

II. CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Information for citation:

Aristov E. V. Obshchestvennye blaga: kontseptsia i konstitucionno-pravovaya kharakteristika [Social Welfare: Concept and Constitutional Legal Characteristics]. *Vestnik Permskogo Universiteta. Juridicheskie Nauki* – Perm University Herald. Juridical Sciences. 2016. Issue 32. Pp. 149–157. (In Russ.). DOI: 10.17072/1995-4190-2016-32-149-157.

UDC 330.123.1:342

DOI: 10.17072/1995-4190-2016-32-149-157

SOCIAL WELFARE: CONCEPT AND CONSTITUTIONAL LEGAL CHARACTERISTICS

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Introduction: the article is devoted to the scientific discussion about the volume of the notion of social welfare as part of the state's constitutional legitimacy principle. **Purpose:** to research different doctrinal approaches to the definition of the social welfare notion in its direct connection with the category of the social state, to define its types and principal parameters of existence. **Methods:** the methodological framework of the research is based on the universal dialectical method of scientific cognition and a complex of general scientific methods (systematicity, analysis and synthesis, concretization). The basic specific legal method of research is the comparative law analysis. **Results:** it has been revealed that there is no universal and precise definition of the social welfare notion in scientific literature. The volume of this notion is also unclear. The types of social welfare have been defined. The article reveals an objective contradiction between the common welfare and the will of individuals to contribute to its maintenance. It also gives a characteristic of the global social welfare, which can be used by all states and all segments of population. **Conclusions:** welfare of the society is one of the most important social benefits. A state of welfare is welfare itself; welfare as a public benefit means acknowledgement of the capability gap within the framework of the market-driven economy and the necessity for the state to show initiative in solving the issues of such a gap. At the same time, the state itself can produce benefits that do not comply with the publicity characteristics, and public benefits can be produced by the private sector of economy.

Keywords: social welfare; public welfare; sociality of the state; social state; state of welfare; human welfare; state legitimacy principle

Information in Russian

ОБЩЕСТВЕННЫЕ БЛАГА: КОНЦЕПЦИЯ И КОНСТИТУЦИОННО-ПРАВОВАЯ ХАРАКТЕРИСТИКА

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Введение: статья посвящена рассмотрению содержания научной дискуссии об объеме понятия общественного блага как части содержания конституционно-правового принципа легитимности государства. **Цель:** исследовать различные доктринальные подходы к определению понятия общественного блага в его непосредственной связи с категорией социального государства, установить его виды и основные параметры. **Методы:** в методологическую базу исследования положены всеобщий диалектический метод познания, а также совокупность общенаучных методов: системность, анализ и синтез, конкретизация. Основным частноправовым методом исследования выступил сравнительно-правовой анализ. **Результаты:** выявлено отсутствие в научной литературе универсального и точного определения понятия общественного блага и объема данного блага. Определены виды общественных благ. Установлено объективное противоречие между общим благом и желанием индивидов делать вклад в его поддержание. Дана характеристика глобального общественного блага, которым могут пользоваться все государства и все слои населения. **Выводы:** к числу важнейших общественных благ следует отнести благополучие общества. Государство благосостояния само по себе является благом; благополучие как публичное благо предполагает признание неравенства возможностей в рамках рыночной экономики и необходимость государства проявлять инициативу в направлении обеспечения решения проблемы такого неравенства. При этом само государство может производить блага, не отвечающие признакам публичности. В то же время публичные блага могут создаваться частным сектором экономики.

Ключевые слова: общественное благо; публичное благо; социальность государства; социальное государство; государство благосостояния; благополучие человека; принцип легитимности государства

Introduction

The problem of the social welfare analysis was posed by the Swedish economist Knut Wicksell in 1896 [31]. It was developed in the work by the Swedish economist Erik Lindahl in 1919 [17]. Then the works by the American economist Paul Anthony Samuelson [25, pp. 387–389; 26, pp. 35–56; 27, p. 154] appeared. All of them contributed greatly in understanding sociality of the state (the state of welfare). Their unquestioned authority in the world economy proves the importance of the social state (the welfare state) paradigm and the social welfare notion in economy. The fact, that Paul Anthony Samuelson, who had paid a lot of attention to «the economy of welfare» for a number of years (as he declared) [1, p. 200], received the Nobel Prize in economics in 1970, proved the great significance of these questions for the economy, law and state.

