
Organisation of Social Policy Directed at Integration: A Modelling and Application Approach

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Purpose: The aim of the study was to define the model conditions for the integration of social services in the system of social policy, to present a systemic role of the integrator of these services on a local level together with a verification based on the analysis of the integration of such services in Poland through the local government social services centres.

Methodology: The authors used a systemic analysis of the organisational environment of the social policy system, extended with a literature review and critical analysis of a case study (the application of the integration of the provision of social services).

Findings: It is possible to identify many variants of the realisation of social policy goals, and the choice of the one to be applied in a given country depends on the legislative solutions, the optimisation in satisfying societal needs requires the appropriate organisation of the provision of social services, the provision of social services will be optimal and effective when it is properly organised, and the necessary condition is the integration of the activities of all the entities involved in the realisation of social services, such as institutions from the public sector, NGOs and the private sector.

Practical implications: The study presents an organisational framework of the process of the integration of social services, which appears to be a rational direction for improving the quality of the system of social policy, and is a contribution to further in-depth research.

Originality: The paramount aim of social policy remains the support for individuals and increasing social inclusivity of the system. It is justifiable to shape the system of social policy not only on the basis of public sector resources, but also with the support from the market sector and the social animation and citizen participation. Systemic regulation of transforming existing in Poland social welfare centers into centers integrating social services is essentially appropriate. The problem is the degree of advancement of the legislative process, the pace of this transformation and the sufficiency of resources determining the effectiveness and efficiency of the integration process.

Keywords: Social policy, social services, organisation of social services, integration of services.

JEL Classification: H11, H41, H53, H61, H72, I38.

Paper Type: Research case study.

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1. Introduction

The institutionalisation of resolving social problems (shaping the conditions of the life and work of individuals and social groups, reducing poverty and social exclusion, and the provision of social services) worthy to be called a ‘social policy’, is historically and doctrinally connected with the development of countries and political systems (Heywood, 2019; Berend, 2006; Górski and Salmonowicz, 2001; Górski, 2009), and in particular with taking stock of tasks and functions of the state (Heywood, 2015; Lijphart, 2012; McCormick, Hague, and Harrop, 2019; Whelan, 2019; Warleigh-Lack, 2006), and the constitutionalisation of social laws (Barak-Erez and Gross, 2007; Contiades and Fotiadou, 2012; Galligan and Versteeg, 2013).

These processes are open, and determined by both the ideological basis (Heywood, 2021) of a political order shaped in electoral cycles, as well as by the necessity to adapt the actual decisions to the changing conditions of the environment (Matei and Calapod, 2015; Sfakianaki, Iliadis, and Zafeiris, 2015; World Bank, 2020), also including cultural specificity defining the decision-making milieu (Sternad, 2011; Sternad, 2012). The pressure to adapt in the area of social policy is also connected with systemic solutions in countries forming their own socio-economic system and the institutional dimension of sectoral policies in reference to the ‘welfare state’ model of (Rothstein and Steinmo, 2002; Ellison, 2017).

One of the most relevant systemic reasons for the reorganisation of a system’s solutions in the area of social policy crisis situations (Matteucci, Civitarese, and Halliday, 2017; Aidukaite, Saxonberg, Szelewa, and Szikra, 2021), both in regional and global terms (e.g., the 2008+ crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic). In conditions of a crisis, the realisation of the tasks of social policy can be seen as ‘wasting resources’ – the attempts to support initiatives aimed at development are then undertaken at the cost of realising these tasks which has a decisive influence on the conditions of a possible reorganisation (Rubaj, 2016; Cantillon, Seeleib-Kaiser, and van der Veen, 2021). An alternative approach requires the conclusion where social policy acts as a support for the macroeconomic objectives of economic policy, as well as a specific vericator of the axiology on which that state is based (Dolls, Fuest, and Peichl, 2012; Barusch, 2017). Its adoption, when confronted with the real requirement for the financial stability of the state, results in the search for solutions to rationalize the social policy system in the scope of its financing and effectiveness of functioning, without neglecting the vital elements of the system (Blakemore and Griggs, 2007). One such solution is the model of social policy assuming the integration of services, which was addressed in this study.

Based on the experiences of the actual transformation of the social policy system directed at the integration of social services in an institutionally heterogenic environment (both regarding the subject and the organisational and financial aspects, the authors of this study: 1) defined the model conditions of the integration of social services in the social policy system, and 2) presented the systemic role of the

integrator of these services at local level, together with verification based on the analysis of integration of social services in Poland through the local government social services centres. The study verified the hypothesis that the integration of social services is an unquestionable instrument for improving the quality of the tasks realised in the system of social policy, and the success of the system's modernisation owing to the introduction of the organisational and integrating function, is determined by the quality of the legislative support of this process.

