki, he spoke about the need to build the Third Republic according to the principles of sound social and market policies. Footnote by M. S.

²³ Economic development is impossible without the social development in a long run, because it leads to disorders in development of economic and social system. E. Domańska: *Wokół interwencji państwa w gospodarkę, Keynes, Fridman, Laufer, Kennedy, Reagan i inni*. Warszawa 1992; L. Gilejko (ed.): *Społeczne uwarunkowania przejścia do gospodarki rynkowej*. Warszawa 1993.

²⁴ This is a significant fact because while defining the character of social policy in Poland we have to take into account the existing models in the countries of the European Union. K. Głąbicka: *Polityka społeczna w Unii Europejskiej. Aspekty aksjologiczne i empiryczne*. Warszawa 2001; also W. Anioł: *Polityka socjalna Unii Europejskiej*. Warszawa 2003.

²⁵ More on this: M Skawińska *Rodzina w nauczaniu Kościoła katolickiego*. Kielce 2001.

²⁶ Comp. R. Titmuss: *Social Policy. An Introduction*. London 1974; N. Furniss, D. Tilton: *The case for the welfare state*. Blomington University Press 1977; G. Esping-Andersen: *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*. Cambridge 1990.

Postulated models are closely tied with existing social doctrines in a country introducing a given type of a social policy model. Thus the existing doctrines condition development of particular social policy strategies, either liberal or conservative.

The liberal model, which is also named as marginal, contains assumptions that there are two manners in which needs of an individual can be satisfied; through the family or through the market place. Thus, this model assumes that the majority of people will survive with the help of their family and charitable institutions. Only when these fail, the state help enters with its temporary solutions in a selective manner. Therefore, in such a model of social policy, family policy will be selective, since the state will provide help for those families which live at the poverty level. According to this model's assumptions *"the proper aim of a welfare state is teaching people how to help themselves without state's help."*²⁷

This model is defined as marginal²⁸, positive state²⁹, liberal³⁰ or residual.³¹ Such a model of social and family policy is used in great Britain.

The other model labeled as conservative³² conditions the level of social benefits needed to satisfy the needs by the position of a particular individual holds within the job market. The state under such policy makes citizens to pay for insurance policies. Such insurance policies include all typical occurrences and all people who are gainfully employed. These insurance policies are organized in a manner that reflects differences in the status within the market. Then help, provided to families or individuals, who found themselves in difficult situation, depends on individual contributions and productivity. On the other hand there should be limitation of state's intervention in social matters. Social programs in a country realizing these assumptions should be so constructed to disturb the least the mechanisms of free market economics. This type model is in place in France and Germany.

The next model is the social model. It is also defined as institutional-redistribution model,³³ a state of social well-being,³⁴ a social-democratic or even welfare state

²⁷ Quoted. M. Kieżopolski: *Modele polityki społecznej*. Warszawa 1999, p. 9

²⁸ e.g. R. Titmuss: *op. cit.*

²⁹ e.g. G. Esping-Andersen: *op.cit.*

³⁰ e.g. G. Esping-Andersen: *op.cit.*

³¹ e.g. M. Ksieżopolski: *Modele...* *op.cit*

³² It is also defined as motivational, conservative –corporate, efficiency, servicing, corporate, see. M. Ksieżopolski: *Modele...* *op.cit.*

³³ This definition is introduced by Richard Titmus: *Social...* *op.cit.*

³⁴ This definition is introduced by Norman Furniss i Dorothy Tilton [in:] *The case...* *op.cit*

model.³⁵ This strategy of solving social problems is significantly different from the first and the second type. The social type model sees social politics as an institution integral with the framework of society. An axiom is built into this model that the causes of social problems are imbedded in the entire society and not just in an individual. This is why, it is the society in general, that is responsible for situations in which its citizens and their families find themselves, and also helping to solve these problems. According to the assumptions in this model, market place is not perfect and does not guarantee satisfaction of social needs at the adequate level from the social viewpoint. It is the social state run politics should replace market mechanisms in the process of filling such needs using the criterion of needs not merits. Therefore social benefits should be applied to all families and help should not be limited by any conditions. This type of model is used in the Scandinavian countries, and mainly in Sweden.³⁶