The Nobel prize in economics given to the Scottish economist Angus Deaton «for his analysis of consumption, poverty and wealth» in October, 2015 revealed and formulated again one of the most urgent problems of the present day, that is sociality of the state as the cornerstone of building and operating the modern legal democratic state. The scientific works of Angus Deaton [7, p. 234; 8, pp. 125–167; 9, pp. 46–51; 10, pp. 89–99] are created around his scientific concepts, interpreting paradigmatically and describing fundamentally the issues and problems of welfare, poverty, sociality and economic development.

Investigating the content of the common welfare notion, at first it is necessary to address the terms used. Such terms as «common good», «public good» and «social welfare» are used in relation to this notion in the scientific literature.

Researchers usually use them as identical terms or as terms that are much alike. Thus, for example, Amitai Etzioni points out that “social welfare is also called “public interest” or “public welfare”” [13, p. 1].

Some researchers use the public welfare notion in a broader sense (but not crucially broader) than the social welfare notion.

For example, Erik André Andersen and Birgit Lindsnaes point out that public welfare includes «common welfare», that is welfare which the market economy is not able to buy or support, but which most citizens desire to possess [3, pp. 30–41].

We are going to use these terms synonymously.

The history of the common wealth concept development

In general, the common welfare notion was developed more than two thousand years ago in the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero [30, p. 3].

The concept of common welfare in the public and political life was first discussed in Plato’s *The State* that caused a lot of discussions about what exactly this notion contains. Some researchers interpret the Plato’s work as the one insisting on understanding the common welfare notion as a set of substantial truths and principles. Such approach contrasts to a certain extent with Aristotle’s approach to the definition of the notion. He considered virtue, justice and wealth as the constituents of common welfare [22, p. 13].

Within the Catholic religious tradition that has a long history of aspiration for the definition of and assistance to common welfare, the latter is determined as a sum of the social life conditions that enable social groups and their members to have an access to their self-realization. Thus, as it was stated by Manuel Velasquez, Claire Andre, Thomas Shanks and Michael J. Meyer, common welfare firstly includes social systems and industries which operate for the welfare of the whole population, such as affordable and cheap system of health care, effective system of social safety. The above systems influence greatly the society member’s welfare [30, p. 13].

At present the concept and theory of common welfare is developing significantly both from the

economic and political and legal standpoint, and it is increasingly important.

Having been a complex, important and meaningful concept for the *peace and safety, the notion «public welfare» appears in the theory of economy in the mid 1950s, enabling its understanding in the philosophical and historical context* [4, pp. 29–52].

It is necessary to consider that the social welfare concept has been changing because it, as any other common concept in a certain epoch, reflects the real life and the political characteristics of certain historical period [20, p. 13].

If we speak about the contribution of certain scientists into the development of the concept exactly within the sociality of the state, including the constitutional-and-legal principle of the state sociality principle, it is worth highlighting the works of Paul Anthony Samuelson, the American economist and Nobel laureate in economics [4, pp. 29–52].

Inge Kaul points out that the common welfare notion is not used too often in political discussions, therefore little attention is paid to the common welfare notion even within the constitutional law. However, because of the world problems attention focused on this concept has increased [20, p. 14].

At present the common welfare notion is addressed in the discussions related to the social responsibility of business, the problems connected with the level of the environment pollution, the question of the education investment, as well as in the discussions on the criminal activity and poverty issues, more often within the statement that the most fundamental social problems are because of taking widely personal interests [30, p. 7].

Providing public benefits and services is an essential element of the state activity. Meanwhile, regardless of how effectively in terms of other different indicators, public authorities engage in the decision-making, budgeting, data collecting activity, according to L. Tsai, it is impossible to consider such activity to be effective in full measure, if it does not result in providing the population with any social welfare. The state is to provide its

population with the transport infrastructure, pure water, national defence and other benefits of appropriate quality, that the population is not able to produce [29, p. 5].

From the practical perspective, providing public welfare plays an important role in providing and support of the appropriate quality of the state population life. In the political context, the way the state provides public welfare and the question, whether it provides them, influence the development of the state institutions and the state legitimacy as a whole. Thus, there is a point of view, according to which, only effectively provided public benefits and services are able to make the state legitimate. The states, which take resources from their population without providing it with essential benefits, have to use force for public control, and even in this case it is difficult to create stable institutes [29, p. 6].

Howard Schwartz points out that public welfare could be considered both as «the final objective of control» and as the concept which regulates and structures the law. In addition, the public welfare notion differs from, but to some extent crosses, the notion of individual rights and freedoms. Thus, legal institutes of the state power aim to and take care of providing public welfare and, as a result, expand public welfare due to redetermination and limitation of individual freedoms [28, p. 2].

