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MAIN FAMILY POLICY DILEMMAS IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND - POSTULATED DIRECTIONS OF CHANGES IN THE LIGHT OF SOME EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

Abstract (introduction):

In search for new solutions for family policy in Poland this paper focuses on two issues: transformation of family models and inadequacy of family policy implementation.

Factors and manifestations of de-institutionalization observed in Polish families are the core issues of these considerations, especially in comparison to the European background. Due to socio-economic diversity and cultural changes in individual countries transformation of the family in Europe is not universal and proceeds with various speed. More in-depth analysis indicates that although this process is not that advanced in Poland as it is in other European countries, it significantly affects disproportion between family policy solutions and actual needs of the families.

The author's main goal is to present the most important features and trends of family policy in Poland, particularly focusing on its shortcomings. Lack of any coherent and consistently implemented program is an essential feature of family policy in our country. Family policy is unstable, short-term and often inadequate for existing needs. Apart from ideological concepts, it lacks practical solutions for the formation and functioning of families.

Family policy in Poland undoubtedly requires fundamental transformation. Experiences of other countries that faced or have been facing similar problems for much longer than Poland may provide valuable policy implications. Defining priorities of family policy and its consistent implementation are the most important challenges. Suggested guidelines for family policy model changes are presented in the concluding remarks in this article.

1. Key indicators and determinants of the de-institutionalization of the family in Poland and other European countries

Low levels of fertility across Europe draw particular attention in context of family de-institutionalization. It should be emphasized that in most countries, especially those of relative early transition, fertility has been restoring though.

According to Eurostat's biennial report on the demographic condition of the Community¹, since 2003 - after a sharp drop in 1980 and at the beginning of 2000's - fertility began to rise in the EU27: from 1.47 in 2003 to 1.6 children per woman in 2009. However, it's still far from minimum generational renewal (i.e. 2.1) (Fig. 1).

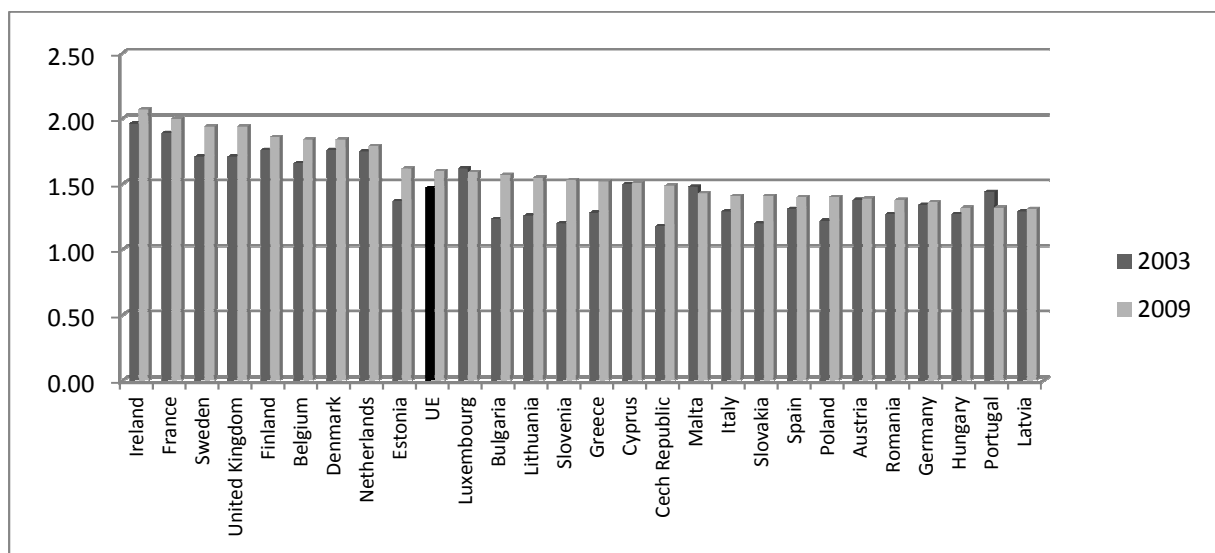


Figure 1 Total fertility rates in the European Union in 2003 and 2009²

Source: Eurostat Database, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>.

¹ *Demography Report 2010 Latest figures on the demographic challenges in the EU*, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-01042011-BP/EN/3-01042011-BP-EN.PDF [access on 1.04.2011].

² Eurostat database lacks data enabling comparisons between all EU states (including total fertility rate for EU). Thus this analysis ends in 2009. Available data indicate that in most of the EU countries fertility rate haven't changed. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in 2010 few rates had fallen (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Litvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovakia) and few had risen (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Luxembourg, Estonia, France, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia). No data for Belgium, Cyprus, Romania, UK. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsdde220>

The increasing number of births refers to entire European Union. The largest increase was observed in Bulgaria (from 1.23 in 2003 to 1.57 children per woman in 2009), Slovenia (from 1.20 to 1.53), Czech Republic (from 1.18 to 1.49) and Lithuania (from 1.26 to 1.55). In 2009 Ireland (2.07), France, (2.00), Sweden (1.94) and United Kingdom (1.94) were the Member States with the highest fertility rates. The lowest rates were observed in Latvia (1.31), Hungary, Portugal (both 1.32) and Germany (1.36).