2. Social Policy in a Systemic Approach: A Literature Review

The genesis of social policy, including the context of political pragmatism (in relation to the evolution of institutions, tasks and the executive instrumentarium), was extensively presented in *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, a volume dedicated to these issues (Mathias, Pollard, 1989)⁶. The approach adopted by its authors, justifying the individual model solutions by the specificity of the political system and organisation of the state, ultimately connects the development of the social policy system with the implementation of the welfare economy by the political system, such as the model of the 'welfare state', whose theory required axiological support.

According to Luhmann, writing about the development of social policy: "this is no longer a matter of the 'consequences of industrialization', as it was in the nineteenth century – this is an expression of the "logic of the welfare state", this logic which should be characterized as "a matter of compensating for these disadvantages that befall the individual as a consequence of a particular way of living" (Luhmann, 1990: 22). Thus the development of social policy was linked to the sphere of values which is subject to an ideological interpretation, understood as a "set of ideas that provides the basis for organized political action" (Heywood, 2021: 7). Esping-Andersen (1990: 26-27) put in order the multitude of concepts obtained in this way (of the welfare state, but also indirectly of the social policy) based on relations between the state, the market and the family.

The conclusion are three political orders: 1) liberal (instrumentalised by modest social transfers), 2) conservative (subject to traditional functions of a family, and maintaining the existing social stratification)⁷, and 3) social-democratic (its ideal is the decommodification of the individual's status and changes in the existing stratification of society). This proposal refers to the typology by Titmuss (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 20-21; Esping-Andersen, 1996), based on the relations between the

⁶*It presents a traditional approach connecting the beginnings of social policy with the consequences of the industrial revolution, (cf. Fraser, 2017, first published in 1984; Chandler, Hikino, 1994; Behling, 2018).*

⁷*Back in 1990 (Esping-Andersen, 1990:26-27), this group was defined as based on the conservative corporatism, however in 1999 (Esping-Andersen, 1999:74) the models it covers were simply called conservative.*

market economy and the state. Its further elaboration by Esping-Andersen has withstood the test of time, and provides indirect proof that social laws on which the approach presented by Esping-Andersen are based, constitute a more durable – in fact exactly axiological – grounding and is linked with the relations between the individual and social groups within the state.

Dolls, Fues and Peichl (2012) convincingly argued that social transfers are part of an effective instrumentarium protecting the economic system under the pressure of a crisis, by performing the role of “automatic stabilisers”. They were meant to absorb from 32% (the USA) up to 38% (the EU) of the then occurring shock connected with the loss of income and have led to the stabilisation of demand at around 20% (the USA) up to 30% (the EU). In addition – as was strongly stated by Kourkout, Sialakis, Iliadis, Krepia, Sapountzi-Krepia, and Kaptanoglu (2020), social protection, especially in times of recession, is a societal value based on the ethical imperative of the state towards its citizens, introducing into practice the principles of social justice (Mayers, Chambers, and Fujii, 2015). In this sense one can confirm the statement by Esping-Andersen (1999: 145) about the maturing of the idea of the welfare state owing to the relations between social policy aimed at solving real problems, with socio-economic development, the final effect of which is the increase of wellbeing.

At the same time, such a conclusion does not remove all doubts. Iacobiuță and Ifrim (2020: 1) stress the risk of popularization of “the welfare mentality”, whereas “sustainable development requires more individual responsibility and less dependence on the state and its redistribution function”. Accordingly, Powell and Barrientos (2004) included an active policy in the labour market among the key elements of the heterogenic environment of the determinants of welfare (“welfare mix”, in line with the concept proposed in (Ascoli and Ranci, 2002). In this approach, the answer to the increased demand for social services and the postulate of strengthening the effectiveness of social policy, is social animation and rebuilding the social policy environment. This should result in a mixed form based on the cooperation of the state, private entities and non-profit organisations (Lucifora, and Meurs, 2012). Gilbert (2002) also states that the evolution of the social policy system has led to a reorientation in the direction of promoting social animation, while the policy limited to the provision of social services has ceased to be an attractive form of realising tasks. The postulated system is an organisational hybridisation of the social policy system in which finding equilibrium between the values accepted by free-market competition and the social obligations of the state remains an open question.

According to Evers (2005), in this case the integrator can be the capital of civic society, which has the potential to become an organizer of a new system of social policy. Its expression are social innovations increasing the scope of services aimed at solving the social problems of the population (Evers, Ewert, and Brandsen, 2014; Evers and Ewert, 2015), and in the long term leading to the increased inclusivity of

local communities (Oosterlynck, Kazepov, Novy, Cools, Wukovitsch, Saruis, Barberis, and Leubolt, 2013; Oosterlynck, Novy, and Kazepov, 2019).