In the context of the fact that the welfare of a person is formed due to benefiting from the social welfare the state policy might end the welfare of its population but not promote it, if it is not able to accept the importance of providing social benefits, and it is formed and realized without considering the necessity to provide them [11, p. 7].

By providing common benefits, the state has a possibility to influence the distribution of private resources and social welfare, implementing the state policy of public spending and taxation. Most common public benefits, such as infrastructure, education, law, order, play a double role in influencing the private economic activity, simultaneously influencing the wealth and the performance of the economy [5, p. 1].

Social welfare in the state of welfare

Paul Anthony Samuelson was the first economist who suggested the theory of the common welfare in the context of the state of welfare. He was of the opinion that the state is responsible for the achievement of the national social welfare as the state is duty-bound to provide its citizens with welfare. According to this theory, the state has a broad and well-organized mechanism for governing, and provision of the public welfare is funded through the taxation system. In addition, the state is capable of predicting what welfare benefits its citizens wish to receive [4, p. 30].

In the context of the definition of the common welfare in the welfare state the viewpoint of a number of researchers is of great interest. According to them, the state of welfare is the welfare itself. However, the question, whether it is public or private welfare, is being discussed because such welfare benefits in the welfare state as health care and social security don't possess the important characteristic of their non-exclusive consumption, and a certain number of people could be fairly debarred from receiving these welfare benefits [24, p. 2].

About specific social welfare

Elmar Altvater points out that absolutely different phenomena could be classified as public welfare: for example, the protection of the natural environment (pure air and water; biological diversity; state, social and human security), the cultural inheritance, the support of the living standard (education, health care), as well as the provision and maintenance of material infrastructure (transport networks, telecommunications, etc.) and immaterial system of norms and institutes (financial system) [2, p. 2].

A number of public welfare benefits are determined, in fact, as human rights or personal freedoms (civil liberties), such as freedom from discrimination, right of work, health, education and information. In addition, appropriate government, peace, stability, trade, information technologies, and even the realized principle of the supremacy of the law and freedom from corruption, could be considered as public welfare [18, pp. 53–67].

Meanwhile, the protection of the interests of every person is not assumed within the theory of social welfare. But, unlike public welfare,

human rights are legally obligatory for the state to support [16, p. 73].

Public welfare is also an expression to some immaterial values (such as human rights) that have ethical and humane meaning [3, p. 32].

As it is noted by United Nations Industrial Development Organization, certain categories of public welfare are closely connected with the aims of the millennium development, and the environment, health, knowledge, safety and governing are among these benefits. Three benefits from the ones mentioned above (the environment, health and safety) are mainly related to the risk-reducing benefits. Two of them, knowledge and governing, require increase and development of the relevant opportunities [21, p. 1].

Such social benefits as the social justice and the prosperity of the nation are of particular interest.

In the post-war period the significance of the social justice and the prosperity of the nation as social welfare increased because the high level of unemployment and the lack of the effective support systems were considered quite widely as inappropriate phenomena from a social, economic and political standpoint. Moreover, it was recognized that international economic issues cannot be regarded as something separate from the domestic social changes [23, p. 1].

Understanding social welfare as public welfare resulted from the intention to solve problems related to the social and economic downturn caused by the Great Depression and the world leaders' inability to achieve stable piece after the World War I. In particular, the Atlantic Charter (1941) stated the necessity to provide welfare [23, p. 2].

The state policy, aimed at the resource distribution, and the social justice began to be considered as the social welfare for the achievement of which the state should provide safety, support democracy and create opportunities for its citizens [23, p. 2].

Understanding wealth as the public welfare assumes the inequality in opportunities within the market economy and the necessity to take the ini-

tiative in solving the problem of the inequality [23, p. 3].

Individual consumers cannot receive such public welfare benefits as equality and social justice by using the market economy mechanisms. In addition, the above benefits together play an important instrument role in providing public welfare [23, p. 4].

Considering social wealth as social welfare influence the state policy, used to achieve such wealth, as follows:

– first, it is the way to form basis of a complete rethink of the social conflict, as well as to institutionalize the democratic social agreement as the decision-making foundation;

– second, it leads to the coordination and integration of economic, social and ecological strategies (as the stable economic growth and social development could not be achieved only with the help of the sector measures and decisions);

– third, it enables to create a system to measure the indices of the nation's «social health» [23, pp. 7–8].