Poland is also among the countries with relatively low fertility. In recent years - as in other countries - an increase of this indicator was observed (from 1.22 to 1.398 in 2003-2009³), whereas in 2010 it was already slightly lower (1.382⁴). Similarly, after four years of negative population growth positive change was recorded when it equaled 35 100 in 2008 - the highest level since 1997. Slight decrease to the level of 32 700 was observed in 2009. The increasing fertility rate was most likely caused by entering reproductive age by generations born in the mid 80's the⁵ and therefore it may decline within next few years.

On the other hand, according to a recently published report on the demographic situation⁶ Poland is one of the few EU member states that significantly increased the intensity of marriages (from 5.4 to 6.8 per 1000 population) in recent years (2005-2008). Slight decrease in 2009 to 6.6⁷ might be worrying. As the authors claim, increase in the marriage level was in part a consequence of postponing those decisions earlier. Yet the intensity of marriage remains high and is now lower only by 0.1 than it was in the early 90's at the threshold of great demographic changes. Nowadays, Poland has the highest share of first marriages for women (90%) in Europe, while the share of first marriages for both partners is approximately 85%⁸. Significantly, approximately 70% of legalized relations in Poland are religious marriages. Number of marriages, their intensity and character have a significant impact on the fertility of

³ *Roczniki Demograficzne* GUS, Warszawa, edition the relevant years; *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny*. GUS, Warszawa 2011, p. 126.

⁴ *Mały Rocznik Statystyczny*: Op. cit., p. 126.

⁵ *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski 2008-2009*, Raport Rządowej Rady Ludnościowej, http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/bip/BIP_raport_RRL_2008-2009.pdf [access on 20.09.2011], s. 6-7; *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski 2009-2010*, Raport Rządowej Rady Ludnościowej, http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/bip/BIP_raport_2009-2010.pdf [access on 20.09.2011], p. 234.

⁶ *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski 2009-2010*: Op. cit., p. 232.

⁷ According to *Roczniki Demograficzne*. GUS, Warszawa, from relevant years.

⁸ *Ibid.*, *Marriage and divorce statistics*, Eurostat database, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Marriage_and_divorce_statistics [access on 11.04.2011].

Polish women. Despite growing number of illegitimate births still far more babies are born in formalized marriages (ca. 80%⁹)¹⁰.

Furthermore, in comparison to other European countries, divorces are relatively rare phenomena in Poland (1.7 divorces per 1,000 population compared to 2.1 in the EU27 in 2009). Since 2008 their intensity rate had been stabilized at much higher level than in 2000 and earlier years (respectively 1,1). Ireland (0.8), Italy (0.9), Slovenia (1.1) and Greece (1.2) have the lowest divorce rates in Europe while the highest are observed in countries such as Belgium (3.0), Lithuania (2.8) and Czech Republic (2.8). In the EU countries changes in the intensity of divorces are much slower than changes in the intensity of marriage¹¹.

Economic situation significantly affects transition of family especially in terms of fertility. Today more and more children are born by women in the wealthier countries (measured by GDP/per capita PPP) characterized by a relatively high social spending in GDP (ca. 25-30%¹²): France, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Great Britain, Belgium. Favourable economic situation or high social benefits are not universal determinants of high fertility rates. Germany, Austria and Italy are the opposite examples of high social expenditures accompanied by lowest fertility rates, whereas Ireland has low expenses (about 16%) and a high fertility rate. Being one of the richest countries in Europe, it is characterized by a developed system of family and employers support¹³.

Poland is one of the poorest countries of the European Union (apart from Lithuania, Latvia, Romania and Bulgaria) with a relatively low share of social spending in GDP (20%). At the same time, it is still among countries where women have the least children.

As explained by the authors of the cited Eurostat report, most children are born in countries of the most generous welfare support for mothers. Shortcomings in this respect largely explain unfavorable results of Germany (1.36 children per woman). Interestingly, most babies are

⁹ In comparison the highest birthrates outside marriages are observed in Denmark – 46 % and in Estonia - 59%. From 1990 now on the number of outside marriage births doubled in EU and tripled in Poland – by Eurostat, op. cit.

¹⁰ *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski 2009-2010*: Op. cit., p. 232.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; *Marriage and divorce statistics*: Op. cit.

¹² *GDP per capita in PPS*, Eurostat database, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/tgm/table.do?tab=table&plugin=1&language=en&pcode=tsieb010> [access on 12.08.2011]; Social Expenditure Database (SOCX), www.oecd.org [access on 12.08.2011].

