

Future of the welfare state

By Michał Polakowski

International Centre for
Research and Analysis (ICRA)

Brussels, 11.10.2012

My research profile

- 2010: PhD in Public Policy and Policy Analysis (Maastricht University, NL)
 - PhD Thesis title: „The institutional transformation of social policy in East Central Europe: comparative–historical approach”
- Research areas: pensions, labour market, skills formation, comparative social policy, research methods in social policy

ICRA activities

- ❑ Publications for general public;
- ❑ Research-oriented working papers;
- ❑ Policy-oriented working papers;
- ❑ Organisation of debates;
- ❑ Involvement in public debates

Selected research projects

- ❑ Integration of migrants in Poland:
 - Among others: access to social rights

- ❑ Youth unemployment:
 - Precarious situation of youth,
 - Untypical employment

- ❑ Labour realities in Visegrad countries:
 - Specificity of the region

Ongoing ICRA projects (1)

- ❑ Warsaw Debates on Social Policy (jointly with F. Ebert Stiftung Poland):
 - Thematic meetings, open access, debate between experts, policy-makers, NGOs, students, benefit recipients, etc.
- ❑ Polish partner in the 'Measuring the impact of daycare in the Visegrad countries' project, financed by the Visegrad Fund

Ongoing ICRA projects (2)

□ „Legal awareness of artists in Poland”:

- financed by Ministry of Culture
- Precarious employment situation of the artists

Future of the welfare state

Polish context

- ❑ Transformation of the welfare state in general
- ❑ The growing misfit between existing structures and needs (New Social Risks)
- ❑ Specific context of post-socialism (radical retrenchment)
- ❑ Towards a permanent fiscal austerity?

Case study: old-age pensions (1)

- ❑ Biggest social spending position in a budget
- ❑ Dynamics of reforms driven not only by demographic trends, *but also by* political pressures and historical legacies
- ❑ Close links with *other fields of welfare state* (research): education, early/elderly care, labour market, public finances

Case study: old-age pensions (2)

- ❑ The functioning of the pension system does not only depend on the system *as such*
- ❑ The environment (especially labour market and its institutions) matters as well
- ❑ Towards a holistic approach
 - Life-cycle of individuals
 - Short- and long-term fiscal perspectives

Welfare state governance

- The state remains the main actor in:
 - provision
 - financing
 - regulation
- Is it the result of opposition of various interest groups?
- No! In many respects state is more efficient than market (*market failures*)

International comparisons

- Governance regimes

 - Institutions

 - Outcomes

 - Policy cycles

Scales of comparisons

- Individuals
- Components of the systems
 - Systems
 - Countries
- Transnational perspective

Future of the welfare state: *conclusions*

- ❑ Welfare state depends on its environment, not only structural conditions
- ❑ The problem of unintended consequences
- ❑ *Some retrenchment measures might be costly in the long run*
- ❑ Saving in one domain requires spending in others to maintain the outputs of the welfare state

Future of the welfare state: *recommendations*

- ❑ Multidisciplinary
- ❑ Beyond a national state (international and supranational)
- ❑ Driven by data and research approaches
 - Data
 - techniques (impact analysis),
 - 'package', profile and policy mix approaches

Michał Polakowski, PhD

International Centre for Research and
Analysis, Warsaw, Poland

mpolakowski@icra.pl

www.icra.pl

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/pages/Fundacja-ICRA/173851982639516>