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## Social Security of Citizens in the Manifesto of the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union for the 2017 Parliamentary Election in Germany

**Abstract:** This article aims to analyze the common manifesto of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian-Social Union in Bavaria regarding social security, with regard to the elections to the German parliament in 2017. The basic assumption was to verify whether the CDU/CSU grouping referred to each of the elements of social security, i.e. social security system, welfare security, community security and developmental security, in its 2017 election manifesto. The method used to complete the study was content analysis. The study shows that the CDU/CSU Union in its common manifesto of 2017 – *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben. Regierungsprogramm 2017–2021*, raised issues related to building the social security of citizens. The proposals that were included in the program allow us to conclude that the CDU/CSU proposed a program that develops each of the pillars of social security in part, but which is still lacking in some ways. It should be noted that the issue of culture has been somewhat overlooked, which undoubtedly has a huge impact on the development of social capital and human capital, despite its enormous impact on two of the pillars, community and development. Other areas and proposals aimed at their development manage to fill this gap. It should also be pointed out that in the electoral proposals included in the manifesto, the most developed pillar was related to social security, implemented as part of the social policy of the state.

**Key words:** welfare state, Germany, social security, community security, developmental security, welfare security

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### Social Security in welfare state

The concept of social security is inseparable from that of the welfare state, which are translated into Polish interchangeably as state of well-being [państwo dobrobytu] or protective state [państwo opiekuńcze], although it seems that the former has become a more popular term (Kościewicz, 2014, p. 51). In the English version of the article, only the term *welfare state* will be used.

When discussing social security in the Scandinavian countries, one should present the idea and foundations of the welfare state which are inherent in the concept. According to Jurgen Habermas, the social state is obliged to shape social relations. It must also ensure that there is a balance between the interests of the individual and the state, as well as the interests of the whole (Habermas, 2008, pp. 402–403). One should also remember that the first welfare states developed in strictly defined conditions, and cannot

be detached from these historical, economic or socio-political conditions. Each of these factors undoubtedly influenced the shape of the emerging welfare states.

The Austrian economist and political philosopher, Friedrich August von Hayek, argued that the welfare state cannot be precisely defined and its categories cannot be clarified. A welfare state is one that cares about the problems of citizens which are not related to maintaining order and law (Hayek, 2006, p. 255). Hayek was not a supporter of these solutions or actions by the state. Instead, he strongly advocated a liberal economic doctrine, rejecting state interventionism (Instytut, 2004).

According to Briggs, a welfare state is a situation in which rulers apply various kinds of political and administrative measures that will help or improve the functioning of market forces in the longterm (Briggs, 1961, pp. 221–223). The basis for creating a welfare state was undoubtedly the idea of social justice; especially the equal and just distribution of interests, opportunities and wealth. The economic justification for these activities was primarily welfare economics and Keynesian economics.

Welfare economics itself was created thanks to the English economist Arthur Pigou. He focused his attention especially on the issue of social welfare. In his works entitled *Wealth and Welfare* (1912) and *The Economics of Welfare* (1920) he referred to changes that would help in the pursuit of creating a welfare state. He demonstrated the attitude that social welfare depends on the size, stability and structure of national income. It was important to implement the idea of social justice, which was to be attributed to the actions of the state (Skousen, 2012, pp. 452–454; Przybyciński, 2016, p. 29).

On the other hand, the aforementioned Keynesian economics derives from the work of the English economist John Maynard Keynes, known as a critic of *laissez-faire capitalism*. In his most famous work from 1936, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*, he presented the model of the economy that he created, which was based mainly on the assumption that free-market capitalism is unstable. The reason for this was supposedly problems in the financial sphere. Expansionary fiscal policy would prevent these problems and thus the instability that he mentioned (Skousen, 2012, pp. 452–454; Przybyciński, 2016, p. 29).

Zygmunt Bauman notes that the welfare state is, to a certain extent, an expression of the *socialization* of dangers that threaten the individual (Bauman, 2004, pp. 82–83).

One of the definitions of the welfare state presents the assumption that a welfare state can be one in which at least half of the state's expenditure is intended for broadly understood social goals (Lumumba-Kasongo, 2006, p. 3). One can also focus on the statement that only the rapidly developing countries – or the ones that are already highly developed economically – currently have the means to build a real welfare state (Rudra, 2007, p. 384). Undoubtedly, in the countries of Western Europe, this idea gained publicity quickly. Countries that are developing rapidly, with a buoyant and prosperous economy and some level of budget surplus, have begun investing in the welfare state model, and so striving for the idea of social justice and equality (Grewiński, 2007, p. 57).

