

1. SOCIALINĖ POLITIKA

ON THE LITHUANIAN SOCIAL POLICY MODEL AND FACTORS INFLUENCING IT

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Introduction

There is a lack of attempts to typify the Lithuanian social security system and to define its entirety rather than components in both national and foreign literature. A comprehensive system analysis of the Lithuanian social security system, comparing it to theory and practice of social security in some other countries, forms a methodological basis for this paper. The purpose of the paper is to describe the Lithuanian social policy model in the context of social policy models of European countries. The tasks of the paper include 1) making an overview of formation and implementation of social policy in Lithuania since restoration of its independence and presenting a structure of the social security system; 2) identifying the role of individual political parties in the process of formation of social policy; and 3) defining the peculiarity of the Lithuanian social security system and social policy.

The paper has been written employing the methods of research literature and metaanalysis. In his analysis as well as in making up a list of references pertaining to the problem of modelling of the Lithuanian social policy, the author attempted to lean, to the largest extent possible, upon the literature on social security by Lithuanian authors and foreign authors published in the English language. It should be noted that such publications are still quite scarce for the purposes of a more in-depth analysis of the subject.

Keywords: social policy models, social security, political parties.

The Role of Modelling

The “ideal type” invented by Max Weber is one of the ways of perception, interpretation and forecasting of social reality. By creating and substantiating bureaucracy as the key category of public administration as well as its “ideal type”, Max Weber adapted a theoretical “ideal type” to social practice. These theoretical efforts eventually gave to technical and social sciences an important research tool – modelling, which by itself is the highest achievement of science and criterion of “scientific nature”. Of course, if a model can be verified and falsified, i.e. its correctness can be confirmed or a model can be “scientifically refuted”. Theoretical and practical dispersion of models has lent colour to and formed a basis for many phenomena and facts of social reality of the 20th century. In each social science, a larger or smaller number of modelling methods have been designed. However, at the outset of the 21st century modelling is becoming a luxury for social sciences and the humanities as a result of a turning point in Western civilization, globalisation, rapid pace of life, and demand of quick practical results from science. Less and less social scientists, especially in less developed countries, can afford and have means for social modelling. Indifference of

politicians, global levelling and ideological or cultural assimilation are often made up as excuses, forgetting both theoretical force and potential practical effectiveness of modelling.

Modelling may be applied both to macro and micro qualitative leaps (Paulauskas, 1999, p. 40). In social administration practice of Western countries, such leaps are usually evolutionary/incremental and in no way remind of drastic changes capable of mixing up the whole social system. In Eastern European countries, however, difficulties in social modelling arise due to a distinct transformational nature of these countries' social systems and frequent changes in laws regulating social security and tax policy. The latter are explained by transformational difficulties, frequent change of governments and the EU/NATO integration objectives (Kozminski and Yip (ed), 2000, p. 4-7). Lack of stability in Eastern European legislation pose great difficulties for social scientists in processing material and modelling socio-economic development on its basis.

The Eastern European Social Policy Model and Lithuania

Lithuania, just as other Baltic States, is between West and East, North and South by its geopolitical code and cultural values. Even the geographic centre of Europe is not far from Vilnius, capital of Lithuania. Though occupied by the communist Russia for 50 years, the Baltic States including Lithuania have always belonged to Western culture, forming an outlying part of Western civilisation. In 1990-2002 Lithuania succeeded in restoring a more or less effective market economy and democracy. As the result it became a EU candidate country. A stronger wish to strive for West European social standards on the part of Lithuanian politicians and public administrators had to be a logical sequence. However, the country's social development markedly lagged behind its economic development and also behind the "Visegrad Group" level. In general terms, the social policy model of Lithuania is consistent with the Eastern European model.

The social policy model prevailing in Eastern Europe can be broadly characterised as follows: functioning of compulsory social insurance funds, usually separate from the state budget and functioning on the "pay-as-you-go" principle; minimal benefits often not meeting even the minimum subsistence needs (in Lithuania the average monthly old-age pension is less than EUR 100); no support is provided to "non-merited poor"; the scope of private and church charity is increasing; strengthening of non-government organisations is slow; corporative welfare institutions operate on a hierarchical basis.

