

POLISH STRATEGY: EFFORTS TO BUILD UP AND THE FIGHT TO SAVE THEM? - ABOUT NATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC "TURN" AND WHAT IS BEHIND IT

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ABSTRACT:

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST SOCIAL PROBLEM IN POLAND? IN A NEAR FUTURE POLAND WILL BECOME A POOR LAND OF OLD PEOPLE. IT'S THE DEMOGRAPHICAL DOWNHILL. PAPER SHOWS POSSIBLE STRATEGIES AND IMPOSSIBLE EFFORTS.

KEY WORDS: SOCIETY; DEMOGRAPHY; EDUCATION, POLAND; SOCIAL PROBLEMS; STRATEGIES;

INTRODUCTION

Country are the people, and if this statement is trivial it happens that we do not fully we realize. Tradition and patriotism are in living people. People are the creators of culture. For them exists and creates a law, and about them is the history. Moreover, not only the people, the nation, is the sense of the existence of the state, but also the community is the sine qua non of its existence. According to the classical definition, country: land, power and people ². It is therefore worth, even very briefly, to look at the strength and potential of modern Polish state.

As perhaps never in the history of the Polish state is safe territory. The country borders remained virtually³ unchanged since the end of World War II. Today, the active involvement of Poland in NATO, but also in other structures, seems to calm about Polish borders only confirm. Poland has a place on the map of Europe, and no one in their right mind does not attempt to challenge it.

For almost 25 years, Poland is fully democratic. What does it mean? Poles themselves choose their government. The nation took over full responsibility for governance in its own grounds. This is due to international standards. However, once again turning toward the clichés, the democratic system is not a perfect solution⁴, so we do not know a better

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²The simplification of the definition of G. Hegla, for: Mariusz, Gulczyński; *Nauka o polityce*, Warsaw: AlmaMer, 2007;

³ An exception was here "correction of border" of the Soviet Union in 1951, covering more than 480 km² territory of the People's Republic.

⁴ For W. Churchill, namely: "Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. " - House of Commons Speech, November 11, 1947.

alternative. Just as it did in relation to border security, so here we will not find legitimate votes undermine the autonomy of Poland.

The third condition is the nation. Ethnic community, political and cultural identifies the with the concept of Polish. Contrary to what is often shown, the Poles are still a strong nation. Historical experience, but also contemporary problems seem still to work in favor of social cohesion in the country. Invariably an important role, although slightly decreasing, has a church. Community tradition, history and customs prevalent among the majority of citizens, constantly distinguished Poles in Europe, which seems as specific monolith⁵. One might say that the Poles are a nation of "quality" quite strong, and nothing in this situation will not change anything in the near future.

The real, main problem is disclosed in respect to the "quantitative" dimension of the Polish population. Here appears real, reasonable concerns and anxieties. Polish society is melting, but also getting older and the projections do not predict imminent improvement.

In short summary, it is clear that unless there is no reason for serious concern about the shape of the Polish border and autonomous authority, whereas the greatest threat to the existence of the Polish state, are demographic threats. Shrinking in number and aging nation will not be able stand on guard of borders and autonomy. Contemporary concern for Polishness is a concern about the size and structure of the nation.

MAIN TEXT

DEMOGRAPHIC DOWNHILL

With regard to the demographics of Poland and challenges associated with it, stands out today a few problematic areas. Perhaps the most important two of them have already been mentioned: change of structure of the population and declining birth rates. Behind them are mentioned as well dimensional changes in family structures, labor market problems, impacts of globalization⁶.

It is worth briefly describe the situation and demographic projections for the Poland. According to the data in 2011 registered more than 390 thousand live births⁷, a decrease of more than 23 thousand compared to 2010, but also it is about 30% less than in 1990 and more than 55% less than in 1983, which was the peak year of the last baby boomers (nearly 724 thousand births). In 2011, the birth rate (number of births per 1000 inhabitants) was 10.1% (up 0.7 points less than in the previous year, but more than 4 points less than in 1990 and more than 9 points less than in 1983 respectively)⁸.

Especially unfavorable period of 1984-2003 were the years when it was recorded steady decline in the birth rate - up to 351 thousand in 2003, which was the worst in the demographic development of the country. The year 2009 was the sixth consecutive year in which was recorded greater number of them, but unfortunately the last. Since the year 2010, the number of births is falls again.

