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SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES IN STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL INHERITANCE OF INEQUALITIES

In the article I would like to extend some of the points raised above in the contribution by T. Drabowicz. My intention is to indicate some differences in perception of intergenerational inheritance of inequalities (IIOFI) as revealed on a basis of reports elaborated by national research teams of the PROFIT project and create a typology of the ways local stakeholders think about IIOFI. Therefore, firstly, the general perceptions and conceptualizations concerning the problem of IIOFI, its scope and anticipated prospects for the future will be analyzed. Secondly, I will concentrate on the local stakeholders' views on the causes of the problem, attached to the macro, meso and micro level. Focus will be put on the perceived significance of the family of origin and ways of conceptualizing the problem. Subsequently, I will concentrate on the evaluation of the undertaken activities, obstacles and assessment of the three policies: educational, labour market and welfare. Finally, typology will be created.

GENERAL CONCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM OF IIOFI

Analyses revealed similarity in respondents' opinions that intergenerational transmission of inequalities presents a challenge in the towns under scrutiny. The problem was encountered in and through the professional duties of the informants as well as in daily observations of the social situation. Respondents' views were based on their subjective perceptions, not on the objective estimation of the level or structure of the IIOFI. No direct records concerning the problem of inequalities transmission are available; nevertheless, according to the subjective assessments

the problem not only exists but also increases, similarly in post-socialist, as well as in the western countries. The pessimistic view is generally prevalent among local actors. However, this conclusion is based on the different premises and sets of reasons. In the post-socialist countries this claim is generally connected with the phenomena that are results of the transformation, like structural unemployment, polarization and impoverishment of the large part of the societies. In the western countries, apart from structural determinants like closing traditional industries (Loughborough/UK, Giessen/CE, Pori/FI) the growth of the problem was also associated with 'post-modern' phenomenon: changes in the family relations, tenuous social bonds and new forms of addictions (Internet) (Pori/FI, Rovigo/IT, Giessen/DE).

Ilofi is generally perceived as a multidimensional problem. However, it is mainly associated with the transmission of poverty. Material deprivation is regarded as the most important aspect of the phenomenon, and usually as a base of other ones. Other disadvantages transferred from generation to generation are mainly: low education level, unemployment, poor housing, and poor social relations and networks. These different aspects are strongly connected with each other and it is impossible to specify casual relationships between them. Accumulation of the above mentioned social predicaments in the family highly increases the risk of the transmission of the low social status and lessens children's chances of getting out of the vicious circle. It is worth mentioning that according to the local stakeholders accumulation of the multidimensional social problems is prevalent. To the problems already well known to social workers, new ones are added: problems in family relations, sense of loneliness, depressions, substance abuse, over-indebtedness, Internet addiction.

PERCEIVED CAUSES OF ILOFI

In the post-socialist countries **macrostructural** reasons are associated with the socio-economic transformation. Such phenomenon like mass unemployment and poverty, directly impacting Ilofi, has been a substantial problem since the transformation started. The change of social and political order with *its guiding principles being restructuring, de-industrialization and neo-liberalism* [Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Rokicka, Rek, et al. 2006] resulted in profound changes and contributed to the polarization and pauperization of the significant part of societies.

In the western countries under study macrostructural causes were not mentioned as often as in the post-socialist ones. However, participants referred to the declining provision of the welfare states (Germany), and more often to the non-efficient educational, labour market and welfare policies.

Local stakeholders very frequently referred to the **situation in their towns and regions**, especially that the main selection principle was the deprivation of the city. In three out of four post-socialist countries difficult situation in the city was associated with the collapse of industrial monocultures. In Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL, Pernik/BG and Jonava/LT after closing of the main factories mass and long-term unemployment occurred. The shift from industrial to post industrial society was reported in Pori/FI, Rovigo/IT, Loughborough/UK. Those cities changed their profile into 'service' or hi-tech industry, creating narrow range of employment possibilities requiring specific skills. Even though new employers appeared, skills and professional experience of the unemployed do not match the new labour market demand.

