

## ACTIVE SOCIAL AND LABOUR MARKET POLICY TOWARDS PEOPLE AGED 50 YEARS AND MORE

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**Abstract:** This paper, based on literature research, reflects upon the importance of active social policy and labour market in the social and professional development of people aged 50 years and more. It seems that in the light of the conducted research, the formula of the social policy and labour policy market related to it has been exhausted. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a new policy model that will take sufficient account of the dominance in the elderly society and the need to sustain their social and professional activity as long as possible, while maintaining the idea of employment priority and education over benefits<sup>1</sup>.

**Keywords:** human being, active social policy, active social labour market.

### 1. Introduction

Social policy as a sphere of the state's activity – carried out by various entities – deals primarily with shaping the living conditions of the population and interpersonal relations (Rajkiewicz et al., 1996, p. 19). It is characterised not only by a reference to various spheres of social life, but also participation in its implementation of diverse entities at various levels of their activity. Social policy can be recognised both in the theoretical dimension (as a science) and in the practical dimension (as non-science). The theoretical dimension of social policy – as science – focuses on justifying, explaining and improving practical activities. This means rationalising activities in the area of social policy related to its practical dimension (Szarfenberg, accessed 13.07.2019). As noted by E. Karpowicz, social policy is first of all a practical activity, in which the considerations determining the ordering of its conceptual foundations are present (Karpowicz, 2006, p. 4). Changes occurring in social and economic structures in the 20th and 21st centuries – resulting, inter alia, from the process of globalisation

<sup>1</sup> The article was elaborated upon, with minor changes, based on the author's dissertation entitled "Professional activation of people aged 50 and more in the phase of demographic change in the labour market of the Śląskie Voivodeship". Unpublished material.

- imposed numerous changes within its sphere (Auleytner, 2002, pp. 49-53). Therefore, the postulates regarding reorientation of social policy are justified (Karwacki, 2010, p. 45). The process accompanying globalisation is, in particular, a demographic change, which as much as the process of globalisation affects the shape of contemporary social policy. As E. Trafiałek emphasises in the face of the changing demographic structure of the modern world, where the current formula of social policy has been exhausted, the future has become the biggest challenge (Trafiałek, 2006, p. 247).

## **2. Active social policy and its importance for people**

Reflections on the concept of active social policy (hereinafter referred to as "aps") should, in particular, address the main issues of a general nature, including the definition of the term "social policy" and reference to selected models of social policy preceding the concept of aps.

The definition of the term "social policy" dates back to the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries.

During this period, the French philosopher and theoretician of social reform Charles Fourier (1772-1837) used the first term of social policy (Humanists, accessed 14.07.2019). Social policy in earlier periods was, in principle, addressed to social assistance. In this form, social policy had already manifested itself in various practical activities in antiquity and the Middle Ages. However, it was only the 19th and 20th centuries that brought about events that were crucial for the development of social policy and defining the areas of its impact. First of all, the institution of the State Factory Inspector appeared in England, whose role was to control and supervise the fulfilment of the regulations in the adopted legal regulations relating to the duration of the working day for adults, adolescents and children (Sierpowska, 2008, pp. 139-154). In turn, in Prussia in the 19th century, the first social insurance appeared (Muszalski, 2004, pp. 35-36). The development of social policy occurred particularly in the 1930s, when the New Deal programme was implemented in 1933-1939, which was related to the effects of the economic crisis. This introduced health benefits, pension insurance, minimum wage and maximum working time. An undoubted merit of this programme was also the expansion of the role and importance of trade unions (Drenda, Katowice, pp. 25-36).

In Poland, the development of social policy took place, in general, at the beginning of the 20th century. During this period, A. Szymański, referring to its frame, emphasised that good work layer, mainly related to physical effort or defining correct relations between employers and employees, are the main areas of interest in social policy (Mazur, 2012, pp. 5-24). In a slightly later period, i.e. in the 1930s, Z. Daszyńska-Golińska defined the concept of "social policy", which indicated that the goal of social policy is to create institutions and legislation that would ensure the highest number of people growing share in production and the good of

civilization (Giza, 2006, pp. 161-173). In the period from 1945 to 1990, numerous definitions of "social policy" were formulated, taking into account the current trends of thinking and its perception (Szarfenberg, accessed 13.07.2018). The nineties of the 20th century were fixed by the previously mentioned concept of "social policy" by A. Rajkiewicz (Rajkiewicz, 1996, p. 19).