¹³ In his context Iceland seems to be worth a notice as a country of the highest fertility rate (2,23 in 2009) and one of the highest GDP/per capita in Europe accompanied by relatively low social expenditures (ca. 14,5% of GDP).

born in countries where average age at the first birth is the most advanced (above 30 years of age) and most children are born outside marriages. The least children are born in the poorest countries of EU: Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal¹⁴.

Thus, previously dominant opinion that wealthy people are less likely to have children needs to be reviewed. It appears that in societies that have exceeded certain level of wealth having children is a sign of social status¹⁵.

Taking into account average age of the first marriage for women, average age of the first childbirth and average age of motherhood or the percentage of illegitimate births on one hand, as well as diversity of socio-economic development on the other cultural transformation of the family in Europe is not homogenic and pursues at different pace. Scandinavian countries and few Western European countries are the most advanced in the sphere of the family deinstitutionalization. In case of the Northern countries late marriage, late parenthood and alternative forms of relationships are growing on importance. In Southern countries marriage as a form of family dominates, but matrimonial and parental decisions are deferred. Poland seems to be a country where the processes of family deinstitutionalization are still of little advance and conventional relationships dominate, even if delayed (relatively less than in other countries)¹⁶.

Delaying procreative decisions by the newlyweds is related to the level of education, difficulties at the labor market for young people, limited possibilities to acquire a flat of one's own¹⁷. Traditional family is also threatened by commonly observed lack of social security and precarious socio-economic situation, lack of appropriate family policy instruments and cultural changes in the patterns of life (dissolving family values) etc¹⁸.

¹⁴ J. Bielecki: *Rosnący wskaźnik dzietności sposobem na gnębiący Europę problem niewydolności systemów emerytalnych?* „Gazeta Prawna”, article from 2011-04-06, <http://praca.gazetaprawna.pl/artykuly/502568> [access on dostępu: 10.07.2011].; Demography Report 2010: Op. cit.

¹⁵ Undoubtedly, it would be worth to once again verify economic theory of behaviour and family by Gary Becker who sought reasons for delayed procreation decisions in pursuit for highest possible children quality, see: G. S. Becker: *A treatise on the family*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1993; G. S. Becker: *Ekonomiczna teoria zachowań ludzkich*, PWN, Warszawa 1990.

¹⁶ L. Hantrai: *Living as a family in Europe*, [in:] L. Hintrais, D. Philipov, F.C. Billari, *Policy Implications of Changing Family Formation*, “Population Studies” No. 49, Council of Europe Publishing, 2005, za: *Raport Polska 2030*: Op. cit., p. 55; Eurostat, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu>.

¹⁷ *Sytuacja demograficzna Polski 2008-2009*: Op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁸ J. Szczepaniak, *Sytuacja i przyszłość rodziny w Polsce – podsumowanie konferencji. Wnioski dla polityki społecznej* [in:] *Współczesne wyzwania polityki społecznej wobec rodziny* pod red. A. Kubowa, J. Szczepaniak. UE, Wrocław 2010, p. 363-374.

2. Changes of family policy models in Poland

Emerging social policy models are key factors that affect development of family policy¹⁹. They set out basic ideas, values, assumptions and objectives that should guide the specific social activities. They designate the place of family in social policy, social policy instruments for the family - their nature and character. They describe conditions for certain instruments in the context defined by ideological model, institutional spheres of executive subjectivity (sectors), areas of interaction (eg welfare services)²⁰. Strategy for families created within the model should clearly identify target groups (family types), quality and level of social benefits (cash, services, institutions), access to these instruments, responsibilities of the family, financing family policies, etc²¹.

At this point lack of consensus on emerging model of social policy emerges - a problem that has been visible from the beginning of transformation²². Although some common patterns or trends of various models can be identified as well as growing role of social services and families as subjects of social policy emerges, clear implementation and execution of policy family cannot be performed.

Shifts in social policy mentioned above refer to abandoning traditional theory of welfare state²³ towards the concept of subjective citizen and his/her problems, calling attention to the cooperation of stakeholders, including families, local environments and pushing the state to the back of social policy. This shift is also described as leaving passive policies of giving “fish” to activation by supplying a “rod”, in which social services should be the key instruments.

¹⁹ In Polish literature family policy is a subdivision of social policy.

²⁰ R. Szarfenberg, *Modele polityki społecznej w teorii i praktyce*, „Problemy Polityki Społecznej”, nr 12/2009, p. 15-55.

²¹ M. Książkowski, *Polityka społeczna w różnych krajach i modele polityki społecznej*, [in:] G. Firlit-Fesnak, M. Szyłko-Skoczny (ed.), *Polityka społeczna*, PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 144.

²² K. Zamorska, *Spór o model polityki społecznej w Polsce w nowych uwarunkowaniach gospodarczych, społecznych i politycznych*, [in:] O. Kowalczyk (ed.), *Współczesne społeczeństwa – nadzieje i zagrożenia*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, 2010, p. 13-27.