Local stakeholders pointed most frequently to the **microstructural** causes of transmission of the social inequalities as the most important factors. Patterns of behaviour, attitudes and life aspirations, value orientation of the family were regarded as factors determining life chances of the young generations. Approaches characterized by inactivity, lack of motivation and work ethos, apathy were most frequently mentioned as those hampering upward social mobility of the offspring. Those circumstances are well known in the literature as 'culture of poverty' and 'welfare dependency'. However, as it was pointed out (Pori/FI, Giessen/DE), that this kind of behaviours and life orientations are usually results of long-term unemployment, and subsequently sense of social exclusion, lack of the self-esteem, and sometimes even depression or other psychological disorders. Another aspect of the microstructural basis of intergenerational transmission of inequalities is connected with the relations among family members, family instability and weakening of the social bonds. Divorces and reconstruction of families can have very negative impact on children: not only on their emotional well-being, but also on their material situation. In the post-socialist countries (apart from Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL), consequences of the parents' necessity to dedicate to their work were often mentioned. Parents have to spend more and more time outside home in order to earn a living and provide decent material conditions, which affects children. Lack of attention and recognition can result in behavioural and educational problems. The development of capitalism posed new challenges in this respect. Employees are expected to be more committed to

their professional careers because of the precarious working conditions and the fear of losing job. What is more, low salaries force people to look for additional sources of income, often additional working place, what impacts family life.

PARENTS CIRCUMSTANCES AND CHILDHOOD AS A CRITICAL PERIOD

According to G. Esping-Andersen *the mainspring of people's life chances lie in the family conditions in their childhood. And, once adult, it is the household that gives meaning to the unfolding individual life course. It is here that social advantage and disadvantage are transmitted and activated; it is here that social risks and needs find primary expression; and it is also here that the primary social safety net is found* [Esping-Andersen 2002: 29]. Opinions of the local stakeholders are similar; they generally do think that family conditions and parents' circumstances are crucial. What is more, the local stakeholders perceive childhood as the critical period in the process of the transmission of inequalities, and while conceptualizing the problem of Ilofi they most often referred to children living in poverty and devoid of appropriate developmental conditions.

Poverty is perceived as a basic problem, especially that *the coincidence of household and child poverty is high* [ibid: 35]. According to the local stakeholders children suffering from disadvantage and social exclusion are likely to reproduce their predicament in the future. Nowadays, it is likely that young families will be mostly threaten by the inequalities because in many societies it is young adults who are strongly affected by unemployment, precariousness of employment, eroding wage levels, and at the same time they are supposed to establish families of procreation.

The income poverty in early childhood can have manifold consequences; it affects health, mental and physical development, and it causes setbacks that cannot be easily make up for in the future. According to G. Esping-Andersen, another factor of crucial importance is 'developmental priming mechanism'. That covers the way of bringing up, providing social stimuli, creative time spending with a child, and education. Underprivileged families are likely to fall short in providing appropriate material conditions, creating opportunities of the proper health development as well as 'developmental priming mechanism'. This way of conceptualizing the problem was to some extent presented by the local stakeholders. However, their opinions of how to deal and assess the situation differ significantly.

In Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL, Pernik/BG and Jonava/LT, generally parents were blamed for their deliberate behaviours and attitudes: lack of activity, indifference and transmission of negative behavioural pattern (like stealing) and value orientations. It was perceived as the most important factor affecting children. Local actors, especially frontliners, pointed to the extreme cases (i.e. deliberate actions in order to send a child to the school for retarded children, just to get higher benefit, or encouraging youngsters to stealing). It indicates 'blaming' attitude of the frontliners and can serve as an excuse that in cases like above mentioned nothing can be done.

Deliberate neglecting of children's needs and improper or no care about their development, were not the only aspects of the problem. Lack of parenting skills and knowledge of how to deal with a child were more often mentioned (Giessen/DE, Rovigo/IT, Pernik/BG, Jonava/LT, Parnu/EE). It was indicated that parents should be *trained how to socialize, how to be more responsible as a parent* [Kasearu, Trumm 2006: 50] which proves that there is a necessity for working out some practical solutions in this respect. Also significance of cooperation and closer relations between parents and educational institutions like kindergarten or school was underlined.

GROUPS AT RISK

It was relatively easy for the local stakeholders to indicate groups mostly endangered the most by the transmission of inequalities. They differ according to the specificity of the town or country; however, some of them were mentioned in each focus group. In most cases participants referred to **the unemployed**. Unemployment, according to the participants of the focus group interviews, is tightly connected with other social problems. Long lasting difficulties on the labour market and material deprivation highly predispose people to the risks of social exclusion and psychological problems like lack of self-confidence and self-esteem? Accumulation of the disadvantages is likely to be transmitted; however the main emphasis was put on the situation on the labour market.