The concept of social welfare from the economic standpoint

According to Samuel Cogolati, Linda Hamid and Nils Vanstappen, the existence of social welfare and the way to provide it show inability of the market mechanisms to function in certain situations. In particular, it is impossible to relate the provision of these benefits and services to the «invisible hand of the free market», and it is necessary to apply forced power measures to provide all the population with these benefits. Thus, the interference of the state is necessary for funding and distribution of public welfare [6, p. 5].

Erik André Andersen and Birgit Lindsnaes point out that as for the public welfare in general the market itself does not exist because the general public, i. e. the whole population, are consumers [4, p. 30]. Meanwhile, Erik André Andersen and Birgit Lindsnaes are of the opinion that to provide public welfare is a necessary addition to the free market economy [3, p. 38].

Inge Kaul underlines that public welfare (such as legal norms and access to certain information) are also essential for market functioning properly [20, p. 14].

The notion and key characteristics of the global social welfare

The social welfare concept has been considered on a global scale recently. Researchers determine the global social welfare as a universal phenomenon in the sense that the representatives of all states, population groups and generations can use this welfare [11, p. 6].

The concept of the global public welfare is based on the neoclassical economic theory of the national public welfare [6, p. 5].

The global social welfare has characteristics that are as follows:

- the advantage of this welfare is used by more than one group of countries;
- this welfare is used not only by a wide range of countries, but also by a wide variety of the world population;
- when receiving this welfare, any population group or generation, present or future, is not discriminated [11, p. 6].

Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg and Marc Stern suggested the following typology of the global social welfare:

- the global natural heritage (for example, the ozone layer and climatic stability);
- the global man-made heritage (for example, scientific and practical knowledge, principles and norms, cultural heritage);
- the results of the global policy (such as peace and financial stability) [19, p. 5].

Like other types of social welfare, the global social welfare differs in the «public» level of its character. Absolutely social global welfare is truly universal, and some aspects of the natural environment, such as sunlight or climate, which is appropriate for human beings to live in, are included in this type of welfare [11, p. 7].

Inge Kaul, Isabelle Grunberg and Marc Stern also highlight the final and intermediate types of the global social welfare that are as follows:

- the final social welfare is, according to the researchers, in fact, a result, rather than «welfare» in the standard meaning of the word; it can be material

(for example, common heritage of the humanity) and immaterial (for example, financial stability);

- the intermediate global social welfare, such as international regimes, contribute in providing final global social welfare [19, p. 13].

Problems and controversial issues related to the practical application of the modern concept of social welfare

Manuel Velasquez, Claire Andre, Thomas Shanks and Michael J. Meyer have revealed a number of the main obstacles to the effective realization of the social welfare concept. As the researchers point out, there often can arise, therefore, a situation when individuals that use common welfare refuse to contribute in its support (so called «problem of fare dodger» discussed in the scientific literature), and when the number of such individuals increases, common welfare could be destroyed at all [30, p. 18].

Moreover, at present serious significance is attached to the personal freedom of individuals, the protection of their personal rights, their constitutional guarantee and their realization, and it could be difficult to make individuals sacrifice their interests for the achievement of social welfare [30, p. 18].

Speaking about the problems of the real implementation of the public welfare concept, Randall Holcombe points out that welfare, demonstrating essential characteristics of the public welfare, could be produced in a small amount in the private sector or not be produced at all, according to the common opinion that economic effectiveness requires that the state makes its citizens contribute in the public welfare production and then allows all its citizens to receive it [15, p. 1].

Randall Holcombe names the following two main problems of the practical application of the public welfare theory as the foundation of the appropriate activity of the state:

- a lot of public benefits can be successfully produced by the private sector, there could be no necessity in producing these benefits by the state;
- a lot of these benefits that are produced by the state do not correspond to the definition of the public welfare [15, p. 1].

Conclusion

Providing public welfare is the key element of the life quality and ecological balance. Insufficient provision of such welfare, including by its

determination in the constitutions, could influence the prospects for the economic and political development of the state, become dangerous for the global economic stability, peace and prosperity. Therefore, the effective public welfare provision mechanisms should be in the heart of any strategy aimed at the poverty reduction [21, p. 1].

In addition, the social welfare concept has already been the central concept of social economy for a long time [11, p. 4].

Most researchers support the point of view, according to which public welfare could contribute in the increase of either the nation wealth level or the economy performance (but not both of them simultaneously) [5, p. 1].

According to Birgit Lindsnaes, the public welfare theory is also a great analytical instrument for the determination of better way to distribute resources (political, economic, legal, spiritual) among people [16, p. 73].

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