Eastern European social insurance funds often suffer from financial deficit, however, in some countries, e g Lithuania in 2001-2002, the deficit of the State Social Insurance Fund budget decreased due to more effective social administration, GDP growth and stabilising demographical situation (though emigration of young people to developed countries continued, the baby boom of the 1980-s increased the supply of labour and there has been a relative drop in the official unemployment rate from 12.9 to 10.7 % in 2002) (*Verslo Žinios*, 12 07 2002). Throughout Eastern Europe, an external pressure from the IMF, WB, WTO and OECD institutions is felt, aimed at creation of liberal welfare states in which market and not-for-profit institutions would be prevalent (Marklund, 1993, p. 112). Nevertheless, internal political support to the creation of such states was not sufficient and opposition against the idea of liberal states was quite strong (results of elections in 2000-2002 in the Czech Republic, Poland and Lithuania). The influence of the EU and ILO upon Eastern European countries manifested itself both in the dissemination of traditional liberal values and propagation of the advantages of Europe's social welfare states (Chandler, 2001, p. 311-314).

The Eastern European social policy model may be defined either as a post-communist conservative-corporate, or liberal model, or as an intermediate between the two types.

On Individualism Opposed to Solidarity and Collectivism in Lithuania

The history of Lithuanian state from the early XIII-th century was implying both opposing to each other tendencies: of centralization and decentralization. For country's centralization the "uniting" ideology of solidarity had a great impact during various, but short periods of Lithuania history. The end of XIX-th century symbolized the formation of "typical" lithuanian mentality which was based on cultural movement. Between the wars these cultural tendencies (development of literature, history science, activities of Kaunas university, Marijampolė gimnasium, Šiauliai "Aušra" museum, etc.) were strengthening further, as with some restrictions this was felt during Soviet years in "attached" capital Vilnius and sea-port Klaipėda too. But in social-economical respect Lithuanian history has almost always shown clear examples of individualism and sometimes even acute individualism. Without historical breaks, as in 1918, 1945-1949 or 1988-1991, there was not felt "normal" collectivist action in Lithuania. Besides aspirations for independence, there were never strong trade-unionist, socialdemocratic, anti-globalist or any other well-known social movement in Lithuania. The collectivism during Soviet time was artificial, put from the "ceiling", it did not reach individual lithuanian heart, it was treated as an enemies tool.

In fact lithuanians always act more individually than collectively. This was the reason why reforms of "free market economy" in Lithuania reached better results than in Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania and Bulgaria in 1990-2003. But why not "social market economy"?

It is necessary to stress that there are many right-wing parties in Lithuania now. The ruling socialdemocrats and social liberals often do not show any left-wing motion. Mass-media is almost always "libertarian". The social-economic discussions in Lithuania are lead by experts from "Lithuanian Free market institute". All assumptions and conclusions of these experts how to organise life in Lithuania are based on the "public choice" and classical economy theories. Almost always they do not take into account any social, cultural or scientific values, parameters and explanations. Experts from "Free market institute" are actively participating in the formation of policy and politics in Lithuania and vigorously "attacking" their few opponents from academic and "social" circles.

Individualistic-liberal model in Lithuania is beginning to dominate even in such disposed to collective – solidaristic action spheres as health and social security, not to talk about more "economic fields". So, the decommodification degree in social security is decreasing with every year and approaching to 20. Such and lower figures of decommodification in social security persist in anglo-saxon world from OECD countries only. Although structurally social security still resembles bismarckian-corporative model of continental Europe, the plan for private pensions funds implementation and increasing privatisation of health services in Lithuania indicate the retreat from solidaristic values in social sphere. Such "liberal" facts in Lithuania show the reasons why Lithuania (and other Baltic states) never have seriously discussed the possibility of implementation of universal social benefits of Scandinavian type. It is necessary to stress that while entering into XXI-st century the architects of Lithuanian social security went to after-Pinochet Chile to study its experience in social security (for creating private pensions funds) but not to Scandinavia. Obligatory private pensions funds in Chile by many right-wing political leaders were given as an example for admiration and success in social sphere (though socialdemocrats decided to implement them only as voluntary). Such tendencies in the political life of present Lithuania emphasize the dominance of North, better to say – South American model of income inequalities and competition, the absence of Asian type collectivism and the not-willingness to follow the best examples of European Welfare States in Benelux and Scandinavia, even taking into account some decline of the present Western Welfare States in Europe and elsewhere in the world. Integration into European Union means more solidaristic and collectivist Western action than it is found in present Lithuania in particular and the Baltic States in general. Globalisation is not always the same as Europeanisation is. The threat of globalisation to national identity in Lithuania is even greater than to other Eastern and Western European countries. And not only because it forms "glocalisation", but also as an obstacle for wise collectivist and solidaristic action. The history of Second Lithuanian republic is a clear indication of that. But