Specialists of active social policy equate this with the concept of the primacy of work on benefits, which was widespread in the 1980s in the United States (Wiśniewski, 2011, pp. 15-29)<sup>2</sup>. It meant limiting the role of the welfare state and reducing state expenditures for the implementation of the instruments and assumptions of the aps concept. In European countries, the aps concept assumes the adaptation of elements of the American social mobilisation system to activity. As emphasised, in particular, by K. Głębicka, this is the aps concept based on the proverbial "giving a rod instead of a fish". In this way, it is not created and does not increase transfers (money), it only shows the way to get them and helps in social re-inclusion. In this approach, aps are identified with the fight against the "addiction culture", i.e. all the instruments used are to relieve budget from ballast in the form of the functioning of disabled system rentiers, who do not assume responsibility in their lives for the fate of themselves and avoid solidarity with society as a whole (Gagacka, 2014, p. 13). It should be noted that the American concept of the primacy of work on benefits introduces further important instruments constituting the practical impact of aps. These are: tax breaks in the form of increasing low incomes in conditions of low employment, limiting entitlements and amounts of benefits and increasing the restrictiveness in their granting, as well as wages in subsidised places of employment kept below the cost of living (Szarfenberg, 2005).

Social policy is perceived permanently, as it was emphasised earlier, through the prism of practical activity. On the basis of this dimension, theoreticians attempted to build models of social policy. As underlined by E. Karpowicz, these attempts were based on diversified construction criteria, both quantitative and qualitative (Karpowicz, 2006, p. 4). The most well-known theoreticians of social policy classification today include Richard Titmus, Norman Furniss and Timothy Tilton and Gosty Esping-Andersen (Szarfenberg, 2009, pp. 1-33). In the view of R. Titmus, three main models of social policy were distinguished. The first is the marginal model, in which social policy is present when there is no possibility of satisfying needs based on the private market or family. An important condition in this model is the occurrence of satisfying needs in the form of ad hoc measures. The motivational model, according to the concept of R. Titmus, is a social policy treated as an added value to the economy. In turn, in the third model, R. Titmus points to the institutional and redistributive functions of social policy,

<sup>2</sup> The role and importance of the scientific achievements in justifying the primacy of employment over the benefit (M. Kabaj). Particularly significant in this area are the works of M. Kabaj undertaking studies on long-term unemployment, the economy of creation and job destruction, participatory remuneration system, programme for combating poverty and unemployment, the impact of vocational education systems on employment and youth unemployment, the project of implementation of the dual system of vocational education in Poland, the impact of free movement of people on the Polish labour market.

which is the institution guaranteeing universal access to services and services based on the criterion of needs.

In the models by N. Furniss and T. Tilton, the state plays a key role in social policy. It occurs in accordance with the developed model in two roles. The first relates to its positive role in protecting the owner of capital against difficulties resulting from the rules of the market economy and demands resulting from the redistribution of income. In the second approach, N. Furniss and T. Tilton see the state as an institution of social security, which, through the implemented social policy, guarantees a minimum income for all citizens. In the third of the models by G. Esping-Andersen, the subject of consideration is the welfare state (Szarfenebrg, accessed 13.07.2019). The author of the model indicates that the challenges for the welfare state are characterised by a form of external occurrence in relation to this institution and include a globally developing economy, implying an increasing flexibility of employment and wages, the reversal of the age pyramid and thus the dynamic process of population aging models and social security systems, insecurity of a family's safety, unable to fully care for their members, which in turn results in an increased risk of the expansion of the poverty sphere. The new situation, in the opinion of G. Esping-Andersen, is to lead to the following dilemma: in the social policy implemented by the welfare state, the current standards will be maintained, but the price will be high unemployment.

