

Social State: Search of Adequate Signs

Marina V. Markheim, Alevtina E. Novikova, Evgeniy E. Tonkov and Anna M. Zhornik
Belgorod State University, Pobedy St. 85, 308015 Belgorod, Russia

Abstract: This study describes the signs of the welfare state, according to the analysis of studies concerning modern interpretations and the trends of a social state development, subject to certain theoretical developments of European and domestic sociologists. Researchers presented the experience of various countries to consolidate the provisions about the social character of a state in the fundamental laws; the statistical data of international organizations are analyzed in the context of identifying of a welfare state signs identification; the role of a social entrepreneurship and its public support is clarified; the theoretical proposals (clarifying the interpretation of a social and a socially-oriented state) are formulated.

Key words: Social state, social state signs, equality, globalization, social entrepreneurship and socially-oriented state

INTRODUCTION

The idea of a welfare state has a long history makes the subject of debates and is interpreted from highly humanistic one (a man is the measure of all things) to the idea of freedom, justice and equality from an utopian one to the concept of a just united society development. For the first time the concept of a welfare state was introduced in science in 1850 by the German philosopher Stein (1850) who stated that the equality of classes and economic progress are its main characteristics. Currently, the ideals of a welfare state are perceived by most countries of the world, filled with a new content, features and tasks, presented in a variety of social models of different effectiveness (Blome *et al.*, 2009). At that there is a lot of countries which not deny these ideals but cannot get closer to their realization due to persistent poverty, inequality and the inability to provide a decent standard of life for all citizens. Due to the above mentioned statements and taking into account the new trends in the development of a society, we consider it is reasonable to refer to the investigation of social state attributes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The achievement of the stated objective is performed by the use of analysis and synthesis methods (at the clarification of a social state sign concept); the comparative method (at the determination a welfare state signs on various grounds); the content analysis (at the evaluation of approaches to the identification of a social state in the constitutions of Foreign countries).

Main part: A welfare state as an idea and a reality are identified differently. From the standpoint of a state legal concept it is advisable to turn to the state constitution to identify the relevant rules. Let's consider them taking into account the classification of European countries according to their social models: the Northern, Anglo-Saxon, Continental and Mediterranean (Blome *et al.*, 2009).

The countries of Northern social model are: Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway. The first two chapters devoted to the basics of a political system, contain such phrases as the "the social security promotion", "the state support of citizens who do not have means to live" and the transfer of basic social, cultural and economic rights. In the second two separate articles are devoted to the social functions of a state located in the last chapters.

The states of a continental social model state their social role differently in its main laws. The Article 23 of the Belgian constitution guarantees the social, economic and cultural rights with the reference to the laws determining the conditions of their implementation. The French Constitution defined a state as a social one (Article 1); German Basic Law mentioned "public welfare" in Article 73, devoted to the delimitation of jurisdiction between a federation and its subjects.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The group of countries within the Mediterranean social model stated the peculiar features of a social state in its basic laws. Greece devoted a separate part of the Constitution to the personal and social rights, Portugal "opens the way to a socialist society", Italy developed a

constitutional task “to remove the obstacles of economic and social order” (Article 3), Spain indicates the already existing social order.

According to the traditional approach concerning the assessment of the constitutional provisions significance in terms of their structural fixation, it can be argued that the priority of social rights and guarantees is typical for Sweden, the Netherlands, France and Italy.

The statistical values of poverty and inequality reduction allow to see a social trend of a state, the standard of living, the access to basic social rights, the share of a state budget allocated for a social sector, the dynamics of indicators change in a single country. They reflect the result of social support measure efficiency taken by a state concerning the citizens in need.

The universal indicator covering health, knowledge and standard of living, the labor market in all countries of the world is the Human Development index of the world, annually compiled by the United Nations. According to this index, all countries of the Northern social model are among the countries with very high levels of this Index in 2014. Norway is among them and it occupies the first place, although its constitution does not provide the priority for social rights. The similar situation is with Singapore: taking the 9th place in the index, its constitution does not expressly provide any social guarantees.

Another marker of a welfare state is the reduction of inequality. At that modern research shows that the countries, the society of which is usually regarded as a highly fair, in fact reveals a high level of income inequality (Sweden, Denmark) (Skopek *et al.*, 2014). And vice versa, the countries where the income inequality is mainly manifested have a rather low level of income inequality (most of the southern European countries).

The conclusion that a state may exercise a social function within a necessary extent only with financial resources (Anonymous, 2011) is considered as reasonable and directly dependent on the level of economic development. In this regard, let's select a medium or a high level of this development as a sign of a social state. The states that lack of economic opportunities for decent social protection of their citizens but that aspire to it may be defined as socially oriented. Mali, Rwanda and Burkina Faso are among these states.