Exactly, the integrating role of the elements constituting a civic society, is in this system difficult to overestimate. Devereux and Cook (2000) prove that the aims of social policy and of economic policy are not contradictory, on condition that the social policy is based on the real needs of the community and not on the priorities imposed from above. Indirectly, this is an indication of the organizational determinants of its effectiveness, both in terms of costs incurred and results (unmet needs), and in turn justifies the need to ‘socialise’ the system of social policy in all its decisional dimensions, in line with the postulates of Melman (1976) regarding the decisional context of productivity.

Interestingly, from the practical viewpoint, the needs diagnosis in itself does not yet guarantee an improvement in the effectiveness of the system, it merely supports by a more precise allocation of resources, even though in the environment, heterogenic in terms of its subjects, of the mixed model (“welfare mix”), the needs require ordering and integration in regard to the realized tasks and the offered services, both within the system framework (or even more narrowly, limited to a specific centre which offers or organizes services), and in relation to the (Kotlińska *et al.*, 2021). From the viewpoint of standards in the New Public Governance, the issue of such an integration, based on the example of a non-profit organization was taken up by Vinokur-Kaplan (2018), who resented the profile of the activities of the centres which provide an area of cooperation between non-profit entities providing complementary outsourced interpersonal services, in order to maximize their usefulness from the viewpoint of their beneficiaries, at the same time optimizing the costs of functioning of these organisations.

The subject of the integration of social services with other public services was presented in the report prepared by a group of specialists (Munday, 2007). It introduced a practical interpretation of the integration of services, and defined it as: “applying to a range of approaches or methods for achieving greater co-ordination and effectiveness between different services to achieve improved outcomes for service users” (Munday, 2007: 11).

Moreover, the pragmatism of the report was also shown in the directives regarding the reorganisation of social policy systems towards the integration of services. Its authors pointed out that integration cannot be a mechanical action because its necessity is of a conditional character. Therefore it is impossible to exclude services which should be provided separately from others because this brings better results from the viewpoint of the final recipient (Munday, 2007: 15-16). A variety of activities and policies supporting integration justified the continued analyses, which can be found in studies by Lara Montero, van Duijn, Zonneveld, Minkman, and Nies (2016; 2018).

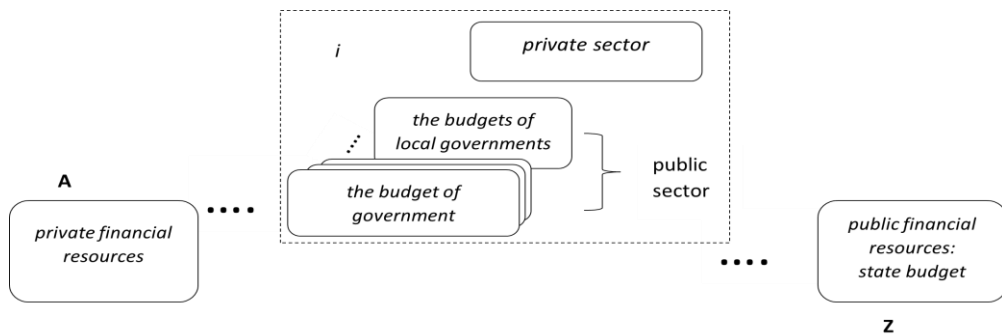
3. The Model Context of Social Services Integration

In order to describe the differences in the actually functioning models of social policy on the basis of the classification by Esping-Andersen, it is necessary to show in more detail the institutional order exceeding the doctrinal aspects of the relation between the state, the market and the family, which greatly complicates the original ordering. The fundamental problem in the context of the potential integration of services remains the reference to the principles, leading to the justification and acceptance of the directions and scope of the redistribution of means for social objectives, connected with the impact on the scale, “depth” and durability of the results on the existing stratification of society. There is also the growing importance of concrete solutions implemented in the system, linked to e.g., the issues of financing social policy, the model of distribution of social services, the details regarding the system’s organization and the cohesion of its influence in a complex institutional environment.