we can not forget a far-reaching Lithuanian solidaristic movement in 1988-1991 which has shown a very high level of collectivist action in the country and was among the uppermost movements of such kind in the world. If to remember, it was organised peacefully in the very difficult historical circumstances opposing the totalitarian regime. Without stronger collectivist or communitarian action in the present-day Lithuania the effective social security is impossible. Even in implementation of the right – wing techniques in social administration such as New Public Management, not to mention the adherence to European Welfare State ideology and practise.

The Lithuanian Social Policy Model

Upon restoration of independence, social policy in the Republic of Lithuania was developed and implemented along two main lines: social security and labour policy.

The social security system consisted of two parts: 1) social insurance and 2) social assistance. Social insurance is a part of the social security system, which is financed out of special contributions and which pays out benefits linked to the contributions; social assistance is a part of the social security system, which provides assistance to residents in cash and in kind including social services (Lithuanian Human Development Report, 2000, p. 59).

The basis for the state social insurance system was laid in 1991; until mid-2002, it functioned on the principles of pension reform of 1994-1995 (Social Insurance in Lithuania, 1999, p. 3). Though principles of universality and solidarity were declared by the authorities, they were only partially implemented in practice. Social insurance was administered in Lithuania by the State Social Insurance Fund Board (subordinate to the Ministry of Social Security and Labour (MSSL) since May 1999), while social support was laid within the competence of MSSL and municipalities.

The enactment of the Law on Pension Funds in 1999 was a very important event in the social security area. The law legitimised a possibility to set up and operate private pension funds and to assume responsibility for pension insurance both by public and private sectors (Social Report 2000, 2001, p. 95-96). However, there were no private pension funds in Lithuania until the middle of 2003, while Poland and Latvia already had such funds. But in autumn of 2003 several private pension funds in Lithuania could not complain about the lack of clients (more than 100 thousand clients have signed the contracts).

The structure of the social security system in mid-2003 is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Structure of social security in Lithuania (in 2002)

Social security			Special benefits
Social insurance	Social assistance		
	Social assistance in cash	Social services	
Pension insurance, sickness and maternity insurance, health insurance, unemployment insurance, insurance against accidents at work and occupational diseases	Social pensions, family benefits, funeral benefits, social benefits, compensations for heating costs, other compensations (transport, communications etc.)	Social care institutions, care homes for the elderly, the disabled, orphans, day care centres, common lodging houses, home care, nursing at home	Presidential pension, national pensions of Degree I and II, pensions for suffered persons, military and officials pensions, scientists pensions, judges pensions, actors' rent

Table 1 shows the importance of centralised social security programmes. However, at the same time MSSL set the task of decentralisation of the social assistance system by reducing the influence of central government and increasing responsibility and competence of local authorities as well as each individual's personal responsibility for his/her own actions. More social services had to be transferred to municipalities and non-governmental sector had to be used more extensively for the development of community social services and

private initiative, with a priority given to support (assistance) and nursing at home rather than to institutional care. This process developed throughout last decade, however, it was not sufficiently rapid (Social Report, 2001, p. 112-113). Services provided by NGOs were more cost-effective because they used voluntary unpaid work and charity money. The Lithuanian Catholic Church was very active in providing care services to elderly people. The role of NGOs was particularly enhanced by adoption of a law (2002) allowing to transfer 2% of income tax to NGO's on a list approved by the Government. In spite of active development of non-governmental sector, the State continued to occupy a dominant position in the provision of institutional care, both according to number of clients and financing. Thus in 1997 the ratio among non-governmental, municipal and public (state) institutional care places for old people was 1:4:6, i.e. one place in a non-governmental, four places in municipal and six places in state institutions (Social Report, 1998, p. 98-99). The ratio did not change much later. Different situation is seen in the area of non-institutional social services: municipalities and NGOs, though hindered by the lack of financing, were main providers of such services.

