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Social pedagogy and the system of care and social assistance

Abstract

The following article analyzes the relationship between social pedagogy, social policy and the system of care and social assistance. The term “system of care and social assistance” should be understood here as widely as possible. It is therefore not only of direct support and assistance in the form of social work, social care homes, etc., but with all the services provided by the state forms of support, ranging from different types of activation in areas of poverty and exclusion, by solving the problems of addiction, to the organization of assistance to the sick or old. Therefore it is not only to reduce this system to social assistance. Thus understood, the welfare system is an area of practical activity, intended to produce specific social change.

Key words: social work, social pedagogy.

The following article analyzes the relationship between social pedagogy, social policy and the system of care and social assistance. The term “system of care and social assistance” should be understood here as widely as possible. It is therefore not only of direct support and assistance in the form of social work, social care homes, etc., but with all the services provided by the state forms of support, ranging from different types of activation in areas of poverty and exclusion, by solving the problems of addiction, to the organization of assistance to the sick or old. Therefore it is not only to reduce this system to social assistance¹. Thus understood, the welfare system is an area of practical activity, intended to produce specific social change.

On the other hand, it would be wrong to equate the care and welfare system with the state social policy, as this policy should cover all the tangible and intangible benefits to society. In addition to government aid institutions the social policy should therefore also implement to some extent, non-governmental organizations. However, it is the system of care and welfare that is one of the main instruments for implementing social policy of the state.

¹ By the social welfare system, among others, should be understood material support for a particular category of people, assistance in finding employment, access to health services, support single parents etc. The help is primarily concerned with social risk groups (people who are excluded, the long-term unemployed, the sick, the poor, the old, addicts, etc.). Cf.: Polityka społeczna – polityka socjalna (w poszukiwaniu definicji, związków, zależności), „Zeszyty Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Humanistyczno-ekonomicznej we Włocławku – Nauki Pedagogiczne” 1998, vol. III, p. 35.

In turn, the term “social policy,” we shall mean in this chapter (article) as the specific set of objectives and methods developed and implemented at the state level and covering in addition to healthcare the range of other actions to satisfy the needs of society, eg. the system of education, health, environmental protection, etc. It should be noted, however, that the social policy literature is said to sometimes narrow the sense and the term refers only to the policy, which aims to ensure social security, while in relation to other areas uses terms such as “educational policy”,”migration policy”, “employment policy”, “family policy” and so on. in a broad sense of the word social policy includes *de facto* most of the actions taken by the state in relation to society and absorbs most of the funds from the various types of social levies².

Social pedagogy can be both a source of the purposes of the care and support, as well as to pursue the objectives defined independently by that system, ie. to respond to specific needs. It can also be a source of specific institutional arrangements or develop under the influence of these solutions³. In contrast to social work, it is not involved directly in the solution, however, individual problems, and if he is involved in the system of care and social assistance, it does so primarily at the level of institutions and procedures. Of course, social work also uses the achievements of social pedagogy, pedagogy therefore have some impact on the way in which changes are made in the social functioning of individuals, but this is not its primary task.

Social policy of each country is shaped by two major groups of factors that significantly distort the final results. The first is the state of society and the type of relationship between state and society (demographics, level of wealth, work culture, individualism vs. collectivism, etc.), while other is the existing system of care and welfare, and thus its size, the degree of bureaucracy and hierarchy, ability to respond to changes in society, the attitude of managers and employees to social problems⁴. Both of these groups of factors are dynamic, which undoubtedly makes it difficult on the one hand to assess the effectiveness of individual assistance programs, on the other hand it forces the constant changes in different segments of social policy.

2 Social policy is also identified as the science of social policy, hence the theory of social policy. In Poland, the social policy problems is raised by one of the science magazine “Social Policy” issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

3 The same can be said for the theory of social work. Cf.: B Szatur-Jarowska, Praca socjalna, in: Leksykon polityki społecznej, red. B. Rysz-Kowalczyk, Warszawa 2001, p. 154.

4 Each bureaucratic system can, however, be made less bureaucratic by giving substantial autonomy to individual links in the system and the release of executives from the obligation to supervise the implementation of centrally planned tasks. In the system of care and welfare that would mean leaving much freedom as to the extent and forms of assistance to executives of the welfare centers. Obviously, this in turn raises a number of new problems. Cf.: D. Antonovich, Funkcjonowanie sektora publicznego. Perspektywa brytyjska, Toruń 2004 and: Kolečák, J.; Pokorný, V.; Ambrozová, E. Connatural management approach to preparation and development of individuals in the business environment. Prosopon, 2013, č. 1, s: 93-104. ISSN 1730-0266.