In focusing on financing (Figure 1), one can see the variability spanning between extreme proposals, from financing based only on private sources (A), to financing exclusively from public funds – in the extreme case – only from the central state budget (Z). Within this range there are numerous variants of mixed financing (generalized in this Figure in module (i)), which are determined by the socio-economic system. Their characteristics require additional clarification, in particular in terms of the relations between the central authorities and the representative institutions at local government level, whose system may also adopt diverse solutions. The latter define the sub-system of financing which influences a further organisation of the social policy system. This applies – indirectly – also to the process of rebuilding, subordinate to the integration of social services, although it should be stressed that exactly for the quality of that process more important are the non-financial elements of the system’s organisation: the criteria of the target rationality of the system (limited to the economic effectiveness, or including the doctrinal elements), subjective heterogeneity, methods and the scope of the target social inclusion (pragmatism of citizen participation) etc.

An important element defining the process of integration is its axiology, described on the basis of the answers to whether: 1) the aim is the cohesion on the level of the multi-sectoral economic policy of the state (in response to the sectoral scattering of social problems solved in the non-transferable perspective of the centrally managed individual policies); 2) the integration is undertaken only in the context of improving the functioning of the system in the intra-organisational categories: the transmission of resources or the cost and decisional effectiveness (the number of applications processed per unit of time and per employee, the speed of the final decision, etc. – there are numerous criteria); 3) the legitimacy of the integration is centred on the comprehensivity of answers to the societal needs measured in relation to the beneficiary, which is superior to all the other reasons triggering the reconstruction of the system of social policy.

Figure 1. “Universum” of the models of financing social policy



Source: Own elaboration.

A precise definition of the paramount values of integration determines the organisational framework of both the process itself and also of the target model, which however does not imply the invariability of final solutions. The pressure related to their shape starts from the more distant environment, which – from the perspective of an EU member state – means EU mobilisation in terms of increased cohesion of the social policies of these states. This is partly motivated by the process of the constitutionalisation of rights, which also affects the EU (Contiades and Fotiadou, 2012; Matteucci, Civitarese, and Halliday, 2017), and partly is a necessity of harmonizing the social situation within the EU – if not for the convergence motivated axiologically, then at least for the reasons of the need to create mechanisms protecting against social dumping (Rothstein and Steinmo, 2002; Esping-Andersen, Gallie, Hemerijck, and Myles, 2002; Lara Montero, van Duijn, Zonneveld, Minkman, and Nies, 2016; Caldarice, 2017).

Independently from the acceptance of such motives, the EU context may be at the most a catalyst of the integration processes, which eventually will be subordinate to the domestic needs of making the social policy system more effective. This is linked with the condition of the public finances and the growing need for moderating the growth processes. Intra-organisational integration remains in this context the only solution enabling the maintenance of the system of social policy which promises an improvement in the traditional economic effectiveness (in terms of the relation between the outlays and the results), whilst retaining the inclusive impact, which in turn should generate a rise in the pro-growth influence.

Such an integration has a two-way character, on the one hand it involves actions aimed at tightening transfers for the realisation of social objectives in an inter-sectoral approach, simultaneously ensuring the synergy of aims in the economic policy, while on the other – comprises activities within the very system of social policy directed at a comprehensive solution of the problems of the final beneficiaries, subject to social inclusion. That complexity of the impact by the system is the essence of intra-organisational integration in this context – and if the

inter-sectoral dimension remains the domain of central authorities, then the task of intra-organisational integration should be entrusted to the entities indicated by the system on the basis of their competences. These should be sufficient to elaborate and implement a model of cooperation in the environment diversified in terms of entities and competences, while maintaining the general principle of the social animation and citizen participation.