The state social insurance system and the social assistance system accounted for the largest part of social security in Lithuania. The state social insurance system dominated the state social security system. Approximately 80 % of all social security expenditure was earmarked for social insurance. However, social security expenditure accounted for just 10.9 % of GDP in 1997. Combined with expenditure for health care, in 1997 total social expenditure accounted for 16 % of GDP, whereas in most Western countries and in the "Visegrad Group" countries this figure was two or three times larger (Lazutka, 1999, p. 141).

After 1990-1991, the new Lithuanian social insurance system was designed based on the bismarckian principle of labour-market-linked benefits, for example:

- The size of pension depended on previous pay and work record;
- Sickness benefit was linked to pay;
- Calculation of social benefit was based on the negative income tax. This means that total personal income consisting of pay and social benefit was always larger for those whose pay had been larger;
- The State Social Insurance Fund was financed by contributions deducted from pay;
- The size of child care benefit was larger for insured women than for non-insured women (students).

The establishment of the State Social Insurance Fund separate from the state (national) budget testifies to the fact that social security in Lithuania was based on labour market. Elimination of self-employed persons with low income from the social insurance system (though this approach was abandoned in 1995) also points to the choice of a certain social policy model. Economically active persons receiving low income were not included in the list of persons to be insured on a compulsory basis. Fighting poverty was thus left to social assistance programmes. This was a typical feature of corporative model (Guogis, Bernotas, Ūselis, 2000, p. 136).

In Lithuania, the corporative model was selected rather as an attempt to increase incentives to participate in the labour market rather than to repeat the bismarckian principle or under the influence of labour market partners (trade unions and employers' organisations). Partly, this may also be considered as an effort to abandon equality that was prevalent in Soviet times and to shift to the market and merit-based social security system. However, the "Lithuanian" corporative model was considerably different from the bismarckian models introduced in Germany, Belgium or Luxembourg. The difference lay in clientelism and special state benefits characteristic of models of eastern, Latin American and to some extent southern European countries. It is namely in these countries that clientelist (lobbyist, acquaintance and kinship) ties are most widely spread, with attempts to adapt legislation to narrow clan interests or to circumvent the laws or amend them frequently. In these countries social differentiation and poverty levels are among the highest in the world. At the turn of the century one sees in Lithuania a type of state structure that is characterised by an urging to privatise everything and in full by eliminating or diminishing the role of public sector even in

areas that should be under patronage of the State to a greater extent, such as health care or social security.

Activities of political parties played an important role in the formation of social policy in Lithuania. Though the formation of political parties in this country followed Western principles and ideological platforms tested in the “free world”, the ideology of market fundamentalism combined with the “homo sovieticus” mentality became the main hindrances in their further social activities. Before bismarckian-type structures could take root in the Lithuanian social security and before their non-viability could be proved, the rightist parties started trying to replace the corporative model with the structures of marginal model. Politicians were encouraged to choose such a position by the Lithuanian Free Market Institute propagating market fundamentalism; the LFMI’s representatives wished that the state social insurance system (SoDra) would be gradually replaced with private insurance. Most political parties agreed with such ideology of market fundamentalism and did not dare to dismantle the existing social security structures only for the fear of major social cataclysms (Bernotas, Guogis, 2001, p.154). According to the findings of the study “Lithuanian Political Parties’ Notion of Social Security” conducted before election to the Seimas in 2000, only three marginal parties in Lithuania came out in favour of the universal institutional model of social security. The remaining 17 either did not have any prevailing opinion on this matter, or came out for the liberal marginal model (Guogis, Bernotas, Ūselis, 2000, p. 88). It is interesting to note that all social democratic forces were also among the latter. True, social democrats spoke for the extension of social programmes and stronger role of the State in social security. This shows certain lack of consistency and confusion in the Lithuanian Social Democrats attitudes towards social sphere. After coming to power in 2001 the Social Democratic Party (LSDP) increased transparency in the financial system, achieved execution and over-execution of both state (national) and SoDra’s budgets in terms of collection of taxes, increased the level of residents’ non-taxable income twice, but postponed the introduction of a progressive tax system declared earlier. A waiting tactics was chosen by LSDP in another key leftist-rightist discussion – a discussion over the establishment of private pension funds on compulsory basis and compulsory payment of part of state social insurance payments by young people and causing a deficit of the State Social Insurance Fund. Until autumn of 2002, LSDP had suspended (postponed) a pension reform under which compulsory private pension funds had to be set up, but in September of 2002 it became clear that market fundamentalists in Lithuania will implement their plan of voluntary private pension funds by directing part of contributions to SoDra to private pension funds. Thus SoDra’s deficit will be caused again.