Designing the models of social policy should take into account not only the fact of the existence of these objective constraints, but also the current situation, to which a social policy is to be the antidote. This in turn means that without conducting research and making continual reflection on the roles and status of implementation of social policy, it cannot be a permanent solution to any weighty social problems. Social pedagogy is therefore primarily to fulfill the function of research and control. Its task is to monitor the extent to which social policy objectives are fulfilled in terms of changes in the functioning of the various social environments, identify emerging problems, formulate proposals and develop ways of correcting measures, which have proven to be ineffective.

An important element of social policy is, therefore, critical discussion on the state of implementation of the objectives of this policy and the factors that hinder the achievement of these goals. This discussion is important, inter alia, for the reason that the implementation of a particular social policy implies the secondary effects, including those in conflict with its basic assumptions. Example is the policy of the welfare state, which proved to be inefficient, not only because it consumed too much resources and even the most affluent society cannot afford to sustain, but also due to the fact that it contributed to perpetuate negative social phenomena, only masking their most visible manifestations of deep social problems.

Social policy can also be one of the tools of knowledge of social reality in terms of educational problems caused by phenomena taking place in society. It is possible, on the one hand, thanks to the daily experience of practical social workers, educators, animators, organizers and managers who, as the contractors of social policy, are an invaluable source of empirical data, on the other hand, due to the fact that every social change resulting from the practical implementation of the social policy involves some unpredictable consequences, which in turn are the object of knowledge of social pedagogy. In other words, social policy is a tool for social change, and the changes are in turn studied by social pedagogy. Regardless of whether the results of such studies are then utilized in planning assistance programs or not, they are expanding our understanding of the educational impact of the environment on the individual.

It is worth noting that the ultimate goals of social pedagogy turn out to be synonymous with social policy objectives. The purpose of both these areas is the impact on society and improvement of the quality of life of individuals. Social policy exists as long as there are institutions that implement this policy. In practice, this means that social policy implementers are the employees of these institutions at different positions, including social pedagogues. Since their activity (or its lack) depends on the effectiveness of social policy. The actions that care and social assistance employees take, depends both on their personal relationship to the social problems they face, and the proposed state of how to solve them, as well as theoretical preparation, during which they acquire the specific system of beliefs and values relating to the relationship between the individual, society and the state.

Another important function of social pedagogy is therefore an indirect effect on

the manner in which the social policy is fulfilled through preparation of personnel making up the social system. Social pedagogy therefore has a role to play as a kind of liaison between the state social policy and the system of care and support that policy in practice performs, as one of its tasks is to prepare future employees of the system of care and welfare. Although, as mentioned, in Poland there is no profession of social pedagogue, this does not mean, however, that the knowledge of the educational impact of the environment on the unit is not necessary for the implementation of social policy objectives. Understanding these interactions is a prerequisite to manage them, as it is currently the more important that the main objective of social policy is activating the individuals and learning social skills that allow for independent functioning in the environment, not only providing material support to allow the biological survival. Educational function is combined with the function of research, since it is impossible to develop the set of essential skills necessary for the social employee, if one does not know the challenges that the system currently faces.

In addition to diagnosing the current state of the system of aid and care a priority of social pedagogy should be to strive to understand the long term effects of the system of care and welfare for society. There is no doubt that social problems that were to be definitively resolved by implementing the numerous assistance programs, not only have not been resolved, but even in the most developed and wealthy countries have become a regular feature of social life. Until recently, there was therefore inefficient system of care and welfare, implementing social policies aimed to meet the material and immaterial needs of individuals, which for various reasons were not able to meet the needs on their own, while at the same time grew the problems which this system was not able to solve. Rising costs of this system along with the deteriorating economic situation in many countries have made it necessary to develop new models of social policy, tailored to economic opportunities of particular countries, while giving hope that the social problems generated by the previous model (including in particular the dependence of whole groups of state aid) will finally be solved⁵.

So far, the main task of this system was to support individuals and groups in meeting the basic needs of living. The scope of the aid depended on the one hand from the accepted ideas in different countries relating to the obligations of the state towards society, on the other hand on the level of economic development. And so at one end were eg. the Nordic countries, where it was assumed that every individual has the right not only to meet the basic biological needs, but to live in prosperity and a high level of wealth of the Scandinavian societies allowed realization of these goals, at the second end is the United States, where the system of social assistance offered to people much less. Regardless of the scope of the assistance provided, the primary objective of the social policy pursued by this system was to provide assistance (material, psychological, organizational, legal, etc.)⁶.

5 On the legislation governing the operation of systems of care and welfare in each country cf. S. Nitecki, System prawny pomocy społecznej w wybranych państwach ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem państw Unii Europejskiej, in: Praca socjalna wobec współczesnych problemów..., p. 105 and following.

