The primary concern of right-wing parties is to satisfy them. However, higher-income voters may also prefer health care over unemployment insurance not only because they do not benefit from the latter, but because they believe that recipients are more 'deserving', as suggested by Van Oorschot [2006]. In general, norm-based preferences (what people think is fair) play a small role in the book compared to largely interest-based accounts (what benefits people them directly). Here again, we have no way of knowing the psychological drivers of preferences. Besides, there are many examples of policies advocated by political parties that go against the direct interests of their voters or do not concern them directly. For instance, social-democratic parties have been strong promoters of active labour-market policies benefitting primarily the 'outsiders' of the labour market (whose electoral potential is limited), while it has been argued that their core constituency is the 'insiders' [Rueda 2005]. The 'third way' policies of politicians such as Tony Blair or Gerhard Schröder also often went against the direct interests of their core electorate. Even if it is not the core focus of the book (and does not undermine its elegant analysis), this type of case fits uneasily in the framework adopted in the book.

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Marek Rymsza (ed.): *Toward Active Welfare. The Development of Social Work and Community Work in Poland and Europe*

Warsaw 2014: Institute of Public Affairs, pp. 319

This book is based on the analyses and experience generated through the 'Creation and Development of Standards in Social Services and Social Integration' project carried out by the Institute of Public Affairs Foundation and the Centre for Supporting Local Activity/CAL Association in Warsaw. The project's objective was to develop a model of local community organising as a foundation for an educational programme for social workers at the level of municipalities. The originality of the book is threefold. First, it integrates policy practice and action research with academic research and policy analysis. Second, it incorporates the concept of activation (policies) into social and community work. Third, it assesses the development in Poland in the area of community social work within the EU framework. These perspectives are new in the context of post-communist countries, where professionalisation of social work, as well as activation policies, have been introduced with some delay when compared to Western Europe. In general, such an approach is becoming more and more important in EU countries, considering the growing risks of (youth) unemployment and social exclusion result-

ing from multiple barriers to social inclusion, including discrimination and social isolation of deprived neighbourhoods. At the policy level, the need for innovative solutions is discussed because the traditional approach of mainstream policies seems to be ineffective.

The chapters of the book were compiled from papers or articles that had already been published on other occasions. However, they are well organised into a fairly consistent volume. The introductory chapter by the editor explains the objectives and structure of the book. The first part then deals with international experience with activation policies in selected EU countries, the second part with the development of social services and social work in Poland, and the third with the practical experiences of the Laboratory of Social Innovation, established during the project, and their theoretical reflections.

The introductory chapter presents the concept of 'active integration' as central to the book and explains the weak position of Poland regarding activation policies and social/community work. However, the individual parts of the book/chapters deserve a stronger and more elaborate theoretical underpinning. It is not recognised here that activation policies represent a broad spectrum of policies, often of contradictory nature, and that various models of activation are discussed in the literature, ranging from the work-first approach to human capital development, or enforcement versus inclusion policy, or workfare versus empowerment. Another issue deserving more attention is that the various 'governance modes' of activation also have different relevance for the application of social and community work.

In the first part, 'Activation Services, Social Welfare and Social Work in Europe', three chapters discuss the international experience. Rik van Berkel assesses the Dutch activation reforms. He presents a largely sustainable analytical frame that integrates the following three perspectives constitutive for the shape of activation practices: social policy, governance, and organisational frontline. It is unfortunate that it was not possible to use this analytical frame throughout the book. Nevertheless, this chapter provides a good introduction to the central issues of the book and sets them in a broader context. The book puts emphasis on the crucial aspects of activation that are necessary in order to (re)integrate the most vulnerable people. These include individualised and tailor-made approach, a larger range of services than those primarily aimed at labour-market integration, cooperation and networking of the various agents involved in activation, and the professionalisation of frontline work. The lessons from the Dutch experience with the governance of activation are critically discussed, such as the failures of marketisation, privatisation, and new public management methods. The chapter on the role of mediation in social work in France by Ewa Bacia raises a specific but highly relevant topic. It reflects French experience with a new method of combating high unemployment among youth by means of a special programme under which the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods take up the job of community mediators. Their position within the community, where the authorities were not able to communicate and act effectively, considerably contributes to social integration aims. The chapter by Violetta Szymczak provides an overview of Hartz's 'activation' reforms in Germany. The author's focus is on the relevance and impacts of social work within these reforms. The problems related to the implementation of case management are highlighted, such as the conflict between new public management methods concerned with outcomes versus the personal nature of the services and building trust-based relationships; standardisation versus the professional autonomy of social workers, the negative impacts

of changes in governance (economisation) in terms of the weaker position of NGOs and their weaker involvement in social integration, the negative impacts of the conditionality of activation rules on the ethics of social work.