In turn, to reduce them, it is necessary to consistently reformulate the model of the American (Anglo-Saxon) welfare state, which will imply an increase in poverty and inequality (Szarfenberg, 2009). It seems that the response to such a perceived new situation are two models of activation-oriented politics, dominated by instruments determining the prevalence of the tendency to take up employment in order to enter into professional passivity and the primacy of employment over benefits. An important element of these models is social integration (Szarfenberg, 2005). The first of the models assumes the creation of social order through the labour market. In this approach, the activities that exclude the creation of areas dominate in the labour market, in which behaviours that determine passive care and lead to extended beneficiary systems become active. The essence of this model is, as A. Karwacki, M. Rymsza writes, making the lower levels of work on the open labour market more attractive while discouraging or preventing subsidies and/or subsidised work (Karwacki, 2011, p. 34). It should be noted that this model focuses mainly on social welfare clients, forcing specific behaviours and compliance with the rules in this model. Activating actions and, at the same time, referring to social integration define the functioning of the second model. Its fundamental weakness is the problem of social exclusion. This phenomenon can not be limited only by interfering with social benefits or pay instruments. In this problem area, the indicated model assumes the advantage of claim right to training, counselling or subsidised employment over the right of compensation for income (Karwacki, 2011, p. 35).

In the light of the above models and the challenges identified at the beginning of the globalisation of economies, in particular demographic change, the importance of the concept of

active social policy in Poland is growing. As aptly noted by K. Głębicka, the aps concept based on the Anglo-Saxon workfare project means recognition of the supremacy of work on benefits (Gagacka, 2014, p. 11). A. Karwacki indicates that the workfare project is a challenge for all citizens and a strategy for developing universal social responsibility and solidarity (Karwacki, 2010, pp. 47-48). Combining the elements of a workfare project with the aps concept, we obtain instruments that shape activities aimed at activating weaker people who are unable to find themselves in a social or professional life. In this approach, professional activation directed at people who are demanding of it should be, in particular, short-term. Long-term support is allowed, which, however, can only be directed at weaker people, such as the disabled. An important element of the activities is short-term timely satisfaction of needs, combined with an appropriate incentive system, the aim of which is to mobilise the unit for professional activation. Along with this approach, also assumed, in the process of professional activation based on the aps concept, is the creation of subsidised jobs, whose aim is to socialise professionally inactive people by introducing them into professional roles. It should be noted that, however, this is a long-term process, and subsidised jobs are characterised by low profitability (Wiśniewski, 2011, p. 37).

The professional and social activation instruments indicated above are allocated in practice, first of all, by social services and employment services. In the context of allocating the instruments in practice, the aps concept assumes (Karwacki, 2011, p. 29):

- orientation on activating actions and resulting in the empowerment of beneficiaries while minimising the cost of protective services,
- the integration of public social services and employment services and the creation of a corps of so-called activation services,
- individualising activation services, meaning their correlation with possibilities and limitations of specific marginalised groups and individuals in social inclusion,
- promoting the so-called the third (environmental) method of social work, i.e.
- activating not only individuals, but entire local communities and environments,
- increase in the importance of non-governmental organisations in providing these services (as entities closer to citizens), but not on the whole, and in cooperation with public administration and using public funds,
- increase in the importance of the competitiveness of the selection implementing the service by the paying institution or its recipient (beneficiary),
- promoting the idea of making social support conditional on fulfilling the obligation to effectively search for a job.

The full allocation of aps instruments and accompanying assumptions with the optimal use of resources and the potential of social services and employment services may trigger changes in the social security system and in the social intervention philosophy of the state (Gagacka, 2014, p. 13).

Nowadays, in Poland, the aps concept refers primarily to the sphere of social assistance, the labour market, the education system, and includes human capital as a result (Labormarket, accessed 14.07.2019). It assumes that one of the basic functions of social assistance is to build the active behaviour of individuals and social groups that are in a difficult professional and social situation, which enables more effective actions of local government units in terms of providing support and strengthening social ties and developing and strengthening the social services sector based on the activity of social economy entities. As underlined by A. Karwacki, aps is a combination of activities in two areas: professional activation and social integration (Karwacki, 2010, p. 67). Another approach to aps is characterised by the approach represented by J. Orczyk and M. Żukowska (Orczyk, 2007). They perceive the apparent aps resulting from the shortage of investment in aps and the maintenance of a large scale of transfers to economically inactive people. In this context, these authors use the term "activating social policy" as a prospective concept, according to which a real turn towards investment in human capital, promotion of work and professional activity is expected.