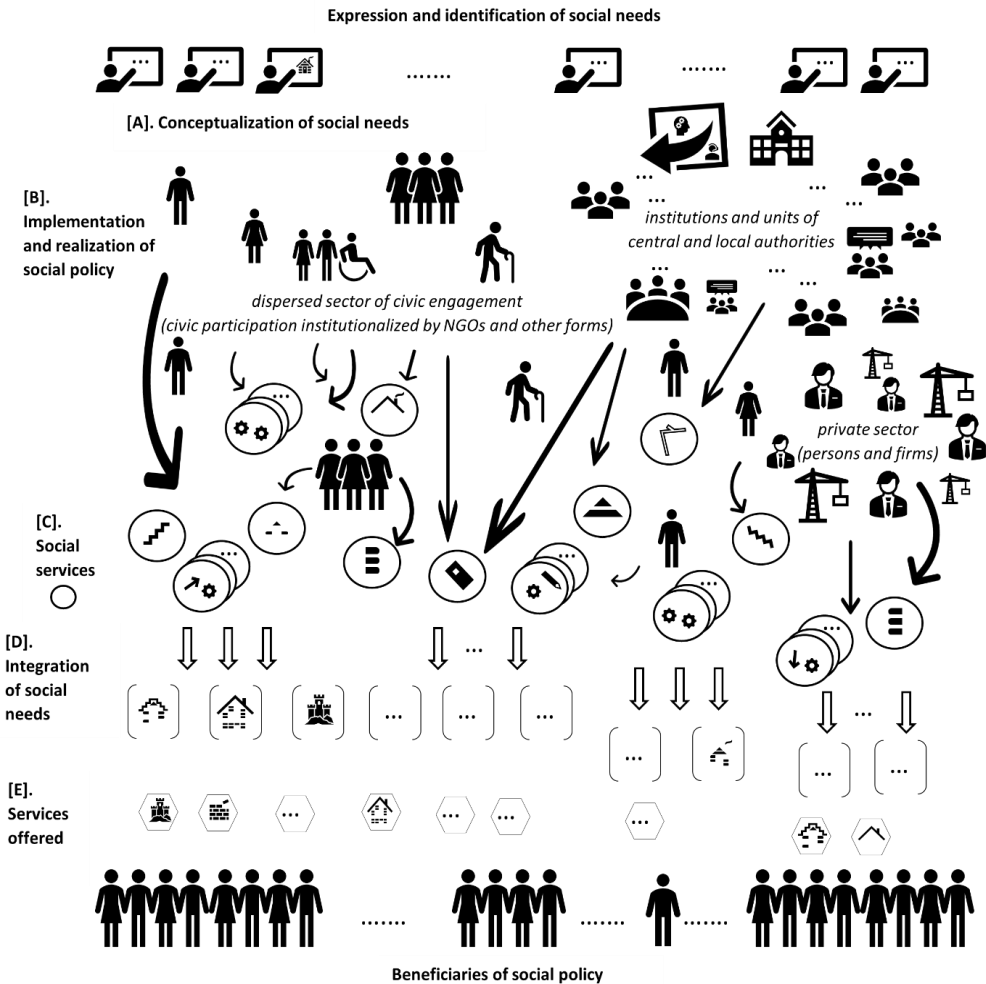
A limitation of the integrative impact within the subjective diversification of the social policy system rests in fact the actual political system of local government, which assumes the formal and legislative relations between various units of public authorities (i.e., units of the individual levels of local government and the units of government administration) in the element of “the public sector”. Obviously, the domestic solutions in this scope are strongly diversified which means the need to create an individual integration path base on the experiences of countries with a similar model of social policy. The differentiation concerns also the principles of financing applied to the realization of tasks, however for a systemic integration the primary issues remain the capabilities and competences of the entities to which were allocated tasks related to the integration, such as collaboration between the units of the public and private sectors (e.g., the terms and conditions of the public-private partnership).

Each time the target system should be initiated by the analysis of societal needs – whose alternative is the assumption of the needs on the basis of the currently provided social services, which already in the initial stages weakens the pro-effective impact of restructuring the system by reducing such improvement merely to the cancellation of the services indicated by experts. In general, the system of social policy which is separated from the actual societal needs becomes alienated and hence prone to various dysfunctions. As a result of the analysis it is possible to initially determine the organisational framework of the system in its new shape, which then should be subjected to a multidimensional assessment, with the guarantees of the participation in this process by local communities (naturally including the system’s beneficiaries) and stakeholders providing the services. An imposed reform of the social policy system, based on assumptions and devoid of social acceptance, is internally contradictory with the *statu nascendi* – thus the indispensable social consultations should not just meet the formal requirements but rather lead to the animation and construction of society aware of citizen rights as well as citizen duties, despite it seeming somewhat idealistic in confrontation with ideological arguments.

Thus the analysis of societal needs is responsible for the informational support for the system, which means that it must not be reduced merely to an enquiry regarding expectations (Figure 2). After all the operationalisation of needs are the social services, which need financing. The coherence of the objectives with the structural environment (economic policy) should come before the services offered by social policy – in any case it is located outside their organization and concerns the

intersectoral integration which is a domain of the central authorities.

Figure 2. Institutional environment of the social policy system in a hybrid model, subjectively heterogeneous, without integration



Source: Own elaboration.

On the subject side, the system of social policy comprises three elements, characterised in detail depending on the political system (regime) framework: 1) institutions and organisational units in the public sector (connected with public authorities: central and local government), 2) the private sector (companies and private individuals), and 3) the third sector, which represents citizen participation institutionalized in NGOs, but also involves other forms of social activity such as neighbourly help and voluntary work. In crisis conditions, the latter gains an institutional value and as such can be taken into consideration during the

rationalization of intra-organisational actions. These components are characterised by their own image of reality and the contextual understanding of societal needs. They are mutually independent – there is no relation of a hierarchical subordination between them, which may be described as subjective heterogeneity. They rationalise the reality in their own specific way, and only the clash of these ‘aspect rationalisations’ creates the basis for a wider view, not only in terms of the actual understanding of societal needs, but also in the context of how the social policy system can effectively support resolving the social problems underlying them (Spicker, 2014).