Participants frequently pointed to **the immigrants and ethnic minorities**. Those groups are highly endangered by the transmission of the low social status. Actually, they are not mentioned only in Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL and Jonava/LT.

The detailed information concerning vulnerable groups that were indicated by the local stakeholders can be found in the table below.

TABLE 1. Local stakeholders' perception of groups at risk of Hfifl

	Unemployed	Immigrants/ ethnic minorities	Sick and disabled	Addicted	Disrupted, single parent families	Other
Tomaszów Mazowiecki /PL	+		+	+		Poor, poorly educated
Giessen/DE	+ (esp. young)	+ (esp. Turks)			+	Multi children families
Pernik/BG	+	+	+			
Parnu/EE	+	+ (Russians)		+	+	
Rovigo/IT	+	+	+	+		Poorly educated, young people
Loughborough /UK		+				Youth
Pori/FI	+ (long-term)	+		+	+	
Jonava/LT	+		+			Former prisoners, foster children

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

The importance of the education for the individuals endangered by the inheritance of the low social status is not to be overestimated. However, it can have a two-way effect on the outcomes of the person; on the one hand it can significantly contribute to achieving higher social position and at the same time cutting of the chain of reproduction of the low social status, but on the other hand, if non-effective, it can petrify the status quo and reinforce inequality cycle. No matter what the country of origin of the stakeholders was, they emphasized the key role of the education system, nevertheless evaluations of its activity and efficacy differed to a high extent. Also the ideas concerning formulated postulates that

should or could be implemented in order to improve effectiveness of the system were formulated on different levels of generality.

Only the Finnish stakeholders were content with the educational system and its possibilities concerning equalizing the life chances of children; their claim is well documented in research like PISA study [OECD: 2004]. In other towns stakeholders were not optimistic as far as educational systems are concerned. However, their suggestions were rather general; especially in the post-socialist countries they were limited to statements like 'changes are necessary'. In those countries also the problems of underinvestment of schools and the need for material help for students were raised as the most important ones. In Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL and Pernik/BG one of the most expected measures was the extension of the scholarship system. In Loughborough/UK and Rovigo/IT more attention was paid to the attitude of teachers towards students (need for more individualistic approach) and necessity of the modernization of the curricula that would be better adjusted to the challenges posed by the modern world. In those countries also the importance of the life-long learning was underlined and perceived as a measure that can contribute to the counteracting unemployment. German educational system was criticized by the local stakeholders as selective and failing in equalizing opportunities for children from underprivileged families. Introduction and development of *all-day schools* were suggested as important measures, especially as solutions and significant support for single mother families.

Apart from the above mentioned general remarks the discussion in most cases concerned two aspects: pre-school education and vocational training, both perceived as crucial in counteracting transmission of the inequalities.

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

According to G. Esping-Andersen the best way of compensation is to provide *universal, high-quality day care* [ibid.] It can be stated that the majority of stakeholders realize the importance of the pre-school education and the preventive role that it can play in the life course of children from disadvantaged families. However, only in few cases it was discussed in details. In the Finnish system care for children in the pre-school age belongs to the welfare system, is well developed and complex. The main concern of the stakeholders from Pori is to keep up the standards in the basic welfare contribution.

In Polish and German discussions a lot of attention was put on the necessity of increasing the availability of kindergartens for the children from poor families.

It can be achieved by reducing/abolishing the fees for the families that are not able to afford them, and, what is equally important, by convincing parents how significant and profitable it can be for their offspring. It was emphasized that in Giessen/DE a special attention should be directed towards single parents and immigrant background families

VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Suggestions of the local stakeholders in this respect concerned two aspects: better adjustment of the offer to the labour market demand and further development, or reinforcement, of the system. These issues were raised in the western countries. The main complaint concerned the inability of vocational training schemes to prepare students for modern occupations and rapidly changing industry. Insufficient number of vocational training places was perceived as the main problem in Giessen/DE.

As far as the post-socialist countries are concerned the issue was raised only in Pernik/BG. The vocational schools should be reformed to match the 'new' conditions of the Bulgarian economy. The basic problem is that they were not modernized and still teach skills that are no longer useful; they need re-orientation in-line with the demand of the local labour market.