6 On the various forms of social aid cf. eg. M. Adamiec, Pomaganie: problemy i uwagi. Psychologia

At the end of the seventies it began to realize about the failure of the system whose main element was giving out funds⁷. The main disadvantage of this system was making the people dependent on the support of state aid, thereby consolidating the foundation of passivity and helplessness. It became necessary, therefore, to develop and implement a system that would allow on one side to alleviate major social problems and deliver effective rescue of persons in distress, on the other side the system that does not cause such adverse effects.

Due to changes in social policy that has taken place in developed countries in recent years, arises the need to rethink the goals and objectives of the system of care and welfare in society. One of the challenges facing social pedagogy in developed countries, including Poland, is to change the existing social policy and the model based on wealth redistribution with the model of active social policy. The model has been implemented in the nineties in the United States, then in Western Europe, and after 2000 it was partially introduced in Poland.

The phrase “active social policy” does not seem to fully give the essence of things, in fact suggests that the previous model assumed passivity of the social policy of the state towards certain issues. Meanwhile, the model of active social policy does not concern about the activities of institutions and social assistance, but on the activity of individuals and groups covered by the support of the state. Therefore, the more appropriate term would be “activation policy”. The basic premise of this policy is the idea according to which every citizen has the right to actively participate in society, and the duty of the state is to allow the participation of all citizens. The state does not, therefore, seeks to provide social security to the citizens, but provides a set of tools which every citizen is able to take care of their own safety. In this model, the activation of the individual and shifting responsibility for its own situation gets primacy over the provision of basic household safety of that individual.

In the model of active social policy the central concept is, obviously, the concept of activation of the individual. But what should be understood by this activation? After all, one can activate the individual, which on certain grounds remains passive, ie. does not use the opportunities in order to overcome life's difficulties and improve their quality of life. Activating somehow intrinsically is directed towards overcoming passivity, hence causing a certain change of attitude and behavior of the individual. Activation is therefore in fact strictly educational action, because in the state system of social assistance it covers both the individual as well as the social environment, it is just the domain of social pedagogy.

It should, however, be noted that the concept of activation as an educational activity has some limitations. Activation in social policy programs is addressed by assumption to people socially excluded and marginalized, and it is assumed that this exclusion and marginalizing was the fault of the individual. Probably for the part of the excluded, this approach is right, the more that the research shows that

pomocy, w: *Psychologia pomocy. Wybrane zagadnienia*, pod red. K. Popiołka, Katowice 1996.

7 The welfare state has become the subject of widespread criticism in connection with the oil crisis of the mid-seventies. Then criticized both his excessive costs and lack of results. Cf. J. Wiśniewski, *W poszukiwaniu państwa opiekuńczo – efektywnego. Od tradycyjnego welfare state do The Third Way*, „*Studia Socjologiczne*” 2002, no. 2.

the longer one maintain in a state of social exclusion, the more difficult it is to overcome this. There is a certain group of people who take their own initiative and actions to improve their situation, yet they are not able to get out of poverty and exclusion. Attempts to “activation” of these people are tantamount to a waste of resources that could be used with greater benefit in other ways.

As noted by M. Rymśza, active social policy model has been implemented mainly due to lower costs compared with the previous model⁸. This means that social pedagogy and social work⁹ were, in a sense put to *fait accompli*, when in fact a major role in changing social policy model played the financial considerations rather than theoretical evidence demonstrating the advantages of the new model over the previous one. Note, however, that the effects of the implementation of this model can only be assessed in the long term, it may therefore be possible that this model does not produce the desired results, not so much because of its ineffectiveness, but because of the much smaller financial resources for its implementation in compared with the previous model.

This does not mean, however, that social pedagogy does not have to play any role in active development of active social policy. Social pedagogy is one of the areas particularly qualified to assess the effectiveness of active social policy, long-term goal of this policy is not an elimination of the negative effects of social problems, but getting to the causes of these problems and make lasting changes in the levels of these reasons.

Given that the active social policy is to activate the individuals, change their attitude to their own situation and equip them in the right set of competencies, which is a kind of “education”, and so the proper assessment of the effectiveness of this type of interaction in the whole society can make only the science concerned with the education. Moreover, it does not seem possible to activate individuals belonging to social environments dependent on state aid and learned helplessness so it became specific social “values” that define the way the individuals operate and perceive the social reality. Without changing the environmental impacts activation the individuals within the activation programs offered by employment offices seem to be doomed to failure. Participation in these programs is always limited in time, while membership in the environment in which the wrong patterns prevail is something permanent.

8 Cf. M. Rymśza, *Praca socjalna i pracownicy socjalni w modelu aktywnej polityki społecznej*, w: *Socjologia i polityka społeczna a aktualne problemy pracy socjalnej...*, p. 120

9 On the relationship between social work and social policy cf. eg. *Praca socjalna i polityka społeczna. Obszary współdziałania wobec wykluczenia społecznego*, red. K. Marzec-Holi, M. Joachimowska, Bydgoszcz 2008.