At present, in almost every country, the functions of the state include stabilizing the economy and managing the distribution of wealth through redistribution mechanisms. Over the past decades, developing countries in particular have been seeking to develop and implement mechanisms that would perform regulatory and distribution functions, facilitating income growth. Activities in this area have covered the regulation of working

conditions and relations ensuring a universal healthcare system for citizens and shaping the social security system (Leszczyński, 2012, pp. 71–73).

In his works, Mirosław Książopolski indicates the social function of the state, according to which in most developed countries, “the state takes on a great deal of responsibility for satisfying the basic needs of citizens in the event of certain typical unfortunate events” (Książopolski, 2013, p. 41). Hence, through the implementation of the social function of the state, the welfare state aims to build a sense of security among citizens. Providing the individual with a sense of security in this dimension is undoubtedly a key issue, and, in order to discuss a citizen’s sense of security, reference should thus be made to the term *social security*.

The concept of *social security* appeared relatively recently in the literature, and it is a concept that is constantly developing. In English-language literature, one can come across the definition of social security coined by the International Labour Organisation. It should be stated, however, that this is not a typical academic definition but a political one, and only due to the frequency with which researchers refer to it has it become part of academic research (see more: Lisiecki, 2008; Skrabacz, 2012; Gierszewski, 2013; Kubiak, Minkina, 2013; Jagusiak, 2015; Leszczyński, 2011a).

The concept of social security is defined by the International Labour Organisation as “the set of public measures that a society provides for its members to protect them against economic and social distress that would be caused by the absence or a substantial reduction of income from work as a result of various contingencies (sickness, maternity, employment injury, unemployment, invalidity, old age, and death of the breadwinner); the provision of healthcare; and, the provision of benefits for families with children” (*Social security*, 2015).

The International Labour Organisation defines all activities within social security as activities related to guaranteeing a level of material wellbeing, i.e. the prevention of economic and social deprivation by state institutions. In Polish literature, attempts to systematize information on social security have been made by many researchers. However, the definition adopted by the author of this article as the key one is that of Marek Leszczyński, who defines social security “as all legal and organizational activities carried out by governmental bodies (national and international), non-governmental bodies, and citizens themselves, which aim to provide a certain standard of living for individuals, families and social groups and preventing their marginalization and social exclusion” (Leszczyński, 2011b, p. 58).

Leszczyński also distinguishes three components that make up social security, without which one cannot discuss the development or functioning of a social security system. Welfare security is the first pillar of the triad. These are all kinds of institutional and legal guarantees, guarantees of minimum income or redistributive mechanisms. These activities are aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens, which results from the social covenant of a democratic state governed by the rule of law. Another element is developmental security, which is nothing other than human capital along with the possibilities of building it in society. These are qualifications, knowledge and skills. The level of developmental security can be determined by chances and opportunities for individuals to develop themselves. The last element is community security, that is, social capital. This element undoubtedly refers to sensations and emotions. Hence, what the individual

feels about belonging to a given community is related to their psychosocial character (Leszczyński, 2011a, p. 59).

This approach to social security undoubtedly makes a broad analysis of this category possible. The proposed approach covers the topic in a subjective and objective way, thanks to which one can unquestionably identify the people responsible for the implementation of tasks in this field. One can observe dynamic models of social security in the welfare states discussed earlier, in which the state actively participates in citizens' lives and tries to help them in every possible situation. Germany is considered the model of a welfare state, if only because its origins lie in the politics of the German Chancellor, Otto von Bismarck. Thanks to this famous politician, the introduction of the first social rights for professional groups was initiated (Baran, 2012, pp. 195–196).

Historically, the German welfare state was based mainly on social insurance and social assistance for the poor and people who worked but did not earn enough to be able to provide themselves with an adequate standard of living. Over time, the welfare state's functions have multiplied, giving citizens many kinds of assistance from the state. The proposed German model is considered archetypal and conservative (Seeleib-Kaiser, 2016, pp. 221–222).