Optimal demographic situation - simple replacement of generations - determines total fertility rate shaping at the level of 2,1-2,15 (if in a given year per woman aged 15-49 years falls on average 2 children). Nowadays the number of birth rate recorded - the level of reproduction - does not guarantee the replacement of generations, not to mention the growth of population. Still remains observed since 1989, a period of depression at birth. In 2011, the

⁵ Stefan, Wolff; *Ethnic Minorities in Europe: The Basic Facts*, (Nottingham: UoN Press, 2008), 2.

⁶ Bożena, Balcerzak-Paradowska; *Ogólne kierunki zmian w polityce rodzinnej krajów Unii Europejskiej [in:] Polityka rodzinna w krajach Unii Europejskiej – wnioski dla Polski*, (Warsaw: RPO, 2009); 19-21.

⁷ *Rocznik statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, (Warsaw: The Central Statistical Office, 2012); 148-216.

⁸ *Population Prognosis for Poland 2008-2035*; (Warsaw: The Central Statistical Office, 2008); 147-187.

total fertility rate reached only 1.30⁹. From 24 years in Poland there was not a single year in which the number of births will guarantee the replacement of generations.

Thus, these data indicate that this sub-title downhill (mountain bike competition involving fast descending a route, with very steep slopes of the mountains), it is not an exaggerated metaphor for the Polish situation in which the number of citizens is rapidly declining. Results of long-term predictions of the Polish population by 2035 - CSO - leave no illusions: in the coming years, the number of Polish population will steadily decrease, the rate of decline will be getting better with time. It was expected that in 2010 the Polish population has reached almost 38 092 thousand people (actually 38 200 thousand), in 2020 - about 37 830 thousand, and in 2035 - about 35 993 thousand. A similar state of population growth occurred in the years 1981-1982, when it was seen last peak of birth. In the next 20 years, will diminish more than 2 million Poles, with just over 38.5 million¹⁰ to almost 36.5 million.

OLD AND POOR AS A POLE

From the decline of the population has the right to further alarmed the age structure of the population. In the simplest terms, it could be characterized as a proportion of the size of different age groups. As before, so it is worth relay on hard data from the Central Statistical Office.

The age structure of the population will change rapidly throughout the prediction period - that is, until 2035. For these changes are responsible changes occurring in the highs and demographic lows, the effects of which overlap with different strength in different periods. The result of this "wave" are visible changes in the processes of fertility and mortality. What is important, migrations affects less on the age proportion of population¹¹.

Number of people of working age (18-59/64 [male / female]) throughout the prediction period will systematically decrease from 24570 thousand in 2010 to 20739 thousand. In 2035, thus more than 3,8 million with the biggest decrease will take place in the five years from 2015 to 2020 (about 1,2 million people). These changes will result in a rapid shrinking and aging labor force and consequently deterioration of the labor supply in the Polish labor market. To make matters worse, the process of melting of the population of working age, will accompany the process of increasing the population of retirement age, with 6413 thousand in 2010 to 9621 thousand in 2035.

A preventive measure already used here was to extend working time between men and women with 60 years in the case of women and 65 years in case of men up to 67 for both sexes. By definition, this is a solution to some extent unfair and reducing the feeling of safety and comfort of citizens. Moreover, used strategy does not solve the problem, it moves only slightly over time.

What is meant by the changes in the structure of the population? Now the burden of maintaining all other citizens (under 18 and above 59/64) in 2035 will rest on the shoulders of a group of about 18% less numerous than now. To make matters worse, the number of retirees and pensioners 'dependent' of working people will increase by as much as 34 percent. These risks can be expressed in a different way: while in 2010 the one person of retirement age there were nearly 4 (3,83) in production age, then in 2035, will fall a little over two (2,15) - that is, while maintaining the same indicators and social regulation, the money will be about half as much¹². A further consequence of this dramatic trend, must be either a reduction of benefits and expenses for all (children, pensioners), or increase charges towards employees

⁹ *Rocznik statystyczny Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 189.

¹⁰ Data from the census of 2011.

¹¹ Data from the census of 2011, s. 161.

¹² Own estimation.

(taxes, fees, labor costs) - both "solutions" are however, impoverishment of society and serious economic problems of Poland.

HELP-ROBBERY

About demographic problems characteristic for Poland, scientists and politicians are debating for years. Like many other issues, so here, you can try to counteract the causes or effects. Also, as in other areas, counteracting only the effects do not solve the problem actually, at most mitigates their effects.