One can therefore formulate the demand of involving in the activation of various social groups (the unemployed, the disabled, seniors, persons addicted etc.) also the social pedagogues. Social pedagogy offers a slightly different perspective in social work than related disciplines¹⁰, taking into account the specificities of active social policy and objectives, the prospects offered by pedagogy seems to be particularly useful. It is worth to emphasize the way that social work, at least in some areas, also to some extent is an educational action intended to produce changes in the functioning of the individual in a social environment and the transformation of the environment. According to the definition formulated by the International Federation of Social Workers “social work is a profession that supports social change, problem solving emerging in human relationships and strengthening (empowerment) and trigger people to enrich their welfare. Utilizing theories of human behavior and social systems, social work intervenes in places where people interact with their environment. “

One of the shortcomings of the Polish system of care and welfare is the fact that the role of social workers is often reduced to a diagnostic functions, while as the support centers deal with allocating of material assistance to persons recognized on the basis of formal criteria as entitled to receive it. Moreover the additional obstacle in the implementation of an integrated model of social policy is the double funding of assistance and care system: the funds from the state budget and European Union funds. This resulted in the need to adopt two types of regulation: ordering the disbursement of EU funds and regulating the disbursement of funds from public contributions. This fact, in turn, became the reason why the social welfare system in Poland currently consists of two operating independently, or even competing subsystems: employment agencies whose job is activating the unemployed, and social assistance centers, providing direct support material and immaterial.¹¹

This situation seems to be impeding an active social policy, in practice this policy is limited to a group of unemployed. Activation is undoubtedly advisable in the case of long-term unemployed or people from certain backgrounds, but the cause of unemployment as a social phenomenon is not the passivity of the unemployed, but the fact that the economy does not produce enough jobs. This, in turn, makes the financial resources that could be directed to work with people socially excluded because of their own helplessness and lack of sufficient social skills, are spent on activities that in the social scale may not produce the desired results due to the overall economic situation.

Thus, although the prospect of social pedagogy in social work and functioning of the care and welfare seems to create opportunities for the effective implementation of the objectives of active social policy, the currently operating system, the way of

10 Cf. E. Marynowicz-Hetka, *Pedagogika społeczna...*, p. 357; and: Koleňák, J.; Pokorný, V.; Am-brozová, E. *Connatural management jako nový přístup v posilování konkurenceschopnosti lidí na trhu práce*. Scientia&Societas. 2013. 9(1). p. 144 - 151. ISSN 1801-7118

11 Cf. M. Rymysza, *Praca socjalna...*, p. 125.

financing and the related legal solutions significantly hinder or even prevent the implementation of this perspective as one of the primary determinants of the system.

The tendency to a certain inertia of the system and repetition of settled procedure despite the change in social policy priorities is not only in Poland. Thus, in countries where there is a tradition of strong state intervention, it can be noted a tendency to persist depending on help from state aid even if the objective is to break this dependency. France for example, which established state-funded social workplaces, in an effort to activate the unemployed and prevent the conditionality of the whole groups from the benefits. As a result, developed a new form of dependence on state support, this time from employment in establishments of social work¹². In this case, the impact of the manner in which the social policy model is implemented also had the kind of relationship between the government and society, and consent to a wide range of social intervention as from society and from employees and executives of the welfare system.

Some authors points out that the system of care and welfare as an instrument of social policy implementation proves to be ineffective, not so much because of the incorrect assumption of social policy, but because of the essence of the problems that the system is trying to solve, and also due to some intrinsic features of this system, without which it would not be able to function and which therefore cannot be eliminated with this system. In the latter case it is the matter of size and complexity, which is simply due to the fact that it is a centralized system, managed by the state, with powerful administration, aimed at solving social problems on a mass scale. In an era of increasing globalization and the technicality of societies, in the wake of the continuing decline in employment of any integrated support system controlled by the state is not to meet all the needs and expectations of society.

Because of these disadvantages of centralized systems of care and welfare one seeks for new methods of solving social problems. One such method is the cooperation of the aid centers with NGOs. Therefore, to overcome the difficulties generated by the system itself, it is proposed for some of the tasks carried out by the local government policy on NGOs¹³. The point here is not so much about the inclusion of support and care by non-governmental organizations, rather to define rules that allow NGOs to delegate tasks to as they are able to achieve better results and at lower cost in comparison with state system, as well as identify areas within which the support of non-governmental organizations would be possible and sufficient.