Justifying the need to implement aps, one should point to the numerous roles and functions that it meets to individuals and social groups who are in a difficult situation on the labour market, or who are on the margins of social life - or outside it in a state of exclusion (Gagacka, 2014, p. 17). As K. Głębicka writes, aps, from the position of their functions, primarily give individuals and groups hope for employment, i.e. offering work, provides a sense of social security, leads to social inclusion and creates opportunities for financial independence from state benefits. In this construction of the perception of aps, one can distinguish the two fundamental functions of K. Głębicka. The first refers directly to the individual and concerns: satisfying the needs of a person, shaping the work habit, learning a job, developing a sense of responsibility in the work process, shaping attitudes, developing physical fitness and mental performance, developing interests and self-realisation. The second covers broader social phenomena, such as social security, social inclusion and the development of the social economy (Gagacka, 2014, p. 17). When characterising the functions of aps referring directly to an individual, it should be noted that the lack of satisfying human needs may consequently result in numerous negative effects. In the context of the aps concept, lack of work can cause an individual to have serious somatic, psychological and social disorders. On the other hand, having a job is a source of human existence and a way of creating one's own life and the basis of moral human development. As a result of having a job, material conditions for its implementation and development arise. Human beings, in the process of work, create culture and communities and cooperate and interact with individuals and groups. Through the development of technology, having a job leads to the improvement of the human mind. In the process of work, a person shapes the habit of performing the job (Furmanek, 2008, pp. 57, 210). Work becomes a boon to man – the righteousness shaping his humanity - thanks to work, man not only shapes nature according to his needs, but also fulfils himself as a human being, equally

becoming even more human (John Paul II, 1982). Work also becomes a source of need for lifelong learning.

Poland is currently one of the most developed countries in the world. This promotion is closely related to changes in education. Prospects for a personal career provide a strong motivation to learn. On the other hand, the higher competences of citizens are a condition for further economic development. Poland stands out against the background of European countries through the dynamics of popularising education at secondary and higher levels. However, formal education, acquired in youth as part of traditionally functioning institutions of the school system and universities, is not enough to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing knowledge-based economy. For this it is necessary to ensure the possibility of constant development of competencies in a flexible manner, based on an individual approach, within formal education, outside formal and informal learning (The prospect of learning, 2013, p. 26). Equally important are the sense of responsibility for exercising and the attitude of the individual shaped as a result of having a job. As noted by T. Myjak, man possesses the most valuable resources of an organisation, which can develop and which is the main factor in the growth of its competitiveness, which is why it is important to properly use this resource. Increasing the efficiency of human resources management and raising its quality to achieve the company's goals are important tasks for managers, translating directly into the competitiveness of the organisation. The main sources of competitive advantage, which are knowledge, skills and competences, are employees of the enterprise. These resources help to build a concept of operation that is difficult to copy by the competition (Myjak, 2014, p. 11). The correspondence with the previously indicated functions of the work are further giving psychical, physical, interests and self-development. These are primarily functions related with internal human activity and the motivation to achieve it. T. Myjak links the inner activity of a person and his motivation to the responsibility understood as consequences resulting from the obligation to comply with, or non-compliance with, the rights as a result of their own behaviour in the workplace, independence expressed in the pursuit of independence in action and performing tasks and in confirming their work and usefulness, as well as values, the possibility of development, i.e. striving for skilful and effective use of qualifications and skills during work and their continuous improvement, recognition which means receiving respect, respect in the workplace, praise, distinctions and thus gaining approval and participation manifested in the direct or indirect impact of employees on the organisation's life (Myjak, 2014, p. 11).

In the context of broader social phenomena, three areas should be noted, to which the aps concept refers. In the context of social security, this is an area covering all legal and organisational tasks undertaken by state institutions, third sector organisations and citizens themselves, securing an accepted standard of living for individuals, family and social groups and eliminating threats leading to their marginalisation and social exclusion. With regard to social inclusion, it should be noted that the function of aps changes the direct recipient of the assistance provided. These are employers organising new jobs, especially those who establish

enterprises from the social economy sector and create sheltered employment places or for "pre-employers", i.e. institutions that organise and conduct reintegration courses, trainings, etc. It is important to emphasise the importance of the occurrence of entities and organisations in these two groups of employers. Representing the civic sector, operating based on the not-for-profit formula (Gagacka, 2014, p. 18). In the context of social economy development following K. Głabicka, the functions of the impact of aps should be noted. The first function is to create conditions for developing social benefits and to respect these basic rules: the priority of work on capital, democratic decision-making and the implementation of services for local communities as a superior objective, strengthening the credibility, quality and durability of operations (Definition of Consortium). Another function is to combine economic activity with social goals, the result of which is the reduction of the phenomenon of marginalisation and social exclusion, as well as activation and social integration (Rosiaak, 2005, p. 40).