²³ J. Stiglitz, *Ekonomia sektora publicznego*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2004, p. 10-13; J. Auleytner, *Polityka społeczna czyli ujarzmiwanie chaosu socjalnego*, Wydawnictwo WSP TWP, Warszawa 2002, p. 120-130, 286; M. Grewiński, *Wielosektorowa polityka społeczna. O przeobrażeniach państwa opiekuńczego*, Wydawnictwo WSP TWP, Warszawa 2009, p. 151-157; G. Esping-Andersen, *Społeczne podstawy gospodarki postindustrialnej*, Wydawnictwo WSP TWP, Warszawa 2010, p. 21.

In order to better understand the nature of these changes it is worth recalling that before 1989 social policy was the exclusive domain of the state and authorities who knew best what people needed²⁴ and were considered the best organizers of economic and social life. This was manifested by undertaking initiatives to organize professional, personal and family life. At the same time the state guaranteed social services (mainly financial transfers) and services, which were commonly provided on a large scale. These benefits were free or very cheap. The socialist state was the main provider of social services in health, education, culture, childcare, care for the elderly and people with disabilities²⁵.

Systemic transformation launched in the 80's focused on building free market, civil society and democracy and brought about substantial changes in the state's responsibilities for basic social needs. Increasing crisis of public finances did not allow for realization of state obligations to citizens on a satisfying level. The state began to withdraw from family support and interventions by external institutions. The key word to understand social policy paradigm at that time was "circumstantial"²⁶. *Ad hoc* measures were taken "[...] generally to replace <<universal protectiveness>> of the state with selective actions protecting primarily the most vulnerable"²⁷.

Due to administrative reform in 1990 competences of state institutions were decentralized and most of them had largely been ceded to municipalities (local governments). From the organizational perspective establishing local family assistance centers, extending their functions and introducing non-governmental organizations that proved to be crucial for families and local communities were of great significance. It seems that when facing numerous barriers and irregularities in public sector NGOs are of the biggest matter for improving life standards of Polish families.

Thus, responsibility of local authorities, non-state actors and the families themselves for creating satisfying conditions of families was increased by decentralization. This perspective on social policy assumes that the state is neither able to recognize and fulfill all of the

²⁴ J. Auleytner, *Wprowadzenie*, [in:] M. Grewiński, S. Kamiński, *Obywatelska polityka społeczna*, WSP TWP, Warszawa 2007, p. 7.

²⁵ K. Zamorska, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁶ Ibidem, p. 19.

²⁷ M. Księżopolski, *Modele polityki społecznej*, IPS UW, Warszawa 1999, p. 37, see: Ibidem; M. Księżopolski, *Polityka społeczna na tle modeli występujących w Europie*, [in:] W. Anioł, M. Duszczyk, P.W. Zawadzki (ed.), *Europa socjalna. Iluzja czy rzeczywistość?* Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2011, p. 265-266.

citizens' needs, nor may directly protect them from all social risks²⁸. Thus, pluralization of social policy stakeholders occurs when grassroots initiatives of citizens, families, NGOs, local governments and other actors in the local environment grow stronger. This approach involves characteristic ideas of democratic states: active social policy, civic policy, citizenship, civil society, social capital, localism, welfare society or welfare pluralism²⁹.

Researchers seek guidance for the development of family policy instruments in welfare models of other European countries. In this context it seems useful to classify EU Member States models as follows: Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, Continental, South European³⁰ (see more in Table 1), adding Eastern European since 2004. The latter emerged in former socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland, and shows trends that determine implementation of these instruments, i.e.:

- 1) more or less radical economic reliance on market mechanisms;
- 2) abandoning “socialist” social security: full employment, job and wage security, subsidized basic goods and services, expanded corporate social responsibilities;
- 3) significant reduction of access to free or low-paid social services limited to low income households only; range of publicly available programs is shrinking to be increasingly replaced by selective actions;
- 4) shifting from the state monopoly in the social sphere to private profit-oriented and non-governmental organizations;
- 5) restricting vertical redistribution within the insurance benefits;
- 6) reduction of numerous social benefits and tightening eligibility criteria for these benefits;

²⁸ J. Auleytner, *Wprowadzenie*, op. cit., p. 7.

²⁹ B. Balcerzak-Paradowska, *Polityka społeczna i rodzinna w wymiarze lokalnym – podstawy koncepcyjne* [in:] B. Balcerzak-Paradowska (ed.), *Sytuacja rodzin i polityka rodzinna w wymiarze lokalnym – podstawy koncepcyjne*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2009, p. 19-32; M. Grewiński, S. Kamiński, *Obywatelska polityka społeczna*, Wydawnictwo WSP TWP, Warszawa 2007; M. Rymśa, *Rola służb społecznych w upowszechnianiu programów aktywnej polityki społecznej*, [in:] M. Grewiński, J. Tyrowicz (ed.), *Aktywizacja, partnerstwo, partycypacja – o odpowiedzialnej polityce społecznej*, Wydawnictwo Mazowieckiego Centrum Polityki Społecznej, Warszawa 2007, p. 13-28.