Opinions on the importance of the non-governmental sector for social policy are divided. On the one hand, there are numerous authors maintaining that NGOs are the inevitable complement to help and care state systems, while others indicate, however, that these organizations can only be a complement to the assistance efforts undertaken by the State and are effective only in those areas where there

12 J. Bourgeois, *Przeciwdziałanie ekskluzji – powrót do zatrudnienia przez aktywność ekonomiczną. Sukcesy, granice i perspektywy w świetle 20 lat francuskich doświadczeń*, in: *Przeciw wykluczeniu społecznemu (materiały pokonferencyjne)*, Fundacja „Pro Caritate”, Warszawa 2003.

13 As noted by M. Załuska, NGO sector can be a kind of “connective tissue” cohesive system of care and welfare of the public. Cf. M. Załuska, *Organizacje pozarządowe w społeczeństwie obywatelskim*, Katowice 1998, p. 97.

are problems for a relatively small number of people. Non-governmental sector in Poland is still much weaker than in more developed countries, and there is no legal obligation to cooperate social help centers with NGOs. It seems, however, that the importance of this sector will grow well in Poland, which will be connected with the currently rapid change in the system of socio - economic development. "Weak non-governmental sector - writes K. Piątek - reduces the chances of effectively solving social problems existing and waiting for us in the age of IT revolution and globalization."¹⁴

Although the non-governmental sector in Poland is much weaker than in the countries of the so-called old EU, in addition to the state institutions of social welfare there operate thousands of non-governmental organizations, non-profit organizations, that each carries out its own goals in the same areas in which operate state institutions of education, health care and social assistance. These organizations, as noted by K. Piątek, constitute as an increasingly important subject of social policy and play an increasingly important role in meeting the needs of society¹⁵. Therefore, it seems appropriate to coordinate the activities of state institutions and NGOs in such a way that the performance of the tasks does not duplicate itself and, secondly, to ensure the consistency of the state social policy. The second objective is all the more important that organizations benefit from government financial support of the state (or European funds), the question arises, therefore, about the rationalization of spending funds.¹⁶

From the point of view of social pedagogy it is essential that these organizations can freely determine their own goals and methods of operation. The strength of NGOs is undoubtedly an individual approach to the recipient and the ease of adjusting the offer to the needs of local communities. Furthermore, these organizations typically have limited budgets, so that in contrast to the state system of assistance and care no tendency to excessive bureaucratisation. Because they are created from the bottom up in response to emerging issues, they can be a source of learning about these new problems. Because the possibility of practical application of theories and methods formulated by social pedagogy in the context of state institutions of above-mentioned reasons, seem limited, non-governmental organizations may constitute an excellent field for experimental kind of application of theoretical solutions in practice. Although these organizations are independent of the state social policy, but the conclusions to formulate social pedagogues in cooperation with these organizations, can be successfully used on a larger scale system-level state institutions.

But one must not forget that NGOs are not able to perform all the tasks of social policy, and it seems necessary that a centralized system of care and welfare exists. The fact that they are not able to take the brunt of the whole state social policy in terms of assistance and care prejudice the same factors that make these organiza-

14 K. Piątek, *Polityka społeczna – praca socjalna...*, p. 116.

15 K. Piątek, *Polityka społeczna – praca socjalna (skomplikowany charakter zależności)*, w: *Socjologia i polityka społeczna a aktualne problemy pracy socjalnej...*, p. 116.

16 Cf. *Ibidem*, p. 117

tions in certain areas gain advantage over the state system¹⁷. The multiplicity of objectives pursued by the non-governmental sector makes it more likely to satisfy the specific needs of certain small groups, but the problems that take on a mass scale, can be effectively solved only under a system targeted at the whole of society and not on the specific local elements. There are also a whole range of problems that solving entails costs so high that NGOs would not be able to bare (eg. the problems related to health care), as well as problems requiring separate legal and institutional frameworks (eg. rehabilitation of convicted).

Besides the fact that the implementation of social policy objectives would not be fully possible without the support of the NGO sector proves without doubt a certain system failure of the state aid institutions. After all the system should be meeting all the purposes for which it was established, and if certain goals are not able to be realized, then the system should be reformed. The thesis that without the non-governmental sector it would not be possible to deal with problems from the area of interest in social policy, is probably empirically accurate, but one must realize that it involves the possibility of a negative diagnosis of the state institutions in meeting social needs for which they have been established.

It is difficult to decide whether it is for non-governmental organizations in the future that will lie with the main burden of implementation in practice demands put forward by social pedagogy based on the analysis of the impact of social policy on society. However, regardless the significant role they will play as a complement to a state system of assistance and care, the scope of their activities and the ability to solve various social problems will depend on the state of civil society, as well as what in the social sciences sometimes referred to as social capital. Effectiveness of non-governmental organizations undoubtedly depends on the existence of a network of social contacts, the level of trust between individuals, civic engagement etc., which of course means that one of the objectives of social pedagogy and social work should be to strengthen social capital.