LABOUR MARKET

In the majority of the discussions unemployment was mentioned as the most severe problem that contributes to the intergenerational transmission of inequalities, however proportionally much less attention was put to the labour market measures and solutions. Even though the problem of the unemployment is very serious in the post-socialist countries, the suggestions concerning this field are again very general, e.g. *to facilitate the reintegration of the unemployed on the labour market*. It can be assumed that in the local stakeholders' opinions it is the responsibility of the central government to solve the problem of unemployment.

The issues raised during discussions in the western countries were more specific, connected with the particular specific problems that are most serious there. They concerned counteracting precariousness of the employment, facilitation of entering the labour market, improvement of the immigrants' situation, adjusting the offer of educational institutions to the labour market demand.

WELFARE

The provision of the welfare services was often the subject of a discussion, but not always directly. The conclusions of the efficacy of the welfare system can be drawn while analyzing the solutions suggested as a reaction for the vignette. In countries with well developed welfare system the main concerns are connected with keeping up the standards and maintaining the provision of services on the high level (Finland) or coming back to the previous solutions that were changed (Germany). In the post-socialist countries (excluding the case of Parnu/EE, where participants were content with the institutional support) it was stated that more can be achieved by informal activities and solutions. Often only institutional support that stakeholders were able to offer comprised social benefit and standard actions, which as they claimed are significantly limited due to underfinancing. It can be stated that welfare system in post-socialist countries is not fully shaped yet, too stiff and burdened with activities from behind its particular domain [Hryniewicz 2004]. It was pointed out that NGOs are more effective and able to offer broader range of solutions to deal with the problem of IIofI. However, it was underlined that the third sector needs to be further developed and gain more 'public trust'. It has not achieved the position, independence and recognition that are attached to the NGOs in the western countries yet.

In the western countries, reproofs concerned the cooperation with the third sector based on the project agreement; lack of continuity of even well-functioning and effective initiatives was perceived as the main problem.

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The networking and building social capital was perceived as an effective strategy. Necessity of better cooperation between public sector and NGOs was underlined both in western and post-socialist countries. Another recommendation common for the lion share of the local stakeholders was improvement of collaboration and networking between local actors (like: social workers, labour offices, school, NGOs), as well as establishing better relations between institutions and families or individuals that need assistance. The interesting difference in this respect can be noticed between postulates from Pori/FI and on the other side Pernik/BG, Jonava/LT nad Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL. Whereas in the former case the need for more frequent and personal relations was pointed, in the post-socialist countries it is mainly the matter of possibility of formalization and institutionalization of the communication and networking that already exist on the informal level.

What is more, creation of long-term strategies and far-reaching planning were seen as necessary in order to counteract Ilofi effectively. Even though it was similarly often mentioned in the western and in the post-socialist countries, this claim was caused by different kind of problems. In the former case (and in Estonia) it was connected with the limited duration of initiatives and projects; in the latter it concerned the lack of long-term strategies of solving social problems in the cities. Participants of the focus groups shared the opinion that such strategies should be based on the diagnosis of situation in the town and focused on designing adequate and efficient social policies on the local level. The only case where reliable and detailed data are available is Loughborough/UK, but even there they are not properly used in solving social problems.

Local stakeholders recognized the importance of early intervention and preventive measures but their recommendations in this respect were rather general; only in Pori/FI and Giessen/DE specific solutions were presented. In Pori/FI, Giessen/DE and Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL the importance of the pre-school education was emphasized.

As it was mentioned above, the local stakeholders complained about fragmentation of the undertaken activities and widely postulated the necessity of implementation of the holistic approach towards disadvantaged people, comprising tailored actions dealing with the multitude of problems that are directed towards the whole family as well as individuals.

APPROACH TO THE TYPOLOGY CREATING

This part of the article is an attempt to create a typology. In order to analyze opinions of the respondents from this angle three questions have been set:

1. what kind of reasons are stressed; in other words what/who is generally blamed for the existing inequalities and the process of its reproduction?
2. who generally is/should be responsible for counteracting Ilofi?
3. what are the most effective measures of preventing the further reproduction of social inequalities/poverty?

Analyses revealed that perception of the causes of the inequalities' reproduction can be a main axis that let us arrange and create sets of opinions, and therefore became the key to further analysis.

As it was mentioned before in majority of the discussions factors from macro, meso and micro level were mentioned as causes of reproduction of inequalities; however, in particular towns, accents were differently put on them. Some kind of continuum of the views expressed by the participants of the focus group dis-

cussions can be created, from: those who 'blame' the poor for their own fate to those who concentrate on the structural or systemic conditionings.