### **Social Security of Citizens in the Party Manifesto of the CDU/CSU in the 2017 Parliamentary Election in Germany**

In Germany, since 2005, the CDU/CSU grouping (the Christian Democratic Union of Germany and the Christian Social Union)– has been in power continuously. These parties have been in coalition for many years.<sup>1</sup> In September 2017, in Germany, parliamentary elections were held, which the CDU/CSU won. In modern times, the provision of security for citizens by the state is considered a basic right. Therefore, this article analyzes the CDU/CSU election manifesto – *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben. Regierungsprogramm 2017– 2021* [For a Germany where we can live well and happily. The Government Program 2017–2021] – in terms of social security policy.

The manifesto consists of nine substantive chapters, in which proposals were presented to German citizens regarding the continuation of and planned changes to policies which had been carried out by the CDU/CSU in Germany for several years. At the beginning, the current achievements of the CDU/CSU were presented. In the manifesto, the politicians paint a picture of Germany in which the economy is growing rapidly, unemployment is at its lowest level since 1991, the number of jobs is still growing and youth unemployment is at its lowest level in Europe. They also point out that the financial situation of German citizens has improved, because wages and pensions have increased and are continuing to increase. They try to convince the public that all the work that has been done so far should not be thrown away and must be continued, which is why appropriate proposals are presented.

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<sup>1</sup> See more about the CDU: The official website of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany, <https://www.cdu.de/>, 13/02/2018; more about the CSU: The official website of the Christian-Social Union in Bavaria, <http://www.csu.de/>, 13/02/2018.

The first substantive chapter in which the CDU/CSU include the proposals for social security is *Gute Arbeit auch für morgen – Vollbeschäftigung für Deutschland* [Good work for tomorrow – full employment for Germany]. In the opening paragraph, the previous achievements of the CDU/CSU are presented, i.e. the aforementioned lowest unemployment rate in 25 years, with 44 million Germans in work, something which, according to the manifesto, has never happened before. Unemployment among young people is the lowest in Europe (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017). In March 2017, the unemployment rate was 5.5%, the lowest in the history of reunified Germany (*Stopa bezrobocia*, 2017).

The goal that the CDU/CSU assume in the election manifesto is *full employment for Germany* in every part of the country, so that the unemployment rate will fall below 3.9%. Of course, this goal is to be time-limited and should be achieved by 2025. Activities aimed at achieving this goal are, above all, greater public investments, which would be limited as part of budgetary discipline. The consequences of these activities are jobs, and, therefore, economic growth in Germany, higher wages and greater prosperity for German citizens (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017). The CDU/CSU election manifesto does not contain any spectacular promises. The policy presented above was undoubtedly one of the most popular.

The CDU and CSU politicians also took advantage of the favorable economic situation of Germany. The manifesto indicates record levels of employment by industrial enterprises (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017), in a country where, according to research conducted by the Federal Statistical Office at the end of August of the election year, over 5.4 million people have worked in industry (*Zatrudnienie w przemyśle*, 2015). This number increased by approximately 37,000 people, or 0.7%, compared to August 2016 (*Niemcy: Niemiecki przemysł*, 2017).

Citizens are also assured that policies in this area would continue to be implemented, and Germany would remain the leader of the automotive industry in Europe, delivering to the market the safest, most economical and most environmentally-friendly vehicles (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

Regarding the labor market and the fight against unemployment, which falls under the umbrella of social security, new jobs are also promised. The manifesto pointed to the need to increase the number of jobs in the industries of the future, such as digitization, biotechnology or the healthcare sector. Of course, in addition to creating new jobs, the manifesto also referred to the need to train people for these positions, so promises of efforts in the field of education, training and development of individuals were made in order to safeguard these investments (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

Unquestionably, the fact that politicians not only remembered the social area of welfare security, but also noticed the need to invest in social capital, especially in human capital, which is extremely important for building social security and running a sustainable economy, is noteworthy.

Reference is also made to professional development for young people aged 25–35 who do not have a university degree. This would enable them to earn a fixed salary, which would reduce unemployment and, in the longer term, build economic growth<sup>2</sup> (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017). (Proposals in this area are also aimed at preventing the

<sup>2</sup> Social exclusion can apply to all countries, because it results from various kinds of inequalities that can lead to various types of discrimination and exclusion from society (cf.: Jordan, 1996, pp. 1–5).

social exclusion to which certain individuals are exposed, such as those in a difficult financial situation and the long-term unemployed).