Information shortcomings connected with the insufficient representation of the ‘aspect rationalisation’ of reality in one of the components generate deficits which cannot be supplemented by the rationalization presented by units of another component. In practice this mainly applies to the participative component (3), and the one of the private sector (2) - in relation to which there may appear actions aimed at diminishing the scope of the model competences and capabilities, or even the removal from the system, with all the consequences this entails. Only achieving a cohesion (not just an aggregation) of the ‘aspect rationalities’ provides the basis for the full characterisation of the social reality (including defining the actual social problems), which should find implementation in the system of social policy.

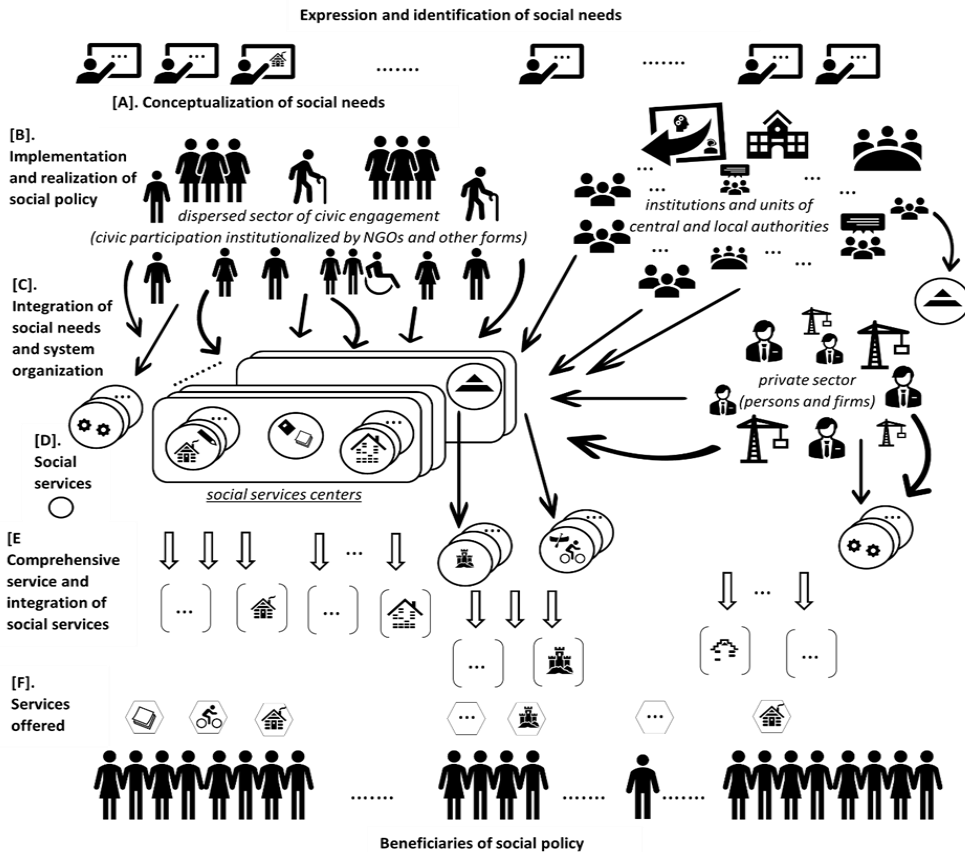
The organizational complexity of this system leads additionally to its doctrinal hybridisation, which may result in the contrasting expectations of individual subjects. Modelling the final shape of the system should take into consideration the fact that the final consumers of the management imperfections in the system of social services are its beneficiaries, who do not obtain real support in solving their problems – which unfortunately does not exclude receiving support in resolving the imposed problems which solidify the ineffectiveness of the system. In fact only the suitably managed activity of its subject elements can result in a consolidation directed at the realisation of an objective such as resolving a social problem. This means in practice the transformation of the existing state into the desired one, in a way guaranteeing the supra-individual character of the results.

Therefore, in an environment which is subjectively heterogeneous, the influence which can be called a ‘policy’ requires a proper ‘synchronisation’ of the undertaken activities based on the systemic ordering of the organisational competences.