Creating a climate for social cohesion formatting, striving for the creation of new jobs, inspiring entrepreneurial attitudes, building a pluralistic society, participatory, democratic and based on solidarity are the functions that also shape and determine aps in the social economy (Hausner, 2007, p. 2). A particularly important issue is that which can occur in the future thanks to evolution of the aps system. This is an evolution from the welfare state to the decentralised and auxiliary state. In this process, two main ideas of aps are revealed: self-governance and responsibility. As K. Głabicka writes, aps wants to build a society based on individuals responsible for themselves and others, and a society in which individual motivation and mobilisation are intertwined with civic solidarity. It is dominated by the principle of social solidarity (Gagacka, 2014, p. 21).

### **3. Active labour market policy and active social policy**

As has been emphasised before, aps primarily give individuals and groups hope to take up employment. This is one of the key functions of aps, which, it seems, should not be designed in isolation from an active labour market policy (hereinafter aprp), which is defined as deliberate state intervention on the labour market, designed to improve the efficiency of its functioning, create indirect or direct jobs and increase the employability of disadvantaged groups. As an activity involving public funds, it should be subject to systematic evaluation, the aim of which is to assess the quality and value of interventions, and thus the effects, impact and needs it was supposed to satisfy (Wisniewski, 2011, p. 19; Kryńska, 2013).

However, one should note the fundamental difference between these policies. As previously noted, aps in the national perspective is focused on activities in the areas of: social assistance, labour market, education and human capital. The aprp aims at: professional activation of the unemployed, reduction of structural mismatches on the labour market, raising the productivity

of the workforce and verification of the readiness to work of the unemployed (Wiśniewski, 2011, p. 19). This distribution of areas of policy influence entitles one to conclude that aps is a field in which the autonomous and, at the same time, permeating aprp is incorporated. Therefore, it is important in the context of the discussion on aps to review selected aspects of modern aprp.

Active labour market policy is primarily focused on structural problems of the labour market and improving the efficiency of its functioning (Kryńska, 1996). In another approach derived from the English-speaking term of active labour market policies, the aprp is defined by the prism of state actions aimed at increasing employment and counteracting the negative effects of unemployment through appropriate impact on entities on the labour market (Wap, 2013, p. 2). Active labour market policy in its beginnings, from the 60s to the 80s of the 20th century, developed as a form of instrument supporting structural changes in the economy, in particular those shaped on the basis of programmes that were to create more favourable conditions for investment development. In this context, recommendations have been formulated to formulate active employment programmes. These were the following recommendations (Wap, 2013, p. 2):

- promote work and vocational training, instead of financing unemployment (which corresponds to the primacy of employment and training on unemployment mentioned in the aps analysis),
- emphasise investment components, as far as possible, in order to expand the infrastructure, improve environmental protection and thus improve the conditions for private investments,
- increase the role of initiatives at the local level,
- take steps to create a second labour market, where it should have a complementary meaning and be oriented towards the vocational integration of the unemployed with the first job market.

In this context, emphasising the importance of the impact of the aprp on reducing unemployment, it should be noted that this is not a form of creating sustainable jobs in the economy, but a "bridge" function leading to future employment (Wap, 2013, pp. 19, 20).

The next stage in the development of aprp was the end of the 1980s, when new elements appeared in the discussion on unemployment. These were mainly connected with the observation in the labour market infrastructure of too low flexibility and lack of innovation from enterprises. In this light, it was important to increase the flexibility of the labour market by deregulating it. Labour market deregulation leads to an increase in freedom of business entities and smaller state participation in the field of collective labour relations.