The former stand is characteristic for the stakeholders from towns located in the post-socialist countries, excluding Pernik/BG. Even though phenomena resulted from transformation were mentioned as highly affecting the situation of the poor and disadvantaged, nevertheless according to the participants some people *create this kind of life by themselves* [LT]. Especially in Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL it was commonly believed that *poverty, impoverishment and social exclusion (as well as their inheritance from generation to generation) are the results of definite mental (pre)dispositions, like "learned hopelessness" of individuals who bear sole responsibility for their lives [...]* [Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Rokicka et al. 2006]. In Jonava/LT and Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL the 'blaming' approach prevails, 'transformation losers' who cannot cope with the new socio-economic conditions are very often burdened with the responsibility for their predicament. Also according to the stakeholders from Parnu/EE *the risk of (HofI) is related more to personal characteristics (like value orientation, learning and work motivation, number and type of social networks, social skills and abilities, etc.)* However, in the former case it does not have 'blaming connotations', as it is result of the conviction that an individual should be responsible for him/herself and the family, and as it was stated by Kasearu, Trumm [2006] *it represents political ideology* and individualistic life-orientation of the local actors. The second axis to contemplate the investigated problem is to whom the responsibility for counteracting of HofI is attached. It is far resulting from the first one; however not in every case the opinions concerning what the causes are and who is/should be responsible for counteracting the replication of inequalities are fully convergent. As far as stakeholders from Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL are concerned their 'blaming attitude' is revealed also in this respect. They believe that there is hardly any possibility of breaking the cycle of transmission of inequalities in the nearest future because of the reluctance of the disadvantaged groups to change the course of their lives. As a consequence they think that not much can be done unless the disadvantaged people change their attitudes. In other words it can be stated that the underprivileged ought to do something with their lives and they should take an action to change their fate. Individualistic approach to the problem of HofI represented by the stakeholders from Parnu/EE and Jonava/LT is also clearly revealed while exploring the issue of responsibility. People trapped by poverty and low social position should show the initiative by themselves, 'make the first step'. The suggested actions can be described by the label 'give someone a rod, not a fish'. That kind of actions can be perceived as a preventive measure

against 'welfare dependency', 'demand-driven attitude', which are often ascribed by the local stakeholders to the groups affected by disadvantages.

Another division line between Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Jonava on the one side and Parnu on the other can be drawn if one takes into account the assessment of actions undertaken to prevent/alleviate poverty. In the former case the negative assessment of undertaken actions prevails both on the local and the state level. Measures and activities are criticized as ineffective and insufficient. On the contrary stakeholders in Parnu are content with the institutional support that is on offer in their town which is considered appropriate and holistic, comprising of the range of activities well serving local needs.

Opinions of the stakeholders from Pori and Rovigo can be located in the middle of the continuum - poverty and other social problems are perceived as stemming from external situation: unemployment, illness, disability, etc., that happens to a particular person. The plight of individuals is seen as a coincidence of factors resulting from macro level, but affecting particular person. Even though it was possible to discern similar patterns of thinking about the causes of inequalities transmission in the opinions of the stakeholders from Pori and Rovigo, the views concerning who should deal with the problem, desirable range of activities and the assessment of existing measures differ significantly. Attitude of local actors from Rovigo in this respect resembles the one presented in the former set of cities. Main stress is put on the activity and initiatives of individuals, however the support of the 'social networks' is also perceived as very important. Interestingly, the male breadwinner model is deeply rooted in the way of thinking; father is the one who bears responsibility for the family well-being. Public institutions should promote activity, i.e. entrepreneurship and benefits should be followed by re-training, as achieving independence from the state support is crucial. At the same time existing measures are assessed as being ineffective, especially because of time-limited project-based funding and fragmentation. Finnish stakeholders represent completely opposite approach: *participants seem to be fairly convinced of the goodness of such a comprehensive and normalizing approach: if there were no limitations of resources, the municipal 'system of care and guidance' should rather operate on womb-to-tomb basis and never stop intervening into families' lives, because only this way it is able to catch up everyone, who appears to be dropping out of the system and to prevent her/him from being a socially excluded* [Naumanen 2006]. This way of thinking and the scope of postulated social support are well described by the quotation: *Some FGI participants suggested that for each disadvantaged family there should be one designated worker (e.g. social worker) acting as a support person to whom the family could trust their affairs*

[Naumanen 2006]. Assessment of the existing measures is positive; the main concern is to maintain the provision of the welfare state. The participants of the discussion emphasize the importance of the preventive measures meaning mainly high-standard universal day-care and effective educational system equalizing the opportunities and preventing drop-outs.