The long-term unemployed are also included in the CDU/CSU manifesto. The help provided to them was to consist primarily of investment in human capital, such as the state investing in raising their professional qualifications and facilitating their return to the labor market, which is not an easy task. The children of the permanently unemployed are also mentioned, who often have problems due to their difficult life situation and lack of financial resources. Financial resources are one of the promises made to young people who are struggling with this problem (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

The manifesto also draws attention to the quality of jobs, and thus the building of social capital through links between individuals, social groups and social trust. Readers are reminded that remuneration for employees during the CDU/CSU's time in office has systematically increased (*Statistiken zur Einkommensverteilung*, 2018). The document also refers to the introduction of the commonly binding hourly minimum wage in 2015 by the ruling coalition CDU/CSU-SPD. In 2015, the hourly wage for all employees could not be lower than EUR 8.50. This did not apply to workers under the age of 18 or the long-term unemployed, or to certain groups of apprentices (*Mindestlohn*, 2015). The minimum wage was then raised to EUR 8.84 per hour as of January 1, 2017 (*34 Cent mehr Mindestlohn*, 2017).

With regard to wages, attention is also paid to equal wages for men and women, more flexible working hours and promises to leave weekly working time unchanged. The elimination of the barriers encountered by the disabled in the sphere of work is also mentioned, as well as increasing employment opportunities for them. In terms of equality, it is promised that by 2025, an equal distribution between women and men in management positions at all levels will be achieved in the public sector (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

The next chapter focuses on activities relating to families and children. The manifesto assures citizens that promoting families is the most important issue for the government, owing to the fact that demographic growth is again noticeable in Germany. There is also an assurance that various forms of partnership are respected by politicians and people should make decisions about their lives for themselves (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017). Undoubtedly, this is a departure from the conservative family model, as, instead of merely easing the lives of these families, the CDU and CSU is proposing to unburden them.

Therefore, there is a proposal or a promise to relieve families of all kinds of the burden of administration associated with collecting the various types of benefits available, or submitting documents in various types of offices. The manifesto assures citizens of both the need and significance of the access to and possibility of submitting documents, certificates, tax returns or applications for benefits digitally, without needing to leave home. With regard to the protection of children, children's rights are also proposed for inclusion in the Basic Law.

Child benefit – *Kindergeld* – would be increased from EUR 192 to EUR 217, i.e. by EUR 25 a month. Obviously, this amount would increase with the number of children one has (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017). The situation is similar with *Kinderfreibetrag*, i.e. child relief, which can be added to the annual tax settlement in Germany. In 2017, this amount was EUR 7,356, while in 2018 it increased to EUR 7,428 (*Kinderfreibetrag*, 2017). In their manifesto, the CDU/CSU assures readers that the amount will increase to

EUR 8,820; however, they do not give a specific date for the implementation of the plan (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

To help young families, the CDU/CSU union proposed a housing program. In principle, this program would apply to existing houses, but also to houses that were to be built according to the owner's plans. *Baukindergeld* is presented as an allowance for families with children intending to buy their first home. The program was first launched on January 1, 2018. The amount given is EUR 1,200 per year for a period of 10 years (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017; *Baukindergeld*, 2018).

In matters related to pensions, the CDU/CSU union saw no major need for change. The pension reform which has been in operation since 2007 (*Rentenreform*, 2007) is praised (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017). However, another element of the CDU/CSU platform is the issue of healthcare. Unquestionably, this is an important aspect for the social security of citizens from the perspective of the welfare security pillar, but also for building human capital and social trust, for individuals as well as institutions.

The German care system is one of the best in the world, the manifesto assures us. As part of the education of healthcare specialists, the CDU/CSU wanted to abolish fees for all types of training and education. With regard to greater respect for patients' rights and making them more transparent, the CDU/CSU wanted to create *Nationales Gesundheitsportal* (*Nationales Gesundheitsportal*, 2018), in which there will be information packages about healthy lifestyles, as well as various diseases, available to all citizens. Digitization in the healthcare sector is also promised in the manifesto.