The concept of “social capital” is often overused so it is worth an attempt to clarify its meaning. This concept stems from the assumption that the existence of a complex interaction of networks of social relations affects the quality of the community life. So next to physical capital in the form of a physical object (or funds) and human capital in the form of a set of competencies, education, skills, personal qualities and so on, there is the capital of social contacts between individuals. Unjustified would be the considered opinion that in civil society, with high levels of social capital, social problems would be solved thanks to the involvement of local communities and other assistance provided by the members of those communities. This is because each joint has a certain objectively measurable amount of resources that could be used to help the most vulnerable members. The individual being a member of the social environment laden high levels of poverty and social exclusion, falls within the social contacts mainly with people belonging to the

¹⁷ The basic problem of the non-governmental sector in Poland seems to be his poor financial condition. The Income of the most organizations do not exceed a few thousand dollars per year, wherien the government funds is used about 60% of them. Cf. A. Niesporek, Trzeci sektor w Polsce. Organizacje pozarządowe w sektorze socjalnym, w: *Praca socjalna wobec współczesnych problemów społecznych*, red. S. Pawlas-Czyż, Toruń 2007, p. 96.

same environment. Even so high levels of social capital is not useful for long-term and sustainable problem solving in social functioning of individuals belonging to the communities affected by poverty and exclusion.

Another way to counter the decline in employment in developed countries may be developing so. non-market social economy. The main goal of social enterprises is not the capital gain of the owner, but to meet the needs of the participants of the economy, and therefore, strictly speaking, providing the means to meet basic living needs. Operation of social enterprises is based on the provision of personal work by individuals within companies, which have certain special powers from the state (eg. tax exemptions or various forms of funding)¹⁸.

Non-market activity of social enterprises is certainly an effective mean of mobilizing individuals excluded from the labor market and restore them on the market, it must be remembered that the employment opportunities in the social dimension not only depend on the activity and competence of individuals, but also on the characteristics of the labor market. If the market does not generate enough jobs, then no form of activation of excluded persons proves effective in combating unemployment. Proponents of non-market social economy, however, indicate that even under conditions of persistent unemployment the existence of social enterprises is intentional, because they allow the unemployed to retain the ability to take up employment, are also associated with lower expenditures than benefits in the form of support or training for the unemployed. Above all, these cooperatives are designed for people suffering from social exclusion, for which participation in the transition of the labor market is the only chance for a way out of a difficult situation.

The activity of social enterprises is an interesting subject of study for social pedagogy, as their aim, at least in the Polish legal system¹⁹ is activating social marginalized people. The question of the long-term effectiveness of social cooperatives in activating people who are excluded is to be addressed, the degree of dependence of persons excluded from membership in a social cooperative, their impact on the local environment, etc. If it would appear that for the majority of the members the cooperatives are targeted workplace, rather than an intermediate step on the road to return to work, then it would mean the need to develop new methods of activating directed to this group of cooperative members who have a chance of finding employment outside the social sector.

Like the NGOs, social cooperatives are not perfect panacea for the problem of unemployment, poverty and marginalization. As companies subject to the laws of the market they bear the consequences of their financial decisions, and thus become susceptible to changes in economic conditions²⁰. Designed as a kind of

18 It is worth noting that this form of support can be combined with the activities of non-governmental organizations, allowing the creation of social enterprises.

19 According to the act on social cooperatives members of the cooperative may be mainly socially excluded people, and the proportion of people not affected by the exclusion shall not exceed 20%. Moreover, cooperatives are businesses and subject to the same laws as all the companies in Poland.

20 In the Summary of a report prepared for the European Economic and Social Committee by the International Centre for Research and Information on the Public, Social and Cooperative (CIRIEC) of 2012. states that social enterprises fared better during the economic crisis in comparison to the market sector, have been shown to be more effective in areas such as "scattered

transitional employment, so that it would be possible to restore people marginalized in the labor market, often turn out to be the target workplace. This raises another problem, because the amount of social cooperatives that can operate on the market at the same time is limited, if cooperatives will become a place of permanent employment for its members, it will cease to function as activation and their members remain excluded individuals with normal functioning in society, with the only difference being that this exclusion in their case will take a different form than in the case of people using the benefits. One should also expect that the ability to create social cooperatives (unless they are subsidized by the state) will be in the future more and more difficult, due to the fact that, in connection with the development of modern technologies in developed countries that gradually decreases the demand for wage labor²¹.

The concept of social non-market economy should be distinguished from the concept of the social market economy. The latter term refers to a type of economic system that has the ability to solve all social problems to which uprising it contributes. The term "market" indicates that we are dealing with an economic system based on a free competition, and this inevitably leads to the exclusion of a certain number of participants of the market game, generating the need for social security. Therefore the element of the market is the existence of national legislation to enforce social solutions in the workplace, a partnership between employees and employers, excessive reduction of social inequalities, etc.