According to the stakeholders from Pernik/BG the reasons for the inequalities and its reproduction are mixed; however the main emphasis is put on structural determinants, mass unemployment and impoverishment resulting from transformation. Nevertheless, the causes related to the micro level like attitudes, system of values and motivation are also regarded as important. In Pernik/BG two distinct streams were presented, convergent with conceptualization of causes of inequalities transmission. According to the stakeholders the successful solution of the problem of Ilofi is connected with the improvement of the standing of the national and local economy. Alternatively it is believed that the normative system, attitudes of the individuals and in some cases the way of bringing up children should be changed. So it can be assumed that the responsibility for counteracting Ilofi is attached both to the authorities and stakeholders as well as to the individuals, who should find 'inner-strength' and motivation. At the same time participants are dissatisfied with the existing institutional support system, described as too limited, underfinanced and ineffective.

The continuum ends with Loughborough/UK and Giessen/DE, where the attention is put on systemic or political solutions. Stakeholders in Loughborough/UK referred also to parents circumstances, behaviours and attitudes connected with the so called 'culture of poverty', but political/ideological solutions were mostly blamed: *the nature of New Labour's benefit system with its emphasis on self-help, on opportunities 'to be grabbed' rather than the redistribution of resources, is punitive in that it disables the 'weakest' in society. In other words, the focus on individual responsibility ignores structural constraints and pathologizes poverty. This results in a rise in inequality, which more than poverty, plagues British society* [Leamon, Kokoroskou 2006]. According to the opinions from Giessen DE, plight of some groups and reproduction of inequalities is due to (...) *the increasing competitive struggle under the conditions of unfettered forces and structures of the current phase of capitalism. These conditions are getting stronger and lead to an elbowing society, in which everybody is aware of how quickly he or she might fall into deprivation. Solidarity between different individuals and groups is eroding, because people only seek their own advantages on the costs of others. Often politicians and parts of the society stigmatize long-term unemployed and stress an explanation for their misery by making actors out of*

victims. *They want the public opinion to accept that unemployment is the fault and in the responsibility of the unemployed themselves* [Eissel, Ludwig 2006]. The systemic solutions were assessed as unsuccessful and even contributing to the reproduction of inequalities (for example: 'selective' education system in Germany, too complicated benefit system in the UK). The opinions of the stakeholders from Loughborough and Giessen are similar in many respects: in both cases a lot of attention is put to education system and spatial dimension of inequalities. Using the expression from the British report education is perceived as 'a panacea' for the inheritance of the social inequalities; its crucial role is connected with equalizing chances and making up for the disadvantage of the children from underprivileged environments. In both towns though, the current educational system was criticized as failing to achieve these goals. According to the stakeholders some direct actions in the deprived parts of the cities are necessary and the concentration of the severe social problems in particular wards and formation of the pockets of poverty poses a challenge to the local authorities. In Giessen it was emphasized that empowerment and ensuring the social participation can be an effective solution. These ways of conceptualizing the problem and its solution indicates that according to the participants from Giessen and Loughborough the main responsibility for counteracting the problem of Ilofl is attached to authorities from different levels.

CONCLUSIONS

Analysis let to distinguish clusters of towns according to the above mentioned criteria however the opinions of the stakeholders are not fully convergent inside them.