The right to e-healthcare is a basic step. Attention is also paid in the manifesto to the protection of personal data and sensitive data. The full digitization of this sector would increase possibilities to save lives; for instance, from the perspective of doctors' access to medical history from various institutions in which the patient has been treated (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

Education is also an area important for social security from the perspective of the pillar of developmental security and community security. The manifesto clearly emphasizes that matters related to education should be formulated by the state. The CDU/CSU state that they plan to increase spending on education to 3.5% of GDP by 2025, and that there will be investment in the accessibility of kindergartens, ensuring that every young citizen will have the opportunity to attend. Money will also be invested in training and hiring the best specialists, so that the level of education systematically increases (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

The manifesto also draws attention to all kinds of issues related to access to culture. It is pointed out that access to culture broadens the cognitive abilities and horizons of the individual. It is undoubtedly one of the vital factors in shaping human capital, which is related to the developmental security necessary for social security. It is also mentioned that there is no culture without education, nor education without culture. However, besides the typical trivial slogans related to the improvement of culture and its importance for citizens, one will not find specific assurances or proposals in the CDU/CSU manifesto, for example regarding the possibility of increasing access to both education and culture.

This is a pity, because, as mentioned earlier, this is a very important element of social security. Unfortunately, it is often overlooked or treated as unimportant, above all in election manifestos (*Für ein Deutschland*, 2017).

## Conclusions

Social security, from the perspective of the welfare state, is undoubtedly a very important element of society, because it enables the proper functioning of the state. Citizens feel safe, not only in terms of welfare security and the provision of material goods, but also from the perspective of building social bonds, forming social groups and building social trust, as well as opportunities for individual development and improvement and thus building civil society or being involved in the development of the state.

Without a high level of human capital and social capital, one cannot talk about civil society, and it is much harder to build a thriving economy. Without a doubt, in their election manifesto from 2017 – *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben. Regierungsprogramm 2017–2021* – the CDU/CSU union raised issues related to building the social security of citizens, which still seems to be at a fairly high level, viewed from the perspective of specific pillars such as social benefits, social capital and human capital.

We should also add that the proposals included in the manifesto lead to the conclusion that the CDU/CSU proposed a manifesto that partially develops each of the pillars of social security, but which, unfortunately, is still lacking in some ways. It can be said that the issue of culture, mentioned earlier in the text, was somewhat overlooked, despite its enormous impact on the development of social capital and human capital, and thus on community and development. However, the other assurances present indicate that the CDU/CSU election manifesto includes the idea of building citizens' social security, which is undoubtedly important for a country such as Germany, which is perceived as a welfare state.

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**Bezpieczeństwo społeczne obywateli w programie wyborczym  
Unii Chrześcijańsko-Demokratycznej i Unii Chrześcijańsko-Społecznej  
w wyborach parlamentarnych w Niemczech w 2017 roku**

**Streszczenie**

Celem artykułu była analiza wspólnego programu Unii Chrześcijańsko-Demokratycznej Niemiec i Unii Chrześcijańsko-Społecznej w Bawarii, w wyborach do parlamentu Niemiec z 2017 roku, pod kątem bezpieczeństwa społecznego obywateli. Założeniem podstawowym było sprawdzenie, czy Unia CDU/CSU odniosły się do każdego z elementów bezpieczeństwa społecznego, czyli bezpieczeństwa socjalnego, bezpieczeństwa wspólnotowego i bezpieczeństwa rozwojowego w swoim programie wyborczym z 2017 roku. Metodą, która posłużyła do zrealizowania badania, była analiza treści. Z przeprowadzonego badania wynika, iż Unia CDU/CSU w swoim programie wyborczym z 2017 roku – *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben. Regierungsprogramm 2017–2021*, poruszyła kwestie związane z budowaniem bezpieczeństwa społecznego obywateli. Propozycje, które zostały zawarte w programie pozwalają stwierdzić, że CDU/CSU zaproponowało program, który rozwija po części każdy z filarów bezpieczeństwa społecznego, co nie zawsze jest realizowane. Zauważyć należy, że słabo rozwinięta została kwestia kultury, która niewątpliwie ma ogromny wpływ na rozwój kapitału społecznego i kapitału ludzkiego, a więc dwóch filarów, wspólnotowego i rozwojowego. Pozostałe obszary i propozycje skierowane w ramach ich rozwoju absolutnie wypełniają tę lukę. Należy również wskazać, że w propozycjach wyborczych znajdujących się w programie najbardziej rozwinięty został filar związany z bezpieczeństwem socjalnym, realizowany w ramach polityki społecznej państwa.

**Słowa kluczowe:** państwo opiekuńcze, Niemcy, bezpieczeństwo społeczne, bezpieczeństwo wspólnotowe, bezpieczeństwo rozwojowe, bezpieczeństwo socjalne