In particular, this concerns the following elements of the labour market infrastructure (Wiśniewski, 1999, pp. 34-47; Baron-Wiaterek, 2008, pp. 27-81):

- a social security system ensuring an adequate standard of living for the unemployed, which may reduce the motivation to look for a job,
- minimum wage regulation, which may lead to employees losing their job if it is too high in relation to the wage on the unregulated market,
- the rights of trade union organisations, enabling them to negotiate high wages, which in effect may lead to the liquidation of jobs and the use of restrictive instruments implying a reduction in the productivity of the economy,
- legislation related to protection of the employment relationship, which may result in restricting the flexibility of the employer in the field of admission and dismissal of employees, increasing labour costs and discouraging employment growth,
- work time regulations that hinder the adjustment of working time to the needs of the plant.

Nowadays, the issue of labour market flexibility can be found in the Lisbon Strategy, a strategic document for the development of the European Union. It is revealed by the concept of flexicurity strategy. Its main goal is to combine increased flexibility in the labour market while maintaining security. In this context, security means job security rather than preserving the workplace. Employment, in turn, involves equipping society with skills that allow for finding a new job (Wiśniewski, 2011, p. 26.). It should be noted that aprp is clearly revealed as a factor shaping the strategy of flexicurity, a strategy which Poland is obliged to support in the implementation of the European Employment Strategy (National Employment, 2005, p. 109).

Analysing the aprp, one should note the importance of the concept of temporary labour markets in the area of its application (Wiśniewski, 2011, pp. 27-28). Its essence is a new interpretation of full employment and a different understanding of the essence of employment systems. The concept discussion focuses on seeking answers to the question of whether full employment is possible today. Full employment is defined as full-time employment (8 hours) for 5 days a week, 46 weeks a year and 45 years in different combinations of paid and unpaid employment over a lifetime. Employment defined in this way is not real. As Z. Wiśniewski writes, an alternative to such a definition of full employment may be a 30-hour working week, with its use depending on the economic situation and the individual's life needs. Hence, employment that deviates from the normal standard of work can be called temporary employment, and institutions linked to it with a transitional labour market. In this context, the main goal of building the concept of temporary labour markets is to reduce the existence of structural unemployment in favour of the friction unemployment admission. The main determinant of this state on the labour market would be paid and unpaid employment supported by new labour market instruments, temporary part-time work or periodically shortened working hours, as well as measures promoting training, professional improvement and retraining and care leave (Wiśniewski, 2011, p. 27).

When analysing the concept of transitional labour markets, it should be noted that it becomes a challenge for policy and law, determining the need to build new transition institutions that will ensure a smooth and smooth transition in the following areas (Mutz, 1995):

- between part-time and full-time work and between subordinate and self-employed work,
- from the unemployed population to work,
- from the education and vocational training system to the employment system,
- from homework or a grey area to subordinated employment,
- from the employment system for retirement or pension.

According to Z. Wiśniewski, the concept of transitional labour markets can not be assessed unambiguously. This concept, however, provides the basis for a broader perception of the role of aprp as a harmonised action for integration with the labour market, regardless of the position it is currently occupying, and protection against social exclusion (Wiśniewski, 2011, p. 28).

In this light, it can be concluded that there are numerous theoretical and practical areas of aprp, which indeed correspond, or are even identical, to the aps concept. The perception of changes in the organisation of the labour market caused by the globalisation process, demographic change, IT revolution or the growing mobility of labour resources can be considered as common in these areas, which forces a new look at the professional and social activation of the individual. In this context, it seems that the most binding aprp and aps are recognition, in the case of both policies, of the primacy of labour over benefits.

## 4. Active social policy against demographic challenges

According to A. Rączaszek, social policy and demography relations do not have to be justified, because the scale of social needs depends on population size and intensity of specific demographic processes. Social policy responds to these needs, and sociology, as a related social science, explains community behaviour and specifies the needs resulting from these behaviours (Rączaszek, 2012, p. 9). In the context of demographic challenges and the resulting problems, as B. Szatur-Jaworska states, a new model of social policy is needed, and, above all, a social policy towards old age (Szatur-Jaworska, 2000). This postulate is constituted by a profound demographic change, especially affecting people classified as seniors. As demographic forecasts indicate, the highest growth rate of aging populations will occur in the so-called old-old group, i.e. in the oldest categories, aged 75 and over.

Sources of growing demographic changes should be sought in several ways. According to the theory of the second demographic transition by DJ van de Kaa (Kotowska, 2003)<sup>3</sup>, the source of change was the change in the population structure in the 1960s, in highly developed countries, the return to post-material values, oriented to life individualisation, a weakening commitment to tradition, family and high fertility, with motherhood (Kaa, 1999). Such preferences, according to the creators of theories, characterise the next stages of development and result in the popularity of alternative marital-family life forms, a decline in the number of births, marriages, shifted during parenthood, a growing number of incomplete families, alternative relationships and cohabitation popularity (Slany, 2002).