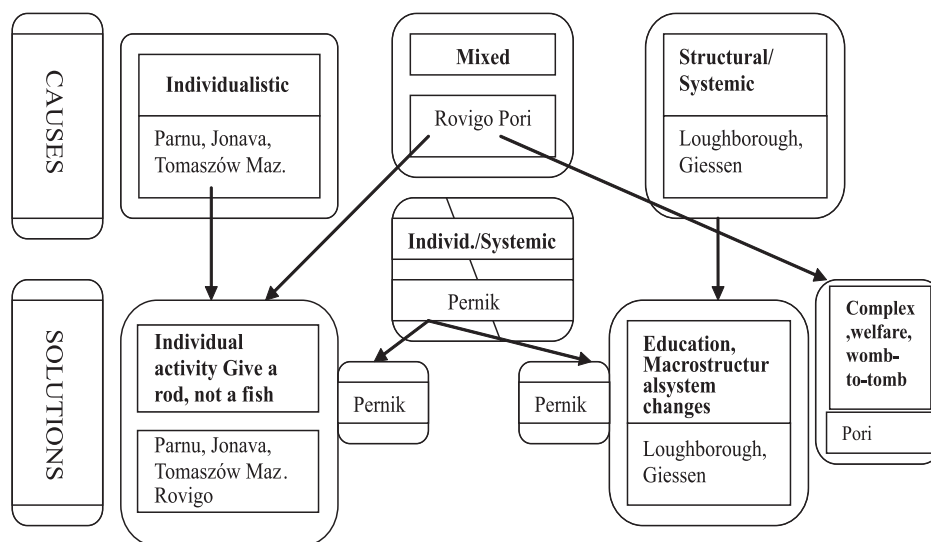
At first glance opinions expressed by the stakeholders from Jonava/LT, Tomaszów Mazowiecki/PL and Parnu/EE are similar. The individualistic approach towards the problem prevails. Causes of the problem are attached mainly to the attitudes, normative systems, demotivation, indifference, etc. of the particular persons and they are perceived as the main reason for the problem. Activity, 'first step', change of a lifestyle are expected from the disadvantaged groups as prerequisite for counteracting Ilofl. Postulated approach can be described as 'give the rod, not a fish'. However, in the two former cities it has strong 'blaming' connotations.

The second cluster, comprising Pori/FI, Rovigo/IT and Pernik/BG, is internally differentiated. Views of the stakeholders from Pernik/BG are classified in the middle, because of combining micro and macro level causes of the problem and its solutions. The individualistic, even sometimes 'blaming' attitude goes hand in hand with the purely structural, systemic way of thinking. Even though

the views expressed by the participants in Pori/FI and Rovigo/IT concerning the causes, mainly as coincidence of the external consequences happening to the individual, are similar, the approaches towards the responsibility and the measures of counteracting Ilofl present opposite way of thinking. In the case of Rovigo it can be described as neoliberal and individualistic, whereas Finnish stakeholders postulate full welfare provision on the 'womb-to-tomb' basis.

Opinions of the stakeholders from Loughborough/UK and Giessen/DE seem to be similar in the given aspects. Structural/systemic way of thinking prevails, in conceptualization of the causes of the problem, solutions, as well as with regard to responsibility for counteracting the problem of Ilofl. Education is believed to be crucial in dealing with inequalities. Spatial dimension of the social inequalities is emphasized, which also find its expression in the suggested measures.

DIAGRAM 1. Perception of the causes and solutions of Ilofl by the local stakeholders



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SIMILARITIES AND DISSIMILARITIES IN STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTION OF INTERGENERATIONAL INHERITANCE OF INEQUALITIES

(Summary)

Decentralization of public administration, subsidiarity and delegation of considerable set of tasks (traditionally belonging to public administration) to organizations of the non-governmental sector are tendencies prevailing in most European countries and intensively promoted by the European Union as effective and socially beneficial solutions. Attitudes and actions taken by the stakeholders, active at various levels of local administration, are decisive for implementation and realization of the above mentioned recommendations.

The article is based on results of focus group interviews carried out in eight towns selected for the purposes of the PROFIT project. Applying the comparative perspective and referring to the phenomenon of inheritance of social inequalities, the author discusses viewpoints of people responsible for creation and realization of social policy at the local level.

PODOBIENSTWA I RÓŻNICE W POSTRZEGANIU DZIEDZICZENIA NIERÓWNOŚCI SPOŁECZNYCH PRZEZ AKTORÓW SPOŁECZNYCH W OŚMIU MIASTACH EUROPEJSKICH

(Streszczenie)

Decentralizacja administracji publicznej, subsydiarność oraz delegowanie znacznej części zadań tradycyjnie przynależnych administracji państwowej do organizacji sektora pozarządowego to zjawiska obecne w większości krajów europejskich, mocno promowane przez Unię Europejską jako rozwiązania skuteczne i korzystne społecznie. Decydujące znaczenie dla wprowadzania i realizacji tych zaleceń mają postawy i działania interesariuszy (*stakeholders*) aktywnych na poziomie różnych szczebli administracji lokalnej.