³⁰ Most popular models by R. Titmuss and G. Esping-Andersena (marginal or residual/liberal; motivational, handmaiden/conservative-corporative; institutional-redistributive/ socialdemocratic) underlie his classification. R. Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State*, Allen and Unwin, London 1974; G. Esping-Andersen, *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1990.

- 7) creating conditions for private insurance and services market to complement or substitute social security or public social services system, combined with wide variety of reimbursement;
- 8) adapting social services and whole social policy to requirements of market economy;
- 9) weaker capabilities of the third sector organizations - as subjects of social policy - in comparison with other EU countries, combined with a weak civil society development;
- 10) overwhelming dominance of neo-liberal and conservative perspective on social policy accompanied by marginalization of socialist / social democratic policy regimes³¹.

³¹ M. Księżopolski, *Polityka społeczna na tle modeli występujących w Europie*, op. cit., p. 266-267.

Table 1. Social Services against the models in the European Union formed by 2004

Criteria/Assumptions	MODEL		
	Scandinavian	Anglo-Saxon	Continental
State family policy	Universal access to social services and transfers according to needs; active and supporting gender equality and female participation in labour market	Limited, narrow scope of services supporting familie.	Passive, supporting male breadwinner model
Scope of public social services	Universal, high standard of services and other transfers	Low (selective and facultative)	Moderate; dependent on individual statuses at the labour market (efficiency and seniority)
State interventions	High, protective role	Low; „night watch”	Low (higher than in Anglo-Saxon model; social interventions supporting economical development); subsidiarity.
Family activity	Low	Very high (high commodification rate)	High (at the labour market)
Stakeholders involved in welfare capacity building	State, society	Families, local communities, NGOs-charity	families – local authorities – state
Countries	Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland	UK, Ireland	Austria, Belgium, France, the Netherlands ³² , Germany
			Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy

Source: author’s own review on: R. Titmuss, *Essays on the Welfare State*, Allen and Unwin, London 1974; G. Esping-Andersen, *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*, Polity Press, Cambridge 1990.

³² Social Policy in The Netherlands has a lot in common with scandinavian countries, thus it is by some included into social democratic regimes, see: R. E. Goodin et. al., *The real worlds of welfare capitalism*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999. See also: M. Książkowski, *Polityka społeczna na tle modeli występujących w Europie*, op. cit., p. 262.

Unfortunately, due to variety of models and opinions on above mentioned trends and perspectives finding effective solutions is not easy. At the same time it should be noted that certain types of social policy – theoretically common for different groups of countries - reflect diverse problems and strategies for solving them. It applies especially to the countries of Central and Eastern Europe³³.

In addition, an important reference point appears in discussions about the development of family policy in European countries. Principle of subsidiarity, emphasizing subjective family and limited state interference in its affairs is commonly shared. It underlines the idea of state support when the market resources are not enough to meet individual needs. First aid should come from the family, followed by the local community, NGOs, local authorities, etc., and finally - from the state³⁴. Similar assumptions are also at the heart of the European Social Model³⁵, which in addition highlights important instrument of linking cash benefits with personal social services. The first aims at ensuring dignified standards of living, the second provides basic social services, especially education, health and welfare³⁶.

3. Social services and their basic functions as prospective solutions in family policy - barriers of implementation in Poland

In recent years main direction of changes in Poland seems to shift from cash benefits to social services. The latter are considered an integral part of social policy³⁷ - as in the Nordic and Western European countries but conditions for their development and

³³Ibidem, p. 266.

³⁴ J. Szczepaniak (Sienniak), *Subsydiarność w polityce społecznej...*, op. cit; See also: G. Gelauff, I. Grilo, A. Lejour (ed.), *Subsidiarity and economic reform in Europe*. Springer-Verlag Berlin Heidelberg, 2008; N. A. Baarsma, *The Europeanisation of International Family Law*, T.M.C ASSER PRESS, Netherlands 2011, p. 116.

³⁵ „The European social model is based on good economic performance, a high level of social protection and education and social dialogue”. Report of the High Level Group on the future of social policy in an enlarged European Union, European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs, 2004, p. 5. see also: C. Hay, M. Watson, D. Wincott, *Globalisation, European Integration and the Persistence of European Social Models*, POLSIS, University of Birmingham “Working Paper” nr 3, 1999.

³⁶ M. Książkowski, *Polityka społeczna na tle modeli występujących w Europie*, op. cit., p. 277.

³⁷ P. Spicker, *Social Policy. Themes and Approaches*, The Policy Press, Bristol 2008, p. 1.

implementation are still far from those in Sweden, France, Ireland and other countries of relatively high fertility rates. It is generally accepted that social services as benefits in kind are generally less expensive than other non-financial social services (especially money). Furthermore, in contrast to cash benefits they have a bigger activating and integrating potential and thus they empower, make independent, expand opportunities for a successful social functioning, protect from consequences of social risks, etc. Their aim is also to strengthen social and family ties. Better needs fulfillment, eliminating inequality and improving equal opportunities should be the ultimate goals³⁸.