In 1999-2002 only the Liberal Party was a consistently rightist political party in the area of social administration according to all criteria, with a very limited social engagement. The aim of the Lithuanian liberals was to diminish powers of the State in social sphere and develop private social security. Upon losing much of its former influence after the election of 2000, the rightist Lithuanian Central Union raised an issue of lowering pension age in 2002, though all the political forces of the country and MSSL had already agreed on the raising of pension age to 62.5 years for men and to 60 years for women.

Possibilities for a national agreement on the economic, social and cultural development of the country were revealed in mid-2002. Andrius Kubilius, one of the leaders of the Conservative Party, was an initiator of the agreement. The agreement was supported by the largest rightist and leftist parties: the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the Social-Liberal and the Social Democratic Party. Eradication of social exclusion and poverty had to become one of the five priority lines of development of the country. Other lines, though indirectly, were also connected with the social sphere: reform of government (social administration) and adaptation of the system of education/science to modern competitive environment (e.g. improvement of public administration, social work and other programmes). Abandonment of special, supplementary state pensions granted to certain social groups should have been, theoretically, closest to the items of the national agreement, since all the parties had publicly expressed their negative position on special state pensions. However, in 2002 this still

remains just a theoretical possibility. Meanwhile, the number of recipients of state pensions has grown further after judges were added. One may only suppose that, if the political parties had reached agreement on basic social security issues in 1990-2002, such huge SoDra's deficit would not have arisen, the problems of persons requiring social support would have been solved more effectively, and social exclusion and marginalisation would have decreased instead of increasing.

Public mood and attitudes prevailing in Lithuania exerted certain influence upon such behaviour of political parties. One may note either a wish to return to the safety and foreseeable future of the real socialism, or expectations to create "pure capitalism" in the form seen in North America. Though, geographically and culturally, West Europe is closer to Eastern Europe (e.g. Nordic countries and Estonia), their ties in the area of social security are weak. For example, though the influence of Nordic capital has increased in Lithuania during the 12 years of independence, in banking, trading and telecommunications in particular, almost no followers of the universal social policy of the Nordic model are seen among Lithuanian politicians and social administrators. People responsible for social administration in Lithuania "migrated both ideologically and practically" between the bismarckian corporative and the liberal marginal model – in substance, between a state social insurance system (with certain parts of social assistance and special state pensions) and private social insurance. There has been virtually no progress in the area of universal benefits during the twelve-year period. Social problems in modern Lithuania and Eastern Europe are markedly different both from the traditional welfare state, which is characterised by standard forms of social services' provision, and from the post-modern needs structure of the OECD countries.

Nevertheless, Lithuania made considerable efforts in the area of EU pre-accession and cooperation with the European Council. In 1999 Lithuania ratified temporary European agreements concerning old-age, disability, loss of bread winner and other parts of social security systems. Earlier, in 1997, Lithuania signed the European Social Charter, and ratified it in 2001. The European Union granted to the candidate countries considerable aid by financing social projects under Phare, Cost and other programmes. Though Euro-integration is generally considered desirable, its potential social consequences for Lithuania have almost not been studied and are quite vague. One may suppose that the lack of analysis of consequences of social Euro-integration results from the EU bureaucrats' reserved approach towards equalisation of national social security systems, leaving key social policy issues to national competence and jurisdiction. In other areas such as movement of capital, security of borders or even agriculture, the EU influence over Eastern European integration projects is much more tangible than in social policy and social security. The EU Member States include several Nordic countries and the Netherlands, whose universal measures in the social security area could be a sound support for social reformers in Eastern Europe and Lithuania. And though lately the importance of universal benefits in the Nordic countries has somehow decreased, other West European countries have made marked progress in this area. In some cases they have even caught up with their northern neighbours. Generally speaking, today nobody is seriously intending to change the European welfare systems and their foundations. Eastern Europe's orientation towards systems based on such values would be a humane step in line with the interests of social risk groups. Though the Lithuanian social security system in 1990-2002 was based on social security of bismarckian type (SoDra), low level of benefits in the area of social assistance and protectionist nature of special state benefits suggests that social security of bismarckian and clientelist type was created in Lithuania, which had no place for universal pensions and other benefits, i.e. it lacks the first-stage pension system, where all citizens of a country, even those who did not participate in the labour market, are entitled to pension. The combination of the corporative and clientelist models in the social security systems consists of a social insurance system based on current payments (SoDra), privileges for individual groups achieved by clientelist/protectionist methods of pressure upon politicians, and a system of special state benefits. This is an infringement of principles of social justice, openness and transparency in the State.