In the context of these phenomena, it should be noted that from the point of view of social policy, one of the most important demographic conditions is the structure of population by age (Orczyk, 2005, p. 31). As E. Trafiałek observes, contemporary civilization carries with it a guarantee of a longer average life duration. This is accompanied by the increase in the number of elderly people, with a simultaneous decline in birth rate. In effect, it results in the consolidation of the so-called inverted pyramid of age (Strzelecki, 2010), which is characterised by, in the social sphere, the occurrence on labour market of a lack of substitutability of generations and also raises the problem of securing decent conditions when departing from professional activity. In turn, in the sphere of economic consequences, it causes a so-called rupture of labour markets (Trafiałek, 2006, p. 246). Therefore, despite the fact that over a dozen years have elapsed since its formulation, the postulate of L. Frąckiewicz, which states that the economic, social, social, medical and cultural effects of demographic aging include different spheres of behaviour, needs, trends, creating a comprehensive catalogue of tasks which requires implementation of appropriate entities and instruments of social policy (Frąckiewicz, 2003, p. 11). The answer to this postulate can be found, among others, in the work of E. Trafiałek titled "For a new social policy towards old age" (Trafiałek, 2002, pp. 179-196). As was emphasised, the author of the text has already noticed the necessity of building the future shape of social policy, especially in the face of old age. This process, first of all, requires the development of a catalogue of priority tasks that will resolve the main issues that originate from the changing demographic structure in the global, regional and local dimensions (Trafiałek,

<sup>3</sup> Professor Dirk J. van de Kaa has a special place in European and world demographics. It consists of his scientific achievements, achievements in initiating and directing demographic research on a national and international scale, as well as activities for international organisations dealing with population issues. The founder and long-term director of the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute, one of the leading European demographic institutes, was also the director of the prestigious Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences. He was in charge of international research of fundamental importance (World Fertility Survey), which influenced the directions of research work undertaken, performing managerial functions in institutions involved in the organisation of research (e.g. the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis) or defining research priorities (e.g. of Demographic Experts, Council of Europe). As a participant in international demographic conferences, meetings of the UN Population Committee or meetings at the intergovernmental level, especially in Europe, and directing the work of relevant working groups or sessions, he influenced the content of the relevant documents of these conferences, assessing the population situation and formulating recommendations for population policy. Acting so intensively, he did not neglect his academic activity.

2006, pp. 252-258). One of the first tasks in this area is the international integration of activities in the construction and implementation of a new model of the functioning of the economy and a new model of saving and investing. In this respect, the main goal is to provide people with adequate income and care. Such an approach requires the fulfilment and recognition of several standards:

- building and strengthening social bonds and intergenerational solidarity,
- recognising life in all phases as an autotelic value,
- recognition of third generation representatives as a valuable human capital and a permanent element of social resources,
- promoting all manifestations of activity and becoming self-dependent (especially economic).

In the next task, the role of local communities in solving the problems contained in the indicated standards is priority. This is especially related with the activities of local environments of an integrated, constructive nature and comprehensive. In this approach, the need to move away from the so-called "Hard departamentality" for the cooperation of all economic sectors and implementation of the principle of subsidiarity and social solidarism (Trafiałek, 2006, p. 252). The author of the aforementioned tasks critically refers to the transfer to Poland of solutions tested in other countries. In this matter, attention is paid to cultural and national specificity. The creation of social integration mechanisms and the optimisation of the third period of life must take into account these specificities while incorporating all age groups into the process of organising the society. Another important task is to give social gerontology the status of an independent scientific discipline that falls within the category of social sciences. The lack of explicit empowerment of social gerontology in theory and practice, in social sciences, as well as the lack of appropriate geriatrics in medical sciences, cause that a group of people interested in making old age problems, conducting research, analyses professionally involved in solving significant problems, is scarce and is deprived of legal, institutional and financial support. Dissemination and consolidation of the intergenerational solidarity and social justice principle in redistribution of funds for social security purposes is another action designated for contemporary social policy. It is determined by the transition period, between implementation and the effects of the pension system reform, which is related to the state budget charging with expenditure on social security benefits (Wojciechowski, 2010; Suwalski, 2014, pp. 77-95). Taking into account the tendencies of faster aging of the rural population in relation to the urban population, the need to reconstruct the model of functioning of Agricultural Social Insurance Funds (KRUS) is important. This requires, above all: increased control and discipline in resource management in order to reduce the disproportion between the amount of benefits received from the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) and KRUS, sealing the system and eliminating functioning people on non-agricultural farms. As has already been emphasised several times before, it is necessary to make the labour market more flexible. Recognition as an absolute priority of education about old age and old age, in particular the dissemination of