While comparing principles of social politics used in Poland during the period of PRL, we can state that they were similar to the social and motivational model. Social politics from the period of social realism treated the state as the bearer of almost all provided benefits and services, but it also strived to provide all social services necessary. There is a similarity to the Institutional-redistributing model. The similarity to the motivational model emerged from the fact, that social policy conditioned social laws in conjunction with the status of a citizen within the labor market, and the dominating role of social insurance in building a system of social protections. Here the similarities end.³⁷ Redistribution functions of the benefits system, which guaranteed support in a case of typical life events, were poorly visible in comparison with those which are present in the market economy. It is the state during the PRL era that determined and played the major role in determining how much people would get paid. Due to the fact that the level of an average salary was

³⁵ The first definition – the socialdemocratic model – was introduced by Gosty Esping-Andersen, second by M. Książopolski, more on this, Książopolski Modele..., p. 91.

³⁶ Presented models of social policies and accompanying strategies are ideal in character. Then this means that no country can implement these in 100% in terms of real life. However the characteristics of all discussed models are more or less dominating in any given state. More on this subject in: K. Głąbicka: *Polityka społeczna...op. cit.* pp. 118–119.

³⁷ We have to state however, that guaranteeing employment for everyone, but not necessarily getting social help expressed the “commonness” of social politics in PRL. Beside this guaranteed employment and well being of the citizens was within the State’s sphere of involvement in consumption, and a small intervention in production, The second support of the social welfare system was high subsidies for basic needs basket and access to low cost social services. Footnote by M. S.

low and pay spread was not significant, there was no need to adjust the primary distribution of incomes by using social benefits.

Then a question emerges; what happened in the Polish social politics after 1990? To what degree economic changes during the period of transformation implicated the necessity of changes in approach to regulating social issues and population issues in a newly shaped democratic state? What kind of social and family political strategies are possible at the threshold of the XXI century in changing Poland?

With the political and economic changes beginning at the beginning of the nineties no total changes of the existing model. We can state that the matter of social reform became marginal issue in the political and economic affairs discussion.³⁸

Undoubtedly the transformation period introduced new conditions within the social policy with consideration toward a family. The factors governing the political, economic, social system changed. During the first years of transformation the need for shaping family aspect of social policy, based on church teachings, was accentuated. According to these theory, it is the family not the state, it is responsible for rearing and educating children. This meant limiting the responsibilities and intervening by the outside family, specifically state run institutions. A decentralization of legislative powers of the state, in the respect of social politics became the reality. The share of private institutions in realization of family policies increased. This was compounded by a financial crisis that occurred during the transformation period and this contributed to lower expenditures by the state for social services.³⁹ Subsequently the restructuring and ownership changes, which occurred as a result of the political system changes, narrowed the social range of the activities previously rendered by the state establishments. The transformation process had a negative influence on functioning and living conditions of most families.

After 1989 three phases of the transformation in social policy can be defined.⁴⁰ The first one can be described as preserving the status quo (1989-95), the second as

³⁸ The common practice of most countries in Central Europe and Poland was holding on to the social support system from the period before 1989, and not creating new institutions. Slow pace of introducing social reforms, in comparison to rapid political changes, was a result of poorly defined ideas in this sphere of life and the political and economic instability, which was not helpful in the beginning of transformation. See Rymśza *Urynkowanie państwa czy uspołecznienie rynku? Kwestia socjalna w Trzeciej Rzeczypospolitej*. Warszawa 1998; and the opinions of the economic and social science experts see. E. Leś (ed.): *Polityka społeczna w okresie zmian ustrojowych. Zbiór rozmów z przedstawicielami świata nauki*. Warszawa 1992.

³⁹ We have to note here that limiting of financing possibilities by the state was accompanied by an increase of the cost to maintain functioning public entities.

⁴⁰ Division proposed by E. Leś "Od filantropii do pomocniczości. Studium porównawcze rozwoju i działalności społecznych" Warszawa 2000, pp. 197–198.

the rebuilding and creation of new principles and social institutions network 1996–1998), and the third as the phase of implementation of the social reforms (beginning in 1999).

While ending these reflections, the following can be added: during governing by each political administration after 1989 new principles of social policy were introduced within the campaign. The realization of these programs took place to some degree after a new government took power. For social politics is such a part of general politics which can make a political party popular, solely due to the campaign promises presented. Defining a new role of the State of Poland in the area of social policy, is at this time a process requiring time, not without conflicts and costs.

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