This is a complex task because the usually dominant role of the public authority subjects – understandable in the context of traditional structural policies – in the case of social policy has to include independence of the remaining components, in particular the participative one (3). The quality of the system of social policy is to a large degree dependent on the cooperation of the subjects co-creating this system, and therefore on the cohesion (integration in fact) of the ‘aspect rationalisations’ of reality so, that the better diagnosed societal needs (problems) are resolved in a comprehensive way, subordinated to social inclusion. In this perspective, the

empowerment within the system of social policy can be reduced to an organisational and integrative function (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Institutional environment of the system of social policy in a hybrid model, subjectively heterogeneous, with the implemented integration mechanism



Source: Own elaboration.

These functions are subordinate to the creation of the conditions for a collaboration, whose aim is to solve problems through the provided services. The institutional forms enabling the organization of such cooperation may differ, but it cannot be excluded that the evolution of the ‘welfare state’ model in the long run will lead to their natural standardisation (Gilbert, 2002; Esping-Andersen, Gallie, Hemerijck, and Myles, 2002; Ellison, 2017; Behling, 2018). At the same time such an organisational integration is subject to purposeful integration whose expression is the comprehensivity of resolving the problems of specific beneficiaries. In this aspect, the organizational function of empowerment means concentrating on the individual (of the given beneficiary) size of needs, despite the model structuralisation of the offered range of assistance. In the transactional understanding, it can be summed up as a ‘comprehensivity of service’ for the

beneficiary of the social policy services.

Social problems are highly specific. From the individual viewpoint of the beneficiary of social services, they occur together, and at their source one can find dysfunctional social relations, which are only partly influenced by individuals – the beneficiary has a right to expect that his/her problems will find not merely temporary support, but that in a scope enabling the actual resolution in a set of linkages. Such an approach will certainly meet with the approval of the opponents of “handouts”, which in their opinion is typical of the social policy of the state, because solving an individual’s problems necessitates his/her social animation – hence promoting the attitudes of the active impact on the social environment and not the passive acceptance of the effects of dysfunctional social relations, simply generating problems (Barr, 2020).

However, this level of integration constitutes a challenge for organisers and those realising tasks in the social policy system, because it requires administrative flexibility which means adapting norms and procedures to the individual needs of the system’s beneficiaries.

Thus the necessary complement of the “comprehensive service” is a “diagnostic comprehensivity” – viewing complex social problems of real individuals exactly in their complexity. Its beginning - is the clash of the “aspect rationalisations” of social realities (in relation to components of the social policy system). This is further developed by the conceptualization of needs in the confrontation of expectations, real possibilities and the postulated social inclusion, without which there is no basis for resolving any social problems.

4. A Model of Integration – Social Services Centres in Poland

The system of social policy in Poland has been subjected to strong modernization pressures accompanying the EU integration processes. Its doctrinal characteristics and the overriding aims indicate that the system fits into the institutional framework characteristic of the conservative order in the three-element classification by Esping-Andersen (1990: 26-27; 1999: 74). Its specific feature is a labile organisational model resulting from the cyclical legislative changes (Firlit-Fesnak and Męcina, 2018), with the visible professionalisation of social workers or the ‘family assistants’ operating since 2011 (Ustawa, 2011). Another, more durable element of this model should be the Social Services Centres (SSC), which can be created as from 2020 (Ustawa, 2019).

SSC is a commune-based institution organised in the form of a budgetary unit, whose aim is the coordination and integration of social services on a local level. This institution realizes a social services programme being an act of local legislation, and its scope may include one or a few communes. In those where the number of residents is lower than 100 thousand, it replaces the existing communal social

welfare centers (CSWC), whereas in those communes with higher numbers of residents, as well as when it is created to realise social services which are the own tasks of a few communes and the tasks imposed on the communes by the government administration, it may be created separately from the CSWC. The emergence of this institution in the social policy system can be seen alternatively as: 1) introducing the new – in place of the existing entity, or 2) introducing a new entity which is to function locally alongside the existing one. The new SSCs created following the transformation of the CSWCs do not merely realise the usual tasks of the latter. The condition of their creation within the social policy system is the necessity to perform selected tasks, so far not realized by CSWC, in at least two aspects of social services from a wide spectrum of activities included in the scope of this policy and indicated in legal regulations.

The wide range of the tasks allocated to SSC, makes this institution a subject which is to perform the function of both providing social services on a local level, a coordinator of these services, as well as that of an integrator of the environs/subjects providing social services to a given local community. Yet, the added value of the functioning of SSC is not only the integration of the so-far dispersed services but also extending the availability of these services to the local community, and the possibility of the collaboration of specialists from various auxiliary fields. All of this can certainly raise the quality of social services and allow to realise them in a wider spectrum of the offered range, and to suit better the local residents, because it was created based on the diagnosis of their societal needs. In principle, such an offer is not only meant to be wider but also more ‘suited’ to the residents because it was created on the basis of the diagnosis of their societal needs. Therefore social services coordinated by SSC will change the existing shape of the social sector structure, and can be treated as an introduction to changes in respect of the management of social services in Poland in general (Budnik, 2020: 35).

