

Marek Nowak (*Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań*)

THE SYSTEM'S "STICKING PLASTER"? VOLUNTARY WORK IN LATE MODERNITY

This paper describes the problem of voluntary work in the historical context. The analysis describes the evolution of voluntas from the classic concept of the will to contemporary practices of treating voluntary action as an element of the professional curriculum vitae. This evolution is significant for late modernity and for the crisis situation in the labour market. The voluntary now means something close to work in various labour sectors. The interpretation suggests that voluntary action nowadays is beginning to play the role of the so-called sticking plaster of the system. Finally, the author introduces the results of an empirical investigation carried out in 2011 in Poland (Poznań, Wrocław, and Gdańsk).

Keywords: *voluntas, voluntary work, citizenship, civil society, labour market.*

AN ARENDTIAN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM OF MODERN VOLUNTAS

The question of *voluntas* in relation to work could be interpreted as a paradox in a generically ancient Greco-Roman perspective. The word *voluntas* could be understood as a name for the doctrine of 'assenting to impressions'. It emphasizes that the only way to a 'moral life' is by exercising this *voluntas*.¹ In the more contemporary, though still traditional, meaning this is free will, good will, free choice, or an attitude toward

¹Inwood Brad, *Reading Seneca. Stoic Philosophy at Rome*, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 135

a kind of action. If the etymological interpretation is right, *voluntas* could be closely linked to the concept of the elitist, moral citizen, in clear opposition to the “mass produced” goods of a *demiourgos* or slave.²

Sociologists might suggest that work in the Greek or later Latin tradition was too different from *voluntas*, because it was founded on the functional (and not subversive) distinctions of traditional society. Work was connected with the specializations of households in meeting basic needs, and belonged to a private sphere, in the opposition to what the social philosopher Hannah Arendt thought of as the origin of the ancient public sphere.³ Work could be defined, as suggested by the Polish economic sociologist Sławomir Patrycki, as “an effort, work with nature, a production process, making useful things, rebuilding the world”, and so forth.⁴ As an aspect of the ancient concept of *vita activa*, of which work is a part, speech and social contact are not necessary for making things, and in fact even disturb acts of “working with nature”, *craft working*, manufacturing, production, and selling things. Being in “opposition” to work, speech and social contacts seem to be essential for *voluntas*. Work and *voluntas* contradict each other, but over time and under modern conditions, the opposition becomes less transparent. This could be read as the *sine qua non* of egalitarianization processes, which have been ongoing for over two hundred years. Arendt, from the perspective of the late 60s, saw the modern transformation of the sphere of polity (in the direction of more egalitari-

²Here differences and inequalities are nothing more than aspects of functionally differentiated society.

³Along with this, Hannah Arendt, in her book, *The Human Condition*, and later in *On Revolution* (see Arendt Hannah, *Kondycja ludzka*, Aletheia, Warszawa 2000; Arendt Hannah, *O rewolucji*, Czytelnik, Warszawa 2003), discussed the reasons for limitations of individual and collective subjectivity. Her philosophy was rooted in a valued concept of speech and sociologically interpreted social relations (interaction) between free people, inspired by ancient *voluntas*. Voluntary in the Arendtian sense could be a kind of attitude directly toward the other, and is constituted by a moment of real social contact between people. “The goal of the game” was the holistic well-being of the community (*polis*), which was separated from the collective interests of group or class, but at the same time was based on the action of the free individuals who compete with each other in being better. When translated into more contemporary language, it was a functional vision of society, but at the same time “disclosed” active individuals, made visible, gave a chance to “count ourselves” in the local interactionist context. Arendtian “locality” with the ancient meaning of *voluntas* is, in my opinion, still the clue for the problem of the possibility of the “*voluntas* action”, and finally of the active, not passive, identity of the person in the community.