gerontological knowledge at all levels of education. Changes in this area should take into account the postulates of introducing to the plans of academic education the subject of social gerontology and the constant extension of the scope of programme activities and forms of work of institutions for lifelong learning networks by enriching their offer addressed to older people. It corresponds with these changes to the need to launch a stream of information that will help old people overcome various barriers of access to social life and reserve airtime in public media for broadcasting programmes addressed precisely to this age group (Pollok, 2007). In further tasks, E. Trafiałek notices the need to: move away from the anonymity model of social life in favour of creating a model of social life and social thinking, combining the need to launch social dialogue for a full and systematic diagnosis of areas of Polish old age deficiency, social policy for old age and development treatment, rehabilitation and care services, supporting old people and their families in providing constant home care, building effective state intervention, but based on creating ties between the state and civil society, while strengthening the role of local communities. In conclusion, it should be noted for E. Trafiałek that the mentioned problems and tasks are in fact, only an outline of a comprehensive catalogue of issues of demographic, economic, political, legal, social and cultural nature; this is the issue global, as well as environmental, local and individual (Błędowski, 2002; Frąckiewicz, 2002, pp. 11-25).

Taking into account the tasks of contemporary social policy, in the context of diagnosed as well as forecasted demographic changes, the following priorities of actions should be indicated (Trafiałek, 2006, pp. 258-260):

- inclusion of the aging issue in all policy programmes (government) to adapt society and the economy to demographic change and to build a society accessible to all age groups,
- supporting sustainable economic growth, whose positive effects would be felt by all social groups,
- adaptation of the labour market, services and social infrastructure to changes and demographic forecasts,
- adjusting the social security system to the ongoing and expected demographic changes (building a system of services and care in the place of residence and insurance for old age),
- striving to provide people of all ages with a good quality of life and independence of life,
- striving for further development of continuing education, so that the education system reflects the changing economic, social and demographic conditions,
- ensuring full integration and participation of older people in social life, with particular reference to the role and needs of older women,
- supporting elderly people in the family, promoting intergenerational solidarity,
- international cooperation in supporting the implementation of accepted tasks, dialogue, dissemination of reports by the European Commission, etc.

## 5. Conclusions

The main challenges for contemporary active social policy have numerous sources. They can be found in the sphere of theoretical considerations over aps or in the field of its practical application. In the theoretical sphere, the discussion on justifying, explaining and improving the aforementioned special role in practice is still important for aps (Szarfenberg, accessed 13.07.2019). As a consequence of the theoretical discussion on the importance of aps, issues arise regarding the evolution of state activity – the transition from a welfare state to the decentralised and auxiliary state. On the basis of these considerations and discussions, the postulate of reorientation of social policy was formulated, which should concern its several important dimensions: axiological – referring to the concept of social policy, model included in the vision of its evolution from social security to participation, substantive – from social transfers to redistribution of work and scope of addressing support - from the orientation of the employee/citizen to the orientation of the employer creating a workplace. It seems that this postulate clearly links the realm of theory with the area of the practical impact of aps (Gagacka, 2014, p. 21). At the same time, this is a postulate referring to the concept of a social policy model in the phase of major demographic changes, the main effect of which is the aging of societies, constituting a major threat to social policy and the related labour market policy (Szukalski, 2002). These processes result in the current formula of these policies being exhausted (Gagacka, 2014, p. 247). Therefore, it is necessary to develop a new model of social policy and labour market policy, which will also take into account the domination of elderly people (Szatur-Jaworska, 2000) and the need to sustain their professional and social activity as long as possible, while maintaining the idea of employment priority and education over benefits (Czapiński 2014).

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