Based on the experience of introducing SSC in Poland, doubts arise regarding the organisational purpose assumed by that institution such as the comprehensivity of the offered range of social services and their provision by SSC in small units of local government which obviously suffer a shortage of competent staff, namely employees/specialists.

The key personnel for the new institution are employees who act as organisers of the local community, and those creating a team in charge of organising social services. In local government units with an unfavourable structure of budgetary revenues (a strong dependence on transfers from the state budget) and with a much higher than national average level of current expenditure *per capita* (Kotlińska *et al.*, 2021), there are concerns regarding the continuation of providing services by SSC, as defined in the programme, after the termination of the project (i.e., three years from the moment of the initiating the services), when the financing of the activities of SSCs will not be covered by the resources of the European Social Fund.

The regime's (systemic) characterization that centers are subordinate to local government is, in essence, correct, however not taking into consideration differences in the potential of communes which are to organise SSC, prompts the question about the degree of maturity of the legislative support for this integration, which determines the potential of a modelling impact of this institution following the commencement of its activity. Thus the possibility of transforming the units (CSWC) already existing in the system into SSC, from the viewpoint of the local authorities will become – as one may suppose in a further perspective – a necessity unconnected with the systemic rationalisation of the implemented integration of services (a multidimensional improvement of effectiveness in the realisation of social tasks).

From the viewpoint of the durability of the integrator's impact, the key issue remains the sufficiency of resources for future integration. This does not apply merely to human resources or the material ones (the infrastructure), but also the integrating potential of the current problems resolved by the offered services. A commune with a substantial human and infrastructural potential (e.g., a large town) will certainly be able to meet the requirements of the planned integration of services, while the same tasks allocated to communes with a small potential will not be possible to be properly realised, which will affect the final outcome of the carried out changes. The mere legislative permission of merging the existing units and assigning new functions to a new entity is insufficient from the point of view of the quality of the making changes processes in the social policy system. It would be more appropriate to add precision to the legislative methods of integration and making them dependent on objective criteria, which determine a choice of a particular path admissible formally and legally.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The considerations carried out in this study enabled to formulate the following conclusions and recommendations:

- 1) The implementation into the system of a social policy of integration mechanisms requires a clear definition of the scope and the expected effects of the integration, and each possible variant demands a separate preparation adapted to the present experiences and systemic conditions. The social policy system should ensure support for all the needy in difficult circumstances of their lives, which at the same time does not mean assuming the entire responsibility for the functioning of these individuals in society – maintaining the subjective heterogeneity should not be threatened by the integration of services.
- 2) Each implementation of the intra-organisational function into the system of social policy, based on selected individuals from a heterogenic subjective environment, requires being dependent on the results of a prior social diagnosis enabling to provide an individualised range of the offered services and to plan the process of introducing the integrator into the system. Support for individuals and increasing

the inclusivity of the system remain the superior aim – integration is the answer to the need of the individualisation of services and comprehensivity of service for beneficiaries, in order to eliminate the duplication of social services and increase the organisational effectiveness of the system.

- 3) The legislative support for the processes of intraorganisational integration in a subjectively diversified social policy system requires connecting the potential (measured by e.g. number of population, access to social infrastructure, etc.) of the units of local government responsible for creating and maintaining integrators with the variable methods of including these units into the social policy systems.
- 4) The new organisational functions of the entities responsible for the integration of social services require specific, and sometimes even unique competences of human resources, which in turn generates the necessity of the planned supplementary education of the staff of the institutions being transformed into integrating units, complementing these tasks by the recruitment of new employees.
- 5) A stable financial base of financing integrators, recognised already at the level of planning their activity, determines the success of the process of changes and of the entire project of integration.
- 6) Another, but no less important element of the process of services integration, is the need for the social environment legitimisation of the powers of the entity with the competences of the integrator, an environment which is diversified subjectively, not just in organisational but also doctrinal terms. Formal and legal legitimisation alone is not sufficient from the viewpoint of the tasks aimed at integration.
- 7) A durable integrative impact requires continuity in informational support of the system of the realisation of services – it is necessary to provide a strategy maintaining efficient diagnosing of services in the scope of social assistance, e.g. through an effective system of reporting on the realisation of tasks by coordinators of individual plans of social services, systematically reaching all the beneficiaries. Due to the systemic role of persons performing these functions, their professional classification should be given a proper formal and legal standing in the system of social policy.

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