Postulated concepts of social services development in Poland focus in particular on integration and activation, which are associated with aspirations to build a coherent policy on social inclusion (active social policy). This approach derived not only from above mentioned models of social policy but also from some European (including Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020, Social Agenda) and national documents (National Strategy for the Polish Social Integration, National Action Plan for Social Inclusion). According to those guidelines implementation of these functions underlies development of social inclusion policy related to active inclusion. Three assumptions are:

- 1) connection to the labor market by being able to get a job or vocational training,
- 2) income support at a level sufficient for dignified life,
- 3) better access to services that remove barriers of inclusion to mainstream society³⁹.

As for my considerations last point is a key aspect that can be described by typical support services for individuals and families, for example advice and counseling, health care, childcare, care for the elderly, lifelong learning, psychological and social rehabilitation⁴⁰. Social inclusion, activation and integration are basic functions of social

³⁸ R. Szarfenberg, *Polityka społeczna i usługi społeczne*, [in:] M. Grewiński, B. Więckowska (ed.) *Przeobrażenia sfery usług w systemie zabezpieczenia społecznego w Polsce*, Wydawnictwo WSP TWP, Warszawa 2011, p. 67.

³⁹ Z. Wejcman, *Świadczenie usług społecznych – w stronę trzeciego sektora*, [in:] M. Grewiński, B. Skrzypczak, *Środowiskowe usługi społeczne – nowa perspektywa polityki i pedagogiki społecznej*, Dom Wydawniczy ELIPSA, Warszawa 2011, p. 113.

⁴⁰Ibidem, p. 113.

services discussed here. Primarily their goals are inclusion of families in efforts to overcome their problems and reaching life goals as well as seeking to integrate (or reintegrate) their internal relations and external environment. In other words, these services aim at helping people to become more self-sufficient, preventing from transfers dependence, supporting individuals, families and communities in successful social functioning, etc. (this notion of social services is particularly close to social workers)⁴¹.

Discussions about development of activating and (re)integrating social services for individuals and families are dominated by references to the tasks of social assistance and family support (expressed in relevant laws⁴²), as well as tasks related to social and professional reintegration (under the Act on social employment or Act on occupational and social rehabilitation and employment of disabled persons⁴³). Catalog of services provided in these areas include: empowerment of individuals and families, integration within their environment, reintegration of internal relationships, social skills and resourcefulness training, acquisition of vocational skills and apprenticeship training, retraining or upgrading professional qualifications, etc. Because of the special needs of recipients (eg helplessness in care and education, unemployment, poverty, disability, alcoholism, drug addiction, etc.) such an approach to social services is reasonable and certainly should be continued. However, in my opinion too little attention is given to individuals and families in relatively good socio-economic situation (not poor, not socially excluded) and/or to relatively strong families. In changing environments, both internal (financial situation, lifestyle, social attitudes) and macrostructural (market mechanisms, economic situation, level of society, and others) lack of appropriate support such as adequate social services (for example support for work-life balance) may deteriorate or disintegrate families. This situation is even more disturbing as mainly those

⁴¹ R. Szarfenberg, *Polityka społeczna i usługi społeczne*, op. cit., p. 61.

⁴² Especially by Act on welfare assistance (Dz. U. 2009, nr 175, poz. 1362 ze zm.) and since 2011 also by Act on family support and foster care system (Dz. U. 2011, nr 149 poz. 887).

⁴³ Act on social employment (Dz. U. 2011, nr 43, poz. 225 ze zm.), Act on professional and social rehabilitation and employment of The handicapped (Dz. U. 2011, nr 127, poz. 721 ze zm.).

families pursue important goals of social inclusion policy such as active participation in shaping optimal conditions for local environment⁴⁴.

As noted above, another problem of Polish social policy instruments is that many desired activating and integrating social services can be identified, but most of them remain in the realm of ideas. This complaint concerns both services addressed to families struggling with difficulties (socially excluded or at risk of poverty), as well as services that address the needs of individuals and families in relatively good socio-economic situation (eg childcare services for children under 3⁴⁵).

There are many reasons for this. First and foremost, it is lack of effective stakeholders on the local level developing and implementing social services, which is a result of insufficient funding, lack of infrastructure and staff, organizational problems: overgrown hierarchy and bureaucracy, etc. These problems are explicitly reflected in functioning of social welfare system where number of activating and integrating instruments were introduced (including specialist family counseling, family therapy, activation programs targeted at specific groups, social contracts) but in general without expected results. Negative attitudes of individuals and families themselves are in my opinion additional barriers that completely prevent from development of desirable social services. These attitudes can be described as “claiming” as a result of belief in “guaranteed benefits” and lack of commitment to solving problems (primarily due to prolonged unemployment, in large families and monoparental families - lack of faith in their own actions and lack of motivation for undertaking them⁴⁶). These attitudes were formed before the system