The second part of the book, 'Social Welfare and Social Work in Poland after 1989', comprises three chapters. Marta Kozak provides a critical overview of the developments of social services after 1989 in Poland, pointing out the 'progressive' interwar tradition in social work, the ineffective governance model of social work during communism, and the failures of the post-1989 reforms (1990, 1999, 2004), such as inadequate funding rules, the lack of regulations on professional qualifications, and formalisation, all this mirrored in the failures of social workers to follow clearly defined objectives, in deficient prevention and evaluation, and an inability to handle difficult cases. The chapter closes with a set of recommendations, which seem to be only partly underpinned by empirical evidence. Marek Rymsza deals with the tensions between bureaucratisation and professionalisation in social work in Poland, which is an important topic in all post-communist countries. The key assumption is that the lack of development in Poland is determined by the institutional set-up of the social welfare system. This set-up implies a benefit-centric approach of social workers (as clerks). Findings from a survey of 1210 social workers (a random, stratified sample) show, among other things, that social workers on the fringes of the social welfare system (typically from NGOs) are the most likely to follow professional standards in their work, including the application of activation methods and community work. The findings call for support for the creation of coalitions across all parties in social services and the provision of specialist assistance so that these coalitions can exercise influence over the institutional conditions of their work.

Tomasz Kaźmerczak in turn presents the results of the same research as in the previous chapter on activation practices in social welfare centres in municipalities. Although the chapter provides some interesting information, the conceptualisation of the research objectives and key issues are rather vague, indicating a lack of understanding of the different approaches to activation and their specific features. The results are excessively descriptive in nature. There are two key findings: there is a preference for activation and an individualised approach among social workers, but, in reality, the individual activation contract is applied only in one out of five cases. Second, there is poor cooperation between the social workers employed in social welfare centres, in social integration clubs, and in employment offices.

The third part of the book, 'Laboratory of Social Innovation (LSI)—Practical Experiences', contains five chapters that reflect experience related to the practical goals of the project that inspired the book. Maria Mendel and Marek Rymzsa explain the role of community organisers and partnership in community work, including a broader theoretical context. This chapter helps to frame the other chapters of this part and also of the other parts of the book in several respects. It explains that the tradition of community work emerged as a desire to challenge the paternalism of the 'helping classes' (the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie) and the division between those receiving help and those providing help. It is based on working with the community and sharing lived experience, but also requires several managerial skills (diagnosing problems, assessing resources, drafting programmes, organising cooperation). The urgent need for such an approach in public policies is due to the mechanisms that are used to de-solidarise with 'redundant people' (Bauman), in line with neoliberal thinking. Consequently, 'social inclusion' policies are, in fact, based

on 'inclusion' by stigmatisation, which only reinforces social divisions. It is not cooperation and participation but rather a subordination approach that is applied. The role of organising community work is to challenge these discourses and practices, to build trust, reciprocity, and partnership, and to develop the potential of local communities and people within these communities. It might be added that, in fact, the popularity of 'social innovation' emerges from the revival of the above principles of solidarity at the local level and of community work in the current social policy context.

The aims of the second chapter by Magdalena Dudkiewicz are a little unclear. The author explains the preconditions for effective community work. However, the summary of the qualitative research indicated in the title is only provided in two paragraphs at the end of the chapter, while the main body of text presents the author's reflections underpinned by other references and experiences from the project. According to the author, two important aspects have a negative effect for policy practice: the difficulties with measuring the effort and effectiveness of community work and the change in organisational culture. Barbara Babska in turn presents the contents and outcomes of the training programme for social workers implemented during the project (61 workers from 35 social welfare centres participated). Evaluation of the training process was based on testing the ability of the trainees in local community organising (LCO) in marginalised communities. There were positive changes evidenced on the part of the trainees (knowledge and skills, self-confidence and motivation, identification with the new role). Also, positive effects in terms of outcomes in the communities were reported, although it is not clear how these were measured. Lastly, positive changes took place in the participating institutions.

The fourth chapter by an expert team from LIS presents the model of social work with local community developed during the project: the principles, strategies, methods, organisation, and benefits. The last chapter by Bohdan Skrypczak discusses, from a theoretical perspective, the key principles applied in community work: dialogue and co-decision making. In line with Etzioni's *Active Society* [1968], there is an assumption that individuals, communities, and organisations are understood as agents and partners. Teleological and praxeological perspectives ('adaptive rationality') are combined in this approach with a critical pedagogical reflection ('emancipatory communicative rationality'). The concepts of neo-institutionalism, constructivism and performative methodology are connected with the agency-driven transformation of social reality. This chapter would be better placed at the beginning of this part of the book, providing the theoretical frame. Subsequently, it would be advisable to better integrate the theoretical perspectives behind the practices of LSI.

To sum up, the book as a whole offers much inspiration from the policy-making perspective and is innovative in some respects. It has the potential to enrich the theoretical foundations of community social work. From an academic perspective, however, more effort should have been devoted to linking the practical policy effort with thorough evaluative research based on a transparent and appropriate methodology. Further elaboration of the links between the key concepts of the book, such as activation, governance, and community work, represents another challenge, which might have been fully met if the book had not relied so much on papers that originated independently of one another, even if they were largely based on a joint research project.

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