There have been proposals for a transition to “compulsory private pensions” in Lithuania, where the second-stage state social insurance system is still not strong enough and where the first-stage universal pension system, which would include persons without sufficient service record, i.e. most vulnerable persons, is lacking altogether.

Conclusions

Generally speaking, the social policy model of Lithuania is consistent with the Eastern European model (except for some countries). The Eastern European social policy model can be defined as either post-communist conservative/corporative, or liberal, or a one intermediate between these two models. However, the Lithuanian model has some specific features.

After the restoration of independence, social policy in the Republic of Lithuania developed along the two main lines: formation and implementation of social security and labour policy.

The social security system consisted of two parts: 1) social insurance and 2) social assistance. Though principles of universality and solidarity were declared by the authorities, they were only partially implemented in practice. A task of decentralisation of the social support system was advanced.

After 1990-1991, the new Lithuanian social security system was designed on the bismarckian principle of labour market linked benefits, e.g.:

- The size of pension depended on previous pay and work record;
- Sickness benefit was linked to pay;
- Calculation of social benefit was based on the negative income tax. This means that total personal income consisting of pay and social benefit was always larger for those whose pay had been larger;
- The State Social Insurance Fund was financed by contributions deducted from pay;
- The size of child care benefit was larger for insured women than for non-insured women students.

The establishment of a state social insurance fund separate from the state (national) budget testifies to the fact that social security in Lithuania was based on labour market. The objective of fighting poverty was left to social assistance programmes. This was typical of a corporative model.

However, the “Lithuanian” corporative model differed considerably from bismarckian models adopted in Germany, Belgium or Luxembourg. The difference layed in clientelism and special state benefits characteristic of models of Eastern and Southern European and Latin American countries.

Social administrators in Lithuania refused to adopt a universal model of the Nordic social policy. They “migrated both ideologically and practically” between the bismarckian corporative and the liberal marginal models.

Social security of corporative/clientelist type was created in Lithuania, which had no place for universal pensions and other benefits, i.e. it lacks the first-stage pension system, where all citizens of a country, even those who did not participate in the labour market, are entitled to social benefits.

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APIE LIETUVOS SOCIALINĖS POLITIKOS MODELĮ IR JAM ĮTAKOS TURINČIUS VEIKSNIUS

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Santrauka

Straipsnio tikslas – apibūdinti Lietuvos socialinės politikos modelį Europos šalių socialinės politikos modelių kontekste. Pirmoje straipsnio dalyje Lietuvos socialinės politikos modelis apibūdinamas kaip tarpinis tarp konservatyvaus – korporatyvinio ir liberaliojo modelių. Daug dėmesio straipsnyje skiriama socialinės politikos formavimo ir diegimo Lietuvoje nepriklausomybės laikotarpiu apžvalgai, pateikiama socialinės apsaugos sistemos struktūra bei išryškintas atskirų politinių partijų vaidmuo socialinės politikos formavimo procese. Atlikdamas trumpą lyginamąją analizę autorius prieina prie išvados, jog Lietuvos korporatyvinis modelis skiriasi nuo daugelio Vakarų ir Šiaurės Europos šalių modelių. Kai kuriais skirtumais (klientelizmu, specialiomis papildomomis valstybinėmis išmokomis) jis artimas kai kurių Rytų Europos ar net Pietų Europos, taip pat Lotynų Amerikos valstybių modeliams.

Pagrindinės sąvokos: socialinės politikos modeliai, socialinė apsauga, politinės partijos