The social market economy operates in many developed countries of the old European Union. Unfortunately, in Poland, its principles have never been implemented, although at the beginning of the transition, there was such a chance²². The reforms liberalizing the economy, combined with a lack of relevant social security meant that large groups were permanently excluded from participating in the game market. As a result, many social ills with which it was relatively easy to deal with, if at the beginning of the transition period ensured the introduction of legislation forcing implementing corporate social responsibility and economic justice, has become a permanent feature of social life.

This means that the present system of care and welfare must deal with the consequences of mistakes that were made in the early nineties. Therefore, a simple transfer of the goals and methods of the social policy of the countries with a long-standing social market economy to Polish conditions does not seem possible. Activation of the unemployed and excluded can bring the desired effect only

and not used to allocate resources for economic activities, encouraging the use of resources at the local level, the development of a culture of entrepreneurship, elimination of barriers to market, increasing labor market flexibility, promotion of locating production in many places," etc. http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/a_ces5925-2012_00_00_tra_etu_pl.pdf.

21 This process is started in the 70s and continues to date. Eg. In the United States in the years 1979 - 1992 productivity in the manufacturing sector increased by 35%, while employment decreased in the same period by 15%. Cf. J. Marykin, *Koniec pracy. Schyłek siły roboczej na świecie i początek ery postrykowej*, Wrocław 2003, p. 23 and next.

22 In Poland, the principle of a social market economy, which is based on a socio - economic development of the country, is written into the constitution. The idea of the social economy is not as yet realized in practice. "Almost no one has ever - notes T. Kowalik - does not raise the matter of our actually existing socio - economic system being unconstitutional". Cf. T. Kowalik, *Społeczne aspekty transformacji a rola państwa, „Gospodarka Narodowa” 2001, no. 9.*

in the system, which in itself does not generate the polarization of society and does not lead to the formation of large social groups partly or totally unable to participate in economic life.

A serious mistake made by some social scientists in Poland seems to be uncritical acceptance of the thesis, according to which the process of globalization leads to different parts of the world, in fact, similar social problems, and therefore the solution to these problems is possible by using similar methods. This thesis implies several other beliefs, eg. the view that globalization is inevitable and that we have no influence on its course, that in addition to certain negative consequences it entails a number of positive consequences that eventually outweigh these negative effects, or also, on the contrary, positive consequences felt only a small group of political and business elites, while the costs of globalization assume broad social circles, globalization leads to a weakening of the nation-state and the strengthening of supranational organizations as decision makers, leading to the destruction of local autonomy and cultural traditions and so on.

The concept of globalization is undoubtedly a factor initializing various political projects²³, including activities in the area of social policy, it should also be remembered that it can contribute to refrain from certain political activities. This second phenomenon we are dealing with when the state does not take sufficient action of a social nature, relying on the supposedly objective and inevitable processes taking place in the economy, for which it has no influence and which are a kind of sign of the times. One can refer the impression that in Poland there is often just dealing with the arguments of this kind.

It should be noted, however, that globalization from the perspective of social policy has also proven to be positive. Due to the fact that in different societies similar processes occur, it is possible to exchange experiences, hypotheses and theories. This process of exchange is now much more intense than in the past²⁴. On the other hand in countries such as Poland nature and scale of the problem is quite different than in Western Europe or the US, so uncritical transfer of models of social policy checks in those countries on Polish soil can cause additional difficulties rather than solving existing problems.

Following the literature in the field of sociology, social work theory, social pedagogy and social policy theory it is easy to see that the issue of globalization and its impact on the functioning of the system of care and welfare in Poland is almost absent. Although there are numerous publications on the relations between the processes of globalization and the welfare state, but they relate to the phenomena occurring in the countries of the so-called old European Union and the Anglo-Saxon countries. These considerations, however, from a theoretical point of view, appropriate and useful, are applicable to the realities of Poland to a very limited extent, with the obvious reason that in our country has never existed

23 As noted by P. Foreman, globalization "is not only a fundamental theoretical concept, but also ideological, mobilizing supporters and opponents to specific political action." P. Foreman, Globalization and new communitarianism, "Culture and Society" 2000, No. 3.

24 Cf. J. Szmagliński, Teoria pracy socjalna a ideologia i polityka społeczna – przykład amerykański, Warszawa 1996, p. 122.

a welfare state. Mindless attempts to introduce solutions developed in countries with the economic system based on the principles of the social market economy, contributed to the collapse of the above-mentioned system of care and welfare for two independently working areas, hence to the formation of the phenomenon not occurring in countries with social market economy.