This group of solutions include earlier presented ideas extending of working time (working age), which governs decided to introduce in Poland. Similarly, the robbery effect of lowering expenditures will bear the expense of all citizens of the state. The younger ones - through cuts in: social benefits, education sector, health care, sport. Similarly, it would be in the strategy of the oldest - saving would be performed at the expense of health care, but primarily through diminution the amount of pensions. In a word, it would be acting not only ineffective, but simply unethical towards weakest sections of society.

Similarly, short-sighted solutions will be attempts to retain the amount of state expenditures by further increasing the commitment of citizens: taxes - including VAT, excise, duties and, of course, income tax and labor costs - even insurance premiums. From the point of view of social unrest Once again, we would have to deal with the unethical and potentially dangerous action.

Like the previous "solutions" such ideas and increasing public debt should be considered as wasteful and ineffective strategy. Without a clear, certain perspective of repayment (to such, and not other demographic and economic indicators there is no perspective) such a move would be interpreted as acting against Polish society and posterity.

(IM)POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

A contemporary Europe, which was struggling (and still is struggling) with demographic challenges similar to Polish, has developed many strategy for the recovery of indicators of population. One of them is a family policy.

Theoreticians in relation to family policy on our continent distinguish several models: liberal, conservative, social democratic, south European¹³. It seems, however, that determine of the effectiveness of the model is not only difficult but sometimes impossible, due to the important role of other factors that are superimposed on the dynamics of demographic processes. It is difficult, for example, determine with certainty whether Ireland's success is the result of demographic well growing economy and increasing wealth of society, a strong Christian tradition, effective family policy, or influx of people from other countries. While analyzing examples of various European countries, a try to eliminate individual factors, allows to draw a certain very cautious conclusions.

It seems that the overall wealth of the society, which often is combined with priority of careers, as well as the inclusion of women in the labor market is not conducive to (indirectly) the development of the population. This is evidenced by data of Germany. Germany as one of the the richest countries of the old continent for decades struggling with declining birth rates, especially in families of native German, and more recently with the decline of the population. Most clearly about this also provide worldwide data, where the list of society with the 'highest number of births" open societies of poorest countries (mainly in Africa), and closes very rich countries like Japan, South Korea, Germany, and Austria¹⁴.

¹³ Bożena, *Ogólne kierunki zmian w polityce rodzinnej krajów Unii Europejskiej*, 15.

¹⁴ Index Mundi – www.indexmundi.com – 8.05.2013r.

Thus, one can even indicate an inverse proportion - the richer the country, the lower the birth rate .

What impact has the tradition and culture of demographic change? As it turns out, probably limited. On the one hand is an example of traditionally Catholic Ireland, which for many years was noted down for a high demographic indicators. On the other hand, there are examples of societies traditionally of family like Italy (also traditionally Catholic) and Greece, which for years stuck in stagnation. In order to more accurately demonstrate the limited influence of culture, we can give the example of Sweden, which is not associated with a strong family tradition, but the population steadily increases.

With the high degree of certainty can be established that on demographic development has affected family policy, but this policy must be intensive. This is well illustrated by the examples of Scandinavian countries and France. These are countries with very extensive package of support for families. Free kindergartens and nursery schools, generous benefits for the child (for progressive), long and well-paid parental leave, favorable conditions for families in tax systems. This strategy is effective, but it also has its weaknesses. The first is associated with enormous costs, and hence the fiscal burden to the citizens. The second most on such impulses react poorer sections of the society, for which the proposed amounts are measurable, significant profit and encouragement. It should be noted that to a large extent in these poorer sections of the "fit" the immigrant community¹⁵.

To complete this thesis can be indicated countries that implement family policy "not-intensive" and the effects of these activities are very limited. Among the group of those countries include the countries of Eastern Europe, including Poland. "Baby bonus" (ie, a one-time grant for the birth of a child), parental leave, subsidies for kindergartens and some relief in the tax system appear to be insufficient incentive to have children.

DEMOGRAPHIC TIGERS OF EUROPE

With some caution, but also with documentary evidence in hard data¹⁶, you can accept the idea that the most important element in the fight for the preservation and development of the population is the impact of immigrants. Today's "demographic tigers of Europe", are countries wide open to immigrants, and what's involved, the countries in which the population of new immigrants provides a relatively large percentage. The phenomenon of this process lies in the fact that the population of the country is increasing not only because of the flow of immigrants, but most of all a very high fertility of these, after settling.

Classic examples of this are the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Ireland, France, Spain and Italy. Listed here countries share, to a lesser or greater extent, a few features. All, from the rest of Europe, have high rates of population growth. All of them are clearly upstream indicators of net immigration - it means that a lot more people settle there, than to leave - which shows the strong liberal immigration policy. After all, not full, but the available data indicate that in most of these countries fertility rates among the native population is quite low - on average per woman can fall from 1,40 child (Italy) to 1,73 (Finland)¹⁷.