⁴⁴ A. Giza-Poleszczuk, *Przestrzeń społeczna*, [in:] A. Giza-Poleszczuk, M. Marody, A. Rychard (ed.), *Strategie i system. Polacy w obliczu zmiany społecznej*, Wydawnictwo IFiS PAN, Warszawa 2000, p. 124; B. Balcerzak-Paradowska, *Przemiany rodziny a więzi społeczne*, [in:] S. Golinowska i in. (ed.), *Więzi społeczne i przemiany gospodarcze. Polska i inne kraje europejskie*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2009, p. 320-325; B. Balcerzak-Paradowska, *Aktywność rodzin w rozwiązywaniu problemów własnych i środowiska lokalnego*, [in:] B. Balcerzak-Paradowska (ed.), *Sytuacja rodzin i polityka rodzinna w wymiarze lokalnym – podstawy koncepcyjne*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Pracy i Spraw Socjalnych, Warszawa 2009, p. 31-32; J. Szczepaniak, *O idei społecznej odpowiedzialności rodziny jako podmiotu polityki społecznej – kilka refleksji i uwag*, [in:] Z. Pisz, M. Rojek-Nowosielska, *Społeczna odpowiedzialność organizacji. Polityczna odpowiedzialność czy obywatelska postawa*. Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2011; J. Szczepaniak, *Subsydiarność*, op. cit.

⁴⁵ Due to Act on care facilities for children under 3 years of age (Dz. U. 2011 Ne 45 poz. 235).

⁴⁶ Numerous examples can be found in: B. Balcerzak-Paradowska (ed.), *Sytuacja rodzin*, op. cit. p. 325-326, J. Szczepaniak, *Subsydiarność*, op. cit.

transformation. Social services haven't kept pace with socio-economic changes and they can't transform negative cultural and mental patterns.

Many unresolved dilemmas concerning quality and level of social services (health, education, nursing and others) can be indicated. They are inadequate to the needs of consumers and/or difficult to access because of their commoditization and far too high prices (either in relation to the quality of those services or to the financial capacity of potential customers). Standardization of social services is believed to resolve these problems⁴⁷ but many difficulties can also be found in this area. Lack of clearly defined priorities for local social policy seems to be a major drawback. This applies not only to legal basis for organizing a system of non-financial benefits, but also to the structure of decision-making procedures and implementation conditions. There are almost no mechanisms for identifying needs and constructing strategy for their fulfillment. As an example the problem of NGOs participation can be indicated. Basic dispute focuses on the objectives chosen by these organizations and called for subsidy by local budgets. In addition, local governments rather reluctantly contract social services or introduce new ones as it imposes number of new responsibilities (determining which of the previously executed tasks can be delegated to other entities, identifying particular service, conditions for its implementation, control methods, etc.)⁴⁸. Further un-publicizing and/or commoditization of social services (in almost every sphere, though in various degrees and extent) is observed. It does not make those services more accessible for all families, though. It should be noted that the profit-oriented commercial sector provides services only to those who are able to pay⁴⁹. Consequently, individuals and families who can't purchase the services due to lack of resources and capabilities (e.g. because of unemployment, poverty, but also precarious employment and low wages) are excluded from market relations⁵⁰.

⁴⁷ R. Szarfenberg, *Krajowy Raport Badawczy*, op. cit.

⁴⁸ Z. Wejeman, op. cit., p. 126-129. See also: B. Skrzypczak, op. cit., p. 46; S. Kamiński, op. cit.

⁴⁹ M. Księżopolski estimates this population at 5%. M. Księżopolski, *Polityka społeczna na tle modeli występujących w Europie*, [in:] W. Anioł, M. Duszczyk, P.W. Zawadzki (ed.), *Europa socjalna. Iluzja czy rzeczywistość?* Oficyna Wydawnicza ASPRA-JR, Warszawa 2011, p. 280.

⁵⁰ Estimated size of this group in Poland equals ca. 60% (income below social minimum line). See also: http://www.ipiss.com.pl/opracowania_min.html

4. Concluding remarks

The greatest challenge of family policy in Poland is to define a coherent concept (model) of social policy and the role of families themselves. It requires resolving many coexisting dilemmas such as:

1. Is the neo-liberal direction of changes adopted in Poland fully justified from the perspective of low fertility rates and ongoing processes of de-institutionalization of family? Do Polish families – both poor or socially excluded for other reasons, as well as those in relatively favorable socio-economic condition - have adequate provisions to take over almost total responsibility for conditions of their existence without the vital support of local or central governments? If so, which of the liberal solutions should be priorities?
2. What should be the specific roles and responsibilities of the state, family and other stakeholders in organizing, financing and delivering social services?
3. Which criteria and rules of entitlement to social benefits should be chosen to prevent from inequalities in access to them?
4. How to improve the quality and level of social services (and other benefits) so that they contribute to increased activity and integration of families?
5. What types of social services and to what extent should be developed in various sectors (public, market, social) and departments of social policy (social welfare, education, health, etc.)?
6. What should be the effects of family policy instruments and how to obtain their optimal level if taking into account limited organizational, personnel, financial and infrastructural capacity and almost unlimited, individualized and changing needs, tastes and attitudes of individuals and families?