Within the stated attribute let's turn our attention to the evaluation the impact of the world economy globalization impact to the social function performance by a state. Along with the justification of such an action with uniquely or mainly negative effects the others also appeared. American scientists according to the example of the European countries revealed a tendency to social

expenditures increase in connection with a world economy globalization, mainly due to the loans given by the International Monetary Fund (Jiang, 2014). A similar trend may be seen in Latin America and the Caribbean countries: the presence of international financial institutions has led to the increase of health care costs (but reduced the costs of social insurance) (Noy, 2011). At that in our opinion, the evaluation by one indicator in separate social areas and within short periods of time cannot be considered as an objective one.

Among the features of a welfare state the presence and the number of implemented social programs may be mentioned. In Sweden, they have a generic name the Swedish social security which is covered by 48% of GDP (Zeljkoviae, 2012). In the US, this percentage is lower which is compensated by the broad participation of a private sector: the charitable organizations and funds, the religious or church groups and by the specialization of social programs: a special program of supplementary feeding for women, infants and children, the food distribution program in Indian reservations, etc.

Due to the expansion of the trend areas and the volumes of social programs the view about errors in their success is expressed because of responsible person incompetence and the wrong choice of programs (Lane, 2014). We share this point of view and add that a social program as a complex of economic, legal, organizational, informational measures and activities subject to a goal requires some consistency and efficiency. We believe that the presence of at least one state goal-oriented program for each social direction reflects the social involvement of a state in the solution of social problems and proves its social nature.

Due to the search of a welfare state signs the issue about the sources naturally appears due to which the sum of its budget is developed. Taxes are recognized as a universal source of income. According to the statistical service of the European Union as of 2012 the Danish taxes make 48.1% of its GDP while the income tax rate makes 51.5%; in Sweden, these figures are almost the same: 44.2 and 56.4%, respectively. Given that 48% of GDP in Sweden and Denmark is spent on social needs, we may conclude that the population of these countries fully provides its own social protection. At the same time, a state is estimated as a social one not a society which in our opinion is not quite fair.

In the context of some appropriate criteria search for a welfare state social entrepreneurship seems to be interesting. In the US for example, 140 thousand of social organizations and enterprises is registered (Anonymous, 2014). There is a Foundation of social entrepreneurs in the UK with a multi-million dollar capital that invests in social

entrepreneurship. The funds of social entrepreneurship support are established in Russian Federation: “Our Future” and private funds; the competitions of various social projects aimed primarily at young people are held annually.

The level of a welfare state may be estimated via the relation of its political forces and its inherent ideologies. Thus, four parties in the Bundestag out of five and its vast majority adhere to the ideology of socialism; in the National Council of Austria the most numerous part of mandates are held by the deputies of the social democratic party; in Australia the ruling party in the house of representatives is the labour party, whose ideology is social democracy. In most of Western parliaments, socially-oriented parties prevail while in Asian countries communist or conservative parties prevail (Japan, China, Vietnam, South Korea). We believe that the predominance of the socialist political forces is a natural response to the new realities of the modern world.

CONCLUSION

The above stated facts give the reasons to the following generalizations and conclusions:

- In the context of the performed study and on the basis of its identified attributes, we offer to interpret a welfare state as a modern state whose policy is aimed at ensuring of a high level of social protection for population, confirmed by a number of quantitative and qualitative indicators and achieved through the implementation of state social programs and projects at a state incentives and individual support who decided to solve certain social problems
- A state may be called a socially-oriented one which due to the objective reasons cannot provide a social protection system for citizens but it tends to achieve it by the constitutional consolidation of minimum social guarantees and periodic social project implementation

- The formulated attributes of a welfare state are not absolute: the states which are the classic examples of such states may not match by one or more grounds. This demonstrates the need to search for some signs of a welfare state to various social models

REFERENCES

- Anonymous, 2011. Human rights and legal social state in Russia. E.A. Lukashev (Eds.). M.: Norma: INFRA-M, pp: 400.
- Anonymous, 2014. The development of social entrepreneurship in the United States. Weiner, V. and Gulbekian, M. (Eds.), pp: 57.
- Blome, A., W. Keck and J. Alber, 2009. Family and the Welfare State in Europe: Intergenerational Relations in Ageing Societies. Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, UK, pp: 352.
- Jiang, T., 2014. Globalization and welfare spending across 21 transitional economies. *Int. J. Comparative Sociol.*, 55 (5): 429-453.
- Lane, K., 2014. Social democratic America. Oxford University Press, New York, pp: 233.
- Noy, S., 2011. New contexts, different patterns? A comparative analysis of social spending and government health expenditure in Latin America and the OECD. *Int. J. Comparative Sociol.*, 52 (3): 215-244.
- Stein, L., 1850. Geschichte der sozialen Bewegung in Frankreich von 1789 bis auf unsere Tage. In 3 Bde. Leipzig.
- Skopek, N., S. Buchholz and H.P. Blossfeld, 2014. National patterns of income and wealth inequality. *Int. J. Comparative Sociol.*, 55 (6): 463-488.
- Zeljkoviae, N., 2012. Social security vs. austerity measures. Sweden's recipe for crisis. Monitor Nordycki.