What is not to be missed is the fact that economists often associated countries' economic success with increased influx of immigrants¹⁸ – as classic examples are here, the

¹⁵ B. Kołaczek, *Uwarunkowania demograficzne, społeczno-gospodarcze i kulturowe polityki rodzinnej w krajach Unii Europejskiej* [in:] *Polityka rodzinna w krajach Unii Europejskiej – wnioski dla Polski*, 31-54.

¹⁶ Index Mundi

¹⁷ Index Mundi

¹⁸ George J., Borjas; *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001);

United States, Canada and Australia. This can sometimes be translated as immigrant initiative and determination in making work. It is also said about the feedback, it means that the more people flows, the more developed the economy and the country becomes more attractive to newcomers.

There is also the other side of the medal, and in fact a number of potential problems. First, the influx of people of widely varying ethnic and cultural roots often cause serious conflicts in the background. In Europe, especially the "bad name" have immigrants from Muslim countries - as evidenced by the "friction" in France, but also in the Netherlands, Great Britain and the Scandinavian countries. What is interesting, these problems do not have a large scale in Ireland, which together accounted for most of the people from other European countries (mainly Poland) - so not so distant ethnically and culturally.

The emergence of foreign nations, may cause unrest and discontent among the indigenous population. In contrast to the cultural conflicts they may have some other ground - this will often be the economic base. Then, too often repeated arguments, passwords will be "picking up jobs" or "squeeze rates". But again, as economists suggest, these are wrong statement, because it often indicates a positive impact of immigration on the economy¹⁹.

The last issue worth discussing is only temporary activity of immigrant population. As indicated in the research of sociologists and demographers²⁰, high fertility rates especially characterized by immigrants in the first and second generation, then it expires. Thus, the procedure of opening of borders can solve demographic problems, but only in the scale of 1-2 generations.

CONCLUSION

ROAD TO POLAND - NEW FAMILY POLICY AND IMMIGRATION

As has been show up, there are two effective strategies to improve the demographic situation.

In the situation of Poland extremely difficult to implement family policy will be high expenditure. In view of the difficult economic situation, high unemployment and public debt, it seems impossible to save up so high measures that could become an incentive to create numerous families. It is worth to mention that the introduction of so called "Baby bonus" was great effort and problem and it was only a one-time expenditure of about 1000 zł²¹ for every newborn Pole. Family policy is even systematic high expenditure, monthly allowances for children, fees for kindergartens and nurseries, wages for parents on parental leave, but the reduction in revenues from higher tax rebate. It seems that such measures are beyond the reach of Poland.

The second strategy is opening up to immigration. This direction is also not easy to implement, but probably only actually possible. Here we can even talk about a new family and immigration policy. The first condition for the success of such a strategy is ... to find potentially interested in settling in the country. For economic, cultural and even climatic reasons Poland is not frequent, attractive destination for people looking for a new country. However, there are community groups interested in settling in Poland. These are often citizens of former Soviet republics but also Asian countries. What is interesting, and particularly important, some of these people are descendants of Polish exiles and displaced persons. This group should be a natural first "tranche" of immigration. People identify with

¹⁹ Borjas, *Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*

²⁰ Blau, Francine D.; *The Fertility of Immigrant Women: Evidence from High-Fertility Source Countries* [in] *Immigration and the Workforce: Economic Consequences for the United States and Source Areas*; Chicago: Borjas and Freeman, 1992;

²¹ That is about 250€.

Poland, sometimes dreaming of moving (back) to the country of their ancestors. The existing limitations very often prevent from the arrival.

Another strategic recommendation is the lead of immigration policy to restrict the cultural - ethnic – social conflicts. So, of course, a wide opening and preferences should apply to communities that do not deviate too much from native culture and willing to assimilate in Poland. In this regard, it would be necessary to use the experience of Western Europe, which has been measuring for a long time the problem of the immigrant population.

Finally, the last recommendation would be to implement, to the extent possible of economic, the family policy to further assist families in establishing "new Poles", not forgetting the "old" citizens. The combination of good family policy with openness to newcomers was as it seems, a recipe for demographic success In UK and Ireland.

The rate of such strategies, in addition to demonstrated improvement of (in fact salvation) demographic situation can be economic success. As was mentioned earlier, it was often involving countries involved to open and thoughtful immigration and family policy.

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