Some guidance in resolving these dilemmas can indeed be found in specific models of social policy and change directions. However, they are not unanimous and do not settle clearly the strategies for families. Moreover, actual condition of Polish society, including

families - both internal and external - additionally prevents from realization of existing and often promising solutions.

While seeking consensus on the model of family policy it should also be noted that certain instruments belong to the scope of state or public interventions in terms of family functioning, which are not universally accepted in academic and research environment and even if such interventions should take place at all there is a question of their forms and extent, etc. At this point dilemmas of efficient goods and services redistribution are tackled, both public or private⁵¹. The multiplicity of ideologies and theories relating to these issues⁵² shows for example that for some no state interference should shape conditions in which families are unfounded and they will strive to reduce completely public benefits - both cash and non-financial (radical liberals)⁵³, for others state “[...] regulation in specific circumstances is not only justified but necessary (social democrats)⁵⁴”. Consensus in this matter is important primarily for the two questions posed above: the share of public sector, market and social development and the responsibilities of the state, family and other stakeholders in organizing, financing and delivering social benefits (especially services) to families.

In my opinion, due to diverse socio-economic conditions in Poland that influence families and their progressing deinstitutionalization looking for a model of a “supportive” state (neither “relieving”, nor “ignoring”) should be a priority both for traditional families (to strengthen their ties), as well as informal relationships (especially when they are

⁵¹ In addition, reflections on these interventions should include: legal aspect, effectiveness, efficiency measured by appropriacy of inputs and outputs, influence on emerging social problems. See: G. Bouckaert, *Concluding Reflections* [in:] C. Pollitt, G. Bouckaert (ed.), *Quality Improvement in European Public Services. Concepts, Cases and Commentary*, SAGE Publications, London 1995, p. 170, by: R. Szarfenberg, *Jakość i standardy usług pomocy i integracji społecznej*, [in:] R. Szarfenberg (ed.), *Krajowy Raport Badawczy, Pomoc i integracja społeczna wobec wybranych grup – diagnoza standaryzacji usług i modeli instytucji*, WRZOS, Warszawa 2011, p. 23.

⁵² Useful dilemmas and theoretical background are presented in: O. Kowalczyk, *Instrumentarium polityki społecznej*, [in:] O. Kowalczyk, S. Kamiński (ed.), *Wymiary polityki społecznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2009, p. 42-55; K. Zamorska, op. cit., p. 13-27; N. Barr, *Ekonomika polityki społecznej*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej, Poznań 1993, p. 98-118; R. Szarfenberg, *Modele polityki społecznej*, op. cit., p. 15-55.

⁵³ G. S. Becker, *Ekonomia życia*, Wydawnictwo Helion, Gliwice 2006, p. 126.

⁵⁴ O. Kowalczyk, *Instrumentarium polityki społecznej*, op. cit., p. 44-45. See also: R. Szarfenberg, *Polityka społeczna i usługi społeczne*, op.cit., p. 44; K. Zamorska, op. cit., p. 18.

planning or have offspring) or single parents outside marriages (mostly women). This model should facilitate not only increasing fertility but also employment rates (especially of women, including young mothers) and thus stabilize social and material situation of individuals and families⁵⁵. Following this reasoning it seems that optimal solutions for family policy in Poland should be sought between Scandinavian (e.g. Sweden), continental (e.g. France, the Netherlands) and Anglo-Saxon model (e.g. UK, Ireland). Polish family policy model should be a combination of family responsibility with a wide support from the state (e.g. through transfers of intermediate and/or direct co-financing of social services - mainly to families with children, the disabled and elderly people) followed by labour market initiatives in family policy creation (e.g. tax relief for companies offering childcare facilities). Guidelines for implementation of such family policy development can be found in family friendly employment directions and work-life balance programs enabling reconciliation of professional and family life, which are implemented by the Scandinavian and Western European countries in various extent⁵⁶.

⁵⁵ Similar priorities were delivered by *Council Decision 2005/600/EC of 12 July 2005 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States* and by Polish documents such as National Action Plan on Employment in 2009-2011, MPiPS, Warszawa 2009; National Development Plan for 2007-2013, M. Boni (ed.), *Polska 2030. Wyzwania rozwojowe*, Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, Warszawa 2009.

⁵⁶ C. Saraceno i in., *First European Quality of Life Survey: Families, work and social network*, European Foundation for Improvement of living and Working Conditions, Dublin 2005, Chapters 1 and 2; A. Riedmann, *Working time and work-life balance in European companies*, European Foundation for Improvement of living and Working Conditions, Dublin 2006; M. Gstrein, L. Mateeva, V. Schuh, *Deficiencies in the Supply of Family Friendly Services*, Research Note, European Commission, Directorate General "Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities", Unit E1 - Social and Demographic Analysis, 2007.

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