Both in Poland and in other countries, one of the main planes of dispute proceed in relation to current social policy is a matter of moral powers of the state to intervene in the economic life of society and the issue of redistribution of national income. In recent years, it seems to overcome the idea that the state should intervene only as long as it is necessary to preserve social peace²⁵, giving up the idea of bringing the widespread prosperity. It leads sometimes to unauthorized conclusion that we are witnessing the bankruptcy of the welfare state as such, and that attempts to broaden the scope of social assistance in Poland are therefore doomed to failure.

In Poland anyway social assistance is still mostly brought to the allocation of funding, which makes social problems mitigated to some extent, however, are not resolved. Due to the scarcity of the resources state interference does not extend too deeply into social life, although undoubtedly due to new legal solutions that range of interference becomes more significant (eg. the law against domestic violence, the law on social cooperatives, the law on the prevention of alcoholism and so on).

Nevertheless social pedagogy as well in Poland is now facing the task of developing new methods of solving social problems. These methods must be possible to implement in conditions of limited material resources, while at the same time should be an effective tool to assist individuals and groups who have found themselves in a difficult situation no fault of their own. This is not a rejection and replacement of the existing types of care and welfare, but on the contrary, the improvement based on the experience and lessons from the mistakes made in the past. Due to changes in the model of social policy and a gradual implementation in Poland active policy model, the role of social pedagogy, both in the state system of assistance and care, as well as non-governmental sector should gradually increase.

Already, social pedagogy can fulfill the function of a specific link between non-governmental organizations and institutions implementing the social policy of the state. This is primarily to develop a coherent set of rules of access for specific social groups to the various forms of institutional support, and to identify the criteria to differentiate the individual forms of support depending on the characteristics and needs of particular recipients. It should however be borne in mind that the system of care and welfare, problems and challenges that it faces, as well as successive governments after 1989 social policy provide arguments for the thesis that even now social pedagogy and related sciences are in a different situation compared with the problematic social pedagogy in countries with long democratic tradition. Different problems are being faced by our country²⁶, as well as the scheme itself

25 E. Mączyńska, P. Pysz, *Spółeczna gospodarka rynkowa. Idee i możliwości praktycznego wykorzystania w Polsce*, Warszawa 2003, p. 131.

26 An example is the problem of migration of the population. In Poland there is a problem of excessive emigration, while in wealthier countries the issue of immigration. Cf. K. Szymbalska, *Migracje jako problem polityki społecznej (na przykładzie Polski)*, w: *Sociologia i polityka*

and social care, which also generates some specific problems. In Poland, on the one hand there is a series of global events, which the Polish system of social assistance tries to respond, as exemplified by trying to pursue an active social policy, on the other hand, we face still problems which arose in the early period of political transformation, and the resultant due to the "shock" nature of the economic reforms, which at that time were introduced.

Social pedagogy could play an important role in the active social policy, but the specificity of the Polish system of assistance and care seems to make its possible effects on the social life largely unused. Nevertheless social pedagogy undoubtedly has a significant role to play as a field of diagnosing the effective implementation of social policy objectives, identifying undesirable effects both at the level of care and welfare system, as well as at the level of institutions established to carry out the purposes of this policy.

Social pedagogy is not only a theoretical social policy, it is therefore difficult to talk about social policy based on social pedagogy. As I mentioned, between social pedagogy and social policies and system support and care which is executor of this policy, there are dependencies on both sides. Social pedagogy can be a source of theoretical and practical inspiration for social policy, on the other hand the system of aid institutions is the object of study for social pedagogues, thus projecting the state of theoretical discussions.

Social policy with the system of care and social assistance is obviously not the only area of practical interest in social pedagogy, on the other hand, it must be remembered that the ability to pursue theoretical models of social pedagogy depends on the policy pursued by the state. Final decisions as to the meaning and place of social pedagogy in the whole system of social welfare does not depend on the social pedagogues, but the designers of social policy models. If social assistance in Poland will be treated primarily as a mitigating factor to social problems, which are not only a source of ongoing objective economic and social processes, but certain political decisions²⁷, rather than as a system whose purpose is to maintain and, where possible improving the standard of living in society. It is worth to remember that, as I mentioned, due to the significant shortcomings of the current system of social assistance and the possibility of practical application of social pedagogy perspective within this system appear to be very limited, however, the increasing role of non-governmental sector makes social pedagogy may still be a significant impact on the process of solving social problems and improve the quality of life of individuals.

społeczna a aktualne problemy pracy socjalnej..., p. 337 and the following.

27 B. Szatur-Jaworska in the early 90s "It is assumed in advance - wrote the author - that - is by no means due to unforeseen perturbations, and certainly - situations arise requiring the intervention of social welfare." Cf. B. Szatur-Jaworska, Znaczenie pracy socjalnej w polityce społecznej, w: Zagrożenia i szanse polityki społecznej Polsce w okresie transformacji, red. M. Książkopouloski i J. Supińskiej, Warszawa 1993, p. 130.