⁴Patrycki suggests the systematization based on J. Gałkowski’s work from 1980 (*Praca i człowiek*, Warszawa 1980). See Patrycki Sławomir, *Zarys teorii socjologii gospodarki*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2004, p. 63.

an relations) as a constitutive element of a newborn "society", in opposition to the "community" (in the ancient sense suggested here). However, the "voluntary subject", in her opinion, still played a significant role in the historical process of social change, where revolutions (as turning points) were the clue. That traditional subjectivity in action (for example in the Arendtian meaning of a special kind of motivation: an aspiration for "public happiness") seems to be now relatively rare, located in the "lair" of social movements, in the discussions of radicals, in the intellectually designed transformation processes (such as in the Central European systems transformations), in colourful mass "flower revolutions" in eastern Europe and central Asia (in the middle of the first decade of the 21st century), or now in the loud new "Agoras" of young, poor city revolutionaries in northern Africa, and wherever change has begun.⁵ But as I suggest in the title of the article, this is not the end of the story of modern *voluntas*. We could find a possible departure point in Fukuyama's and Putnam's reflections on social capital and trust and their developmental consequences, or in Sztompka's reflections on the syndromes of the lack of trust (social and cultural trauma, for example, in the theoretical context of the systems transformation).⁶ *Voluntas* here seems to be more often an element of the "solution" than an element of the "failure". The key to unlocking the contemporary meaning of *voluntas* is, in my opinion, close to the problems of (1) how effective is the regulation of systems in a particular society, and (2) how important is social and civic support for social cohesion, and what is the specificity of one's subjectivity in relation to the social environment, and finally, where is the "place" (the role) of individual activism in opposition to the market-state regulation in meeting ("secondary") needs?

⁵This observation is important because Arendt suggests the disappearing of "positive freedom" (freedom to act or presupposition to the real social change); Marek Nowak, *Polityka jako wolność pozytywna i wolność negatywna: koncepcje Hannah Arendt*, in: *Koncepcje polityki*, Wesolowski W. (ed.), Scholar, Warszawa 2009), which is an inspiration to the concept of unique status of the republican or the radical revolutionary-activists.

⁶In referring this subject I want to quote fundamental works: *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* from the beginning of the 1990s, and next titled: *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* written by Robert Putnam and co-authors, *Zaufanie. Kapitał społeczny a droga do dobrobytu* from the middle of 90., *Trust: a sociological theory* and studies on cultural trauma written by Piotr Sztompka in the end of 90. and in the beginning of the first decade of 2000.

VOLUNTAS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MODERN WELFARE STATE

Mary Morris authored a 1969 book that developed the discussion of voluntary work and put it into the context of the postwar Welfare State. This may be a first step in answering questions on the direction in which western European subjectivity (*voluntas*) evolved after the Second World War. She said that,

voluntary work is undertaken for three main reasons: first, there are jobs to be done which cannot be or at least will not be done by paid personnel; second, the opportunity to give service meets a personal need felt by individual people; and third, voluntary action is a powerful force for social progress.⁷

The first reason discusses the limitation of market regulation in relation to “what should be done”. We can add, in relation to what could be effectively served by state institutions, by the hands of their staff. The second discusses the necessity of personalizing the sort of services which are something more than what you can pay for, because of the logic of economies of scale or the level of professionalization of social services. This could be both described as being a more or less successful institutionalization of the strategy of removing limitations on state policy, or as a kind of “market failure”, which becomes visible in consequence of the erosion of traditional community institutions, such as large families and neighbourly relations. The third reason, perhaps the most intriguing, suggests the functionality of voluntary work in the context of “progress”, which is definitely an element of the ideology of “improving” a modern liberal society, with its passive state regulation and the “mercantilization” of social relations in the traditional context described above. It should be added that Morris’ way of thinking, in the following decades, became one of the most influential concepts of the origin of the nonprofit sector based on the inspiration of the neoclassical economy which had developed starting from the second part of the 1970s.⁸ *Voluntas* here fills the space where the mar-

⁷Mary Morris, *Voluntary work and the Welfare State*, Routledge, London 2002, p. xiii.

⁸Salamon and Anheier in their empirical study describe this theoretical assumption as “government failure/market failure theory” (see the Salamon M. Lister, Anheier Helmut, *Social Origin of Civil Society: Exploring the Non-profit Sector Cross-Nationally*, Working Papers of the John Hopkins Nonprofit Sector Project, no. 22, ed. Lister M. Salmon and Helmut K. Anheier, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Institute for policy Studies, 1996; Salmon, M. Salamon,

ket is absent and "there is no state" – in other different words, the space in which the dominant regulators are insufficient in putting pressure on the evolution of the modern citizen. This macroprocess could be seen either as a tendency for the emancipation of social functions, or as a part of the evolution of individual subjectivity. Put more simply, it once again reveals a new logic of citizenship, which is (or may be) closer to consumer relations. From that perspective, as Paul Dekker suggests, it means

being a social person: not being a burden to other people, having a positive attitude (tolerance, understanding), and doing good to others. People mention volunteering, more in the informal sense of helping others than in a formal sense of doing things for or in organizations. Besides this social side to good citizenship, there is the side of obeying the law, not driving too fast, not committing crimes, and so on. It would seem that people see things more in terms of what a good citizen does not than what he or she does do.⁹

The societal substrate is clearly reduced to individual attitudes. But there is something more, as claimed by the same author:

the majority of present-day voluntary associations are not the 'schools of democracy' that De Tocqueville saw all those years ago. Organizations focusing on community affairs and interests that are related to government still show the expected relationships between associational and political involvement, but mainly as a result of self-selection.¹⁰

On the other hand, it needs the support of market institutions and an equivalent organizational design,¹¹ which is usually called 'professionalization of the nonprofit sector'.

Finally, to use a metaphor, this new "*voluntas*", having once constituted the modern world of *homo faber*, has passed on to the world of *homo economicus*, and returned home... but following this long trip, it seems to have changed, to have received a new shape and broader content. As Salmon and Anheier suggest in their comparative analysis of the "third sector", its "evolving shape" may be significantly different in different social and political contexts of particular societies, because of "the complex interactions

Anheier, Helmut, *Social Origin of Civil Society: Exploring the Nonprofit Sector Cross-Nationally*, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1998).

⁹Dekker Paul, *Civiness: From Civil Society to Civic Services?* *Voluntas* 20, 2009.

¹⁰*Ibidem*.

¹¹Kate Cooney, *The Institutional and Technical Structuring of Non-profit Ventures: Case Study of a U.S. Hybrid Organization. Caught Between Two Fields*, *Voluntas* 17, 2006.

between this set of institutions and both the state and market sectors".¹² Particularly useful is the "relativist" interpretation of Espring-Andersen's concept. The theoretical point of departure (Espring-Andersen 2010) concerns here the shapes of welfare state at different times, the position of nongovernmental sector in relation to the historically "designed" social structure ("the dislocation" of social class, and its importance in relation to democracy based on political parties). But whether or not those relations (between state welfare regimes, markets, and people's self-organization) are coercive or functional still might be questioned.

Dekker, quoted above, uses the word "hybrid" in the more general sense, by which he means rather hybridization as a tendency (or process), in opposition to the coercive contexts of civil society, which dominated in the past. For Dekker, the explored vision of the social relation is always face-to-face with the dominating market coordination, where the state plays the rather less important role of the opportunism-reducing "actant". A similar context was developed by authors who explore strict economic inspirations, for example, the new institutionalists, who tried to describe the direction of the evolution of the nonprofit organization in the USA and other developed countries.¹³ The "new" and the "old" approaches, nowadays, can be seen as the spread between "the 'instrumental' and the 'transformative' approaches", but being instrumental or being transformative signifies being "dislocated" along the continuum, closer or further from the final ideal types (instrumental or transformative).¹⁴ Going beyond (or anticipating) this diagnosis, the first (instrumental) approach could be describe by subsidiary action in relation to what an employer has "appointed". The second approach is both normatively and morally oriented (involving doing something because it is right or necessary); the first formally corresponds with the external goal of the organization (because it is "commissioned"). The second corresponds to the ancient meaning of *voluntas* (free or good will). The first establishes what is worthy, and in the end what has fitted to the more or less particular interests of groups or organizations. The second is related to what is "appropriate", and ultimate-

¹²Salamon M. Lister, Anheier Helmut, *Social Origin of Civil Society...*, p. 2.

¹³Kate Cooney, *The Institutional and Technical Structuring of Non-profit Ventures...*

¹⁴Anna Lawrence, "No personal motive?" *Volunteer, Biodiversity and the False Dichotomies of Participation*, preprint of the article submitted for the consideration in *Ethics, Place & Environment* 2006, available online at: <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/>.

ly to what is the value.¹⁵ The first is much better explained by the neoclassical theory of economics, rational choice theory, or, for example, as the form of rationality in the new institutionalism. The second is much more clearly understood in a paradigmatic context of the radical streams in social science, or in the broader interactionist tradition in sociology. Finally, the first is professional in the sense of specialization, and the second is an aspect of the general emancipation process, where civic participation, activism, or interpersonal competition are more important than the realization of practically defined goals, and so on. We could also discuss the differences in motivation as differences in relation to the *status quo*: more affirmative or more critical, more or less institutionalized, instrumentalized, economized, and so on.

Let us describe in greater detail the logic of transformation of "*voluntas*" as linked to the evolving concept of modern citizenship. The *quasi*-chronology would be rooted into the traditionally liberal 1950s language of Thomas H. Marshall, whose concept now is described as the "static" in opposition to the "flexible" of the globalised contemporary society.

A REINTERPRETATION OF T.H. MARSHALL'S CONCEPT

Marshall's idea is stretched between interpretations of historical processes: (1) an idiographic description of particular periods of evolving civic identities in western civilization (perhaps too ambitious a description), and a kind of typology of civic activity (2) a particular aspect or a type – in precisely the modern sense.¹⁶ In his historical diagnosis, he suggested three aspect-periods showing dynamics of "being civic": holding "civil citizenship", holding "political citizenship", and holding "social citizenship". As he said, "when the three elements of citizenship parted company, they were soon barely on speaking terms". He elaborated that "the

¹⁵I describe here the differentiation between "value" and "interest" which Marek Ziółkowski suggests in his book explaining attitudes in Polish society in the end of the twentieth century (Marek Ziółkowski, *Przemiany interesów i wartości społeczeństwa polskiego*, Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, Poznań 2000).

¹⁶I would discuss both because of the main goal of the text, which tries to offer a diagnosis of the voluntary work in their genetic perspectives. Finally it should be enhanced and criticized because of limitations included in Marshall's point of view. The final destination point would be illustrated by results of the empirical investigation which was carried out in Poznań in 2010.

formative period in the life of each” should be assigned “to a different century – civil rights to the eighteenth, political to the nineteenth, and social to the twentieth. These periods must, of course be treated with reasonable elasticity...”.¹⁷

Civil *voluntas*. The first, “civil citizenship”, is the most traditional type of citizenship, and is based, as Marshall suggests, on the concept of ‘natural law’. It relates to the ideology of “being equal, behind equals”. As he said:

civil element is composed of rights necessary for individual freedom-liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property, and to conclude valid contracts, and the right to justice.¹⁸

Such a civil identity is founded on equal relations to the other, in opposition to feudal institutions, and results in rights to be the subject. In the context of *voluntas*, this could be an attitude to the practicing of action in the public sphere. Firstly, related (as Jurgen Habermas suggests) to the selected class of newborn capitalism, the bourgeois; secondly, related to the experiences of discovering their collective identity, and practicing collective interests.¹⁹ “civil disobedience” would then be an aspect of the process of the evolution of the legal system when we look at discovering civil citizenship as a principle. “Civil disobedience” is in this sense a form of contesting the *status quo*, which is also just a way to reorient the accepted system and to legitimize systems. This could be illustrated by a “point of reference” inspired by Arendt’s view of the modern civic “voluntas”, where at the beginning someone is looking for a chance to make a difference (achieving some communal goals), looking for a way for “action” to improve some relations which now is seen as unacceptable and impossible.

Political *voluntas*. The second period-aspect, “political citizenship”, relates to the political element of citizenship. As Marshall suggests, “political citizenship” is

¹⁷Marshall Thomas H., Battmore Tom, *Citizenship and Social Class*, Cambridge 1992, p. 10.

¹⁸Ibidem, p. 8.

¹⁹Habermas Jürgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, The MIT Press, Cambridge Massachusetts 1989, p. 95, and next.

the right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the member of such as body.²⁰

Here Marshall describes the processes of institutionalization which tend to organize *gesellschaft* in the structure of representations (corporatist structures). *Voluntas* here means (or may mean) having "free will", taking part in an organization which realizes a kind of "political mission", or simply participating in democracy.

Both, "civil" and "political" voluntarism exhaust the topic of the Arendtian concept of the realization of the "positive freedom" of an active citizenship, with its immersion into collective behaviour, and the gradual emergence of individual political participation.

Social *voluntas*. The last, and nowadays overused, sphere of voluntary action would seem to be 'social citizenship', which could be partly understood as a kind of substitute adjusting market and state regulations to meet the expected needs of the participants of a society. Marshall describes it thus:

the whole range of the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to standards prevailing in the society.

He adds finally:

"The institutions most closely connected with it are an education system and the social services".²¹

This scope of institutionalized activity is broad in modern society, and the following sphere of "social *voluntas*" should also be complex. Indeed, it really does look like that. But Marshall observed something more: he suggested a separation in time of his three aspect-periods, which now coexist without positive feedback. This tendency could be interpreted as an evolution in the relation of systems. The real cause we could find in Marks' and Durkheim's discussion of the "division of labour" or in more contemporary theoretical contexts, in the Luhmann's differentiation of systems²² as the (communicative) consequence of the step-by-step speciali-

²⁰Marshall Thomas H., Battmore Tom, *Citizenship and Social Class...*, p. 8.

²¹Ibidem, p. 8.

²²In Luhmann's words: "We can conceive of system differentiation as a replication, within a system, of the difference between a system and its environment. Differentiation

zation and professionalization of “services”. The *voluntas* in that systemic context seemed to evolve similarly like a “structuralizing” systems regulations (individually solving problems of education, aging, disability, discrimination, emancipation, migration, gender relations, minorities, etc.), which generate, we can say, “communication subsystems”. One intriguing interpretation is mentioned by Paul Dekker. He discusses changes in the positions of employees at their place of work, which he suggests is basic people’s activity, and in relation to the evolution of employment, marginalize the room for “fringe” (political) identities. This idea is close to the interpretation of modernity by Arendt, but in the same time contradicts the discussion on the growing importance of spending free time as cultural identity or the (post)materialist tendency in contemporary western societies developed between ten and twenty years ago by Ronald Inglehart.²³ The interpretation of that inconsistency could explore the context of differences of the position of the social structure or in different European societies (horizontal or vertical), with the general (or even universal) tendencies in evolving societies. It is worth pointing out here the interpretation of the differences in the cultural and legal framework for *voluntas* (voluntary work activity) in describing the developmental context. Putnam’s interpretation of north and south Italy was rather a cursory example. I want to indicate in more detail the description of Ireland (Northern and the Republic) which focuses on *voluntas* activity in the interpretation offered by Acheson, Harvey, and Williamson.²⁴ The main idea of this text is addressed here to Sydney Tarrow, Robert Putnam and finally the studies of Salmon and Anheier, which offer more relativist statements about direction and dynamics of becoming a state institution (welfare regime) and society. Finally, the concept of ‘social capital’ is used in the description of processes of separate evolutions which lead to differentiation of so-

is thus, understood as a reflexive and recursive form of system building”; see: Luhmann Niklas, *The differentiation of Society*, Columbia University Press, 1982 p. 230–231).

²³In more contemporary publications, he analyses the relation between societies in searching for regularities in self-realization indicators, civic participation, religion, indicator of democratization and development. His statements in these studies are much more moderate than previously; see: Inglehart Ronald, Welzel Christian, *Changing Mass Priorities: The Link between Modernization and Democracy* in: Perspectives on Politics No. 2, June 2010. The text is also available on the website of the World Value Survey: http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/wvs/articles/folder_published/publication_587).

²⁴Nicholas Acheson, Brian Harvey, Arthur Williamson, *State Welfare and the Development of Voluntary Action: The case of Ireland, North and South*, *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Non-profit Organizations*, Vol. 16, No., 2 2005.

cial trajectories, and in the end "builds" a difference in *status quo*. A mentioned difference which Acheson, Harvey, and Williamson noticed, is only "feigned" as simply based on religion. In reality the causes are the institutional and ideological design of the social environment, which is (or rather may be) something external. As they described:

They reflected deep differences between Protestant thinking about individual responsibility and Catholic assumptions about the role of the institutional [collective] church and the responsibilities of believers towards it.²⁵

We may call this the correlation between the shape of *voluntas* and the nation-building project, which is much more obvious as a social process (realized at the turn of the 1900) and much more particular in the specificity of the indigenous action. Here the influences of state policy are significant because of the systems of financial support (and the direction of this support), but at the same time in the role which is played by it in the broader social system (more simply: the more support, the more action; the less support, the less active civic sector). The change was made under the pressure of the deconstruction of sectarian institutions, both Catholic and Protestant, which ultimately tended to increase the importance of the civic voluntary sector itself.²⁶ This meant, in this particular case, the proliferation of the sector in the Northern Ireland. Here is worth asking the question of what exactly has changed in *voluntas* in last 30 years, and why discuss it separately?

CONTEMPORARY *VOLUNTAS*. EXPANDING MARSHALL'S CONCEPT

To complicate the picture, I want to add three more period-aspects to the concept, redefining Marshall's interpretation: (1) the labour period-aspect, (2) the environmental period-aspect, and (3) the entertainment period-aspect, as being more significant for the contemporary evolution of late-modern "*voluntas*".²⁷ These all simultaneously correlate with evolu-

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 191.

²⁶ *Ibidem*.

²⁷ "Labour", which was an aspect of the post-Fordist reorientation to the service-economy growing along with the pressure of globalization in the same political context of step

tions in technology, production, and management, which we could analyse in relation to their consequences in western societies as follows: the decline of blue collar workers, the general improved quality of life, and the intense growth of mass consumption which runs parallel to the point of Marshall's social reforms following the Second World War.

The impact of these processes stretched over a period of time. But in my opinion, the most significant period for the evolution of *voluntas* was last the 20–30 years. The “material-institutional” change which I want to lay particular stress on related to the so-called ‘rescaling policy’,²⁸ which signifies “subsidiarization” as a value in common politics, and finally the gradually tendency of social services to be marketized in particular western societies. A few of the mentioned aspects could be thought of as a step back from the vision and state practices which were diagnosed and recommended by T.H. Marshall.²⁹

The observations in the following paragraphs will, as a consequence, reconstruct the “new problems” under the new conditions, and will try to understand the citizens of late-modern western societies from the 1980s to the first decade of the 21st century (and following the beginning of the 1990s, in the case of the inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe).³⁰ Espring-Andersen, at the beginning of the 1990s, analysed the fiasco of the welfare state idea of full employment, and in consequence announced

by step individualization and deregulation. The “environmental” period-aspect evolved along with a discussion of costs of the same industrialization processes which was particularly noticed in the intensification of the social activism from the beginning of the energy (oil) crisis of the 1970s; the entertainment period-aspect related to the evolution in spending free time. These ‘aspect-periods’ will discuss in more detailed later.

²⁸See: Kazepov Yuri (ed.), *Rescaling Social Policies: Towards Multilevel Governance in Europe*, Ashgate, Vienna 2010.

²⁹This is interesting in itself in the context of evolution of civic participation and more generally of *voluntas*.

³⁰For example, one of the most significant *voluntas* practices is charitable giving. We can find this in Central European Poland in interviewee declarations in the social research we carried out in Poznań in 2006, see: Nowak Marek, *Postcommunist Citizenship? A Generational View of Social Microactivism Based on Surveys Conducted in Poznan*, [in:] Nowak M, Nowosielski M. [eds.], *Declining Cities/Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Zachodniego, Poznań 2008. The interviewees, who have had decades of social transformation, suggest relatively passive motivations for support people. This is justified, declaratively, as the response to growing social inequalities (“I’m a winner, but you are the loser, and you need support”). So they need support. What seems to be interesting is that they imply that insufficient service is provided by the state, or else just rely on the Christian obligation to ‘love one’s neighbour’.

"three creeping revolutions" (translation from Polish).³¹ As first, there was the change of the main goals of social policy in the context of external pressures, which caused a "decrease of tension on the labour market". State support was directed toward those who could not manage themselves. Social security programs (pensions, for example) gradually involved a growing amount of people. Many times, as Espring-Andersen suggests, early retirement is simply a reaction to the situation in the labour market (very similar experiences are remembered in Poland from the 1990s), but the results of that policy included increasing costs of the public sector, and ultimately increases in budgetary debt. "Business" was treating retirement (supported by state policy) as a way of injecting new blood into staff. For systemic reasons, the level of unemployment among young generations was much too low, which could be either understood as a "replacement" of risk, social pressure, and costs from the responsibility of market manage companies to the budgetary politics of the state – brilliantly reflecting the change in philosophy of state management.

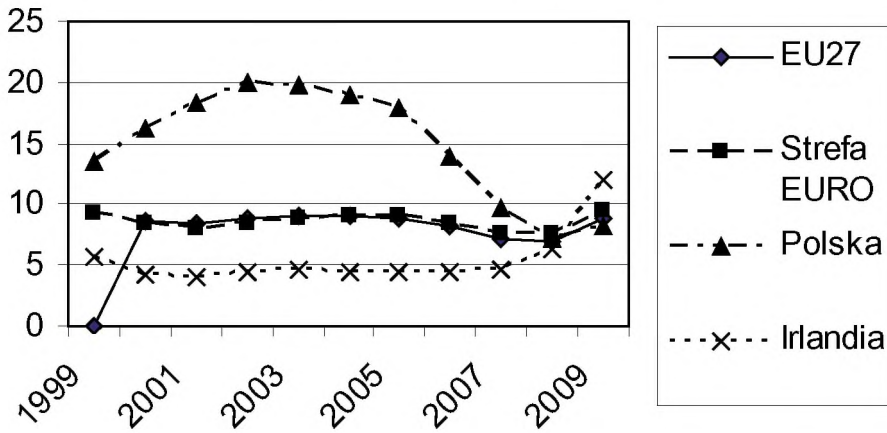
The growing social sector finally became a significant employer with an impact on the position of voluntary actions, and located, I suggest, particularly in the area of welfare services.

Subsequently it is not accidental that one of the main factors which describes the direction of evolution of the late modern social order, and interesting for the contemporary *voluntas* phenomenon, is (from the one side) the challenge to employment as a way of organizing the "new labour force" into an innovative service sector, and the social problems, particularly the specificity of an unemployment of the youth and among the "old" labour force. As Ulrich Beck suggests from the perspective of the second part of the 1980s, a stable and relatively high level of unemployment became an element of "systemic risk" which should be more and more individually "managed"³² in European countries. But to be sure, this is not at the same intensity in the different types of Welfare Regimes. As Espring-Andersen suggested, the United Kingdom is much more traumatic case when it comes to liberalism than are their social-democratic Scandinavian neighbours. The decrease in the numbers of professionally active workers, and the constant (and recently growing) level of unemployment, par-

³¹ Gøsta Espring-Andersen, *Trzy światy kapitalistycznego państwa dobrobytu*, Difin, Warszawa 2010, p. 192.

³² Beck Ulrich, *Spółeczeństwo ryzyka. W drodze do innej nowoczesności*, Scholar, Warszawa 2002.

Figure 1. The changes of unemployment based on the EUROSTAT data from 1999 to 2009 for EU 27, Eurozone, Poland, and Ireland.



ticularly among the young, have become a traumatic discovery, especially from the European point of view (when we compare with data from Asia, Latin America, and Africa).³³ The last few years have brought even more significant increase, but paradoxically for Poland (in years 2006–2009), this was a period of time with the relatively lowest level of unemployment from the beginning of the transformation of systems (1989).

In my opinion, these processes and structural condition in the labour market make especially popular the kind of *voluntas* that here call “voluntary labour”.

Voluntary labour may be a new kind of volunteering which is clearly correlated with the weak condition of youth (particularly) in the labour market. I suggest that this type of individual involvement in doing something for the other is very close to “outside” system activism which we could observe in the context of civic volunteering. But the motivation is a kind of usage, a “sticking plaster” for the system, which I understand as substitution of the possibility of the “normal” logic of career. It is for example both work without remuneration or salary in the case of organization for profit and not for profit, which are in part paid by the state (or local communities), the social service sector. The work of volunteers could be a cheaper

³³See Global Employment Trends 2011. Document available on the web of the International Labour Organisation: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_150440.pdf.

substitute for formal employment from the side of the employer or organizer, and from the employee's perspective could serve as a kind of training in a sort of skills or qualifications perceived as a way to the more stable condition in the labour market or vacancy in the future. The question of why this career-option is so important for current "volunteers" relates to the other two "creeping revolutions" from youth perspectives. (2) Formerly constant but recently growing unemployment in the generation which is now coming in to the labour market (in European countries, this can be 20–30% of youth). (3) The second is the tendency "to shift" the moment of entering the labour market because of the increasing "scholarization rate", and new barriers arise from the devaluation of formal education.³⁴ Another aspect is located in the expectations of employers, which grow following technological specialization and increases in global competition. To show the "final" condition of youth employers (in particular) in the literature, we can use the description of the "precariat". This may explore the Latin root "caritas" (meaning mercy, a moral obligation to love one's neighbour) and 'prex', which mean 'gain through entreaty' and joins it with the ideological and a theoretical context of the proletariat with the "precarity" or the French: *precarité*.³⁵ They both mean being dependent and unable to earn ones living as a worker, etc. The source of concept, by Guy Standing,³⁶ describes the growing "silent power", located socially close to the underclass, and located on the border of the lower-middle class because of the position of parents. Experiences with "voluntary labour" may be significant for the location of the "precariat", which is close to being outside of the typical logic of career, and is located "on the darker side" of the Bourdieu distinction. In the Polish public discussion in the years 2002–2005 (which saw the highest level of unemployment since the beginning of the systems transformation), intellectuals came up with the another term: "the 1,200 złoty generation" (1200 złoty = 350 euros, a monthly wage), which ascribe a weak social condition to youth, even among uni-

³⁴In Central and Eastern Europe, this causes a limit in the production potential of the economy (when the number of production investments is increased), and strengthens the emigration pressure ("push factors").

³⁵Jan Sowa, *Prekariat – globalny proletariat w epoce pracy niematerialnej* [in:] Sokołowska J. (ed.), *Robotnicy opuszczają miejsca pracy*, Łódź 2010 (<http://www.ha.art.pl/prezentacje/39-edufactory/1655-jan-sowa-co-to-jest-prekariat.html>) date of access: 15 September, 2011.

³⁶Standing Guy, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, Bloomsbury Academic, London and New York 2011.

versity graduates in the largest urban areas.³⁷ The Polish Central Statistical Office (Główny Urząd Statystycznych) presents current data which shows the amount of unemployment in four age brackets (15–24, 25–34, 35–44, over 45) in 2011. The citizens in the first age bracket (25%)³⁸ are twice as likely to be unemployed than those in the second. A much lower level of unemployment is found among older generations (in the total population it is around 12%). This “precarization” of the younger labour force could be read as a sign of systemic crisis or as a social problem particularly in the current economic depression, or when it is connected with minority positions.³⁹ This crisis condition corresponds with the different systemic obstacles which seemed to be external in comparison with the changes in the labour market sector. This area correlates with the degradation of the biological environmental and its demand for individual and collective activism and the work of a significant number of volunteers. I want to point out that the problem of this kind of *voluntas* is of a different type: “environmental *voluntas*”. I don’t intend to discuss the concept of this environmental *voluntas* in detail, but it is worth indicating particularly the dynamics of discovering environmental traps (in the practices of economic progress) which follow processes of growth of the environmental social movement which focuses public on about the danger of the worst scenarios of environmental changes. When we look at the mechanisms of effectiveness of the voluntary action approach, we can discuss the subject of motivations and values. As Lawrence suggests:

it may be more useful to assess such participatory activities [voluntary work] in terms of the balance of ‘external’ and ‘internal value’.⁴⁰

This, internally for the author, means the contribution of the participatory process – an essential aspect of traditional “*voluntas*” – to the fulfilment of personal self-realization. “External value” is understood as contextual, a point of reference, describing a more universal usefulness of

³⁷ 1,200 zloty (about 350 euros) means here the monthly payment typical for many first jobs (very close to the legal minimum wage). Monthly rent typically costs at least 1,000 zloty.

³⁸ <http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus>

³⁹ It can lead to “the riots of young” in the city centres, like in London in 2011 or one year later in a different cultural background in *Tahrir Square in Cairo*.

⁴⁰ Anna Lawrence, “No personal motive?” *Volunteer, Biodiversity and the False Dichotomies of Participation*, preprint of the article submitted for the consideration in *Ethics, Place & Environment* 2006, (available online, <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/>)

voluntary action for the nature or a society: a previously mentioned diversion of motive-values present, how socially complex are voluntary attitudes (not only in relation to ecological subjects), and what kind of problem it carries with. The author summarizes this with the question, "do we want good data or strong citizens?" – which discloses another dilemma, that of "praxis or ideology", or as I suggest before: "instrumental" or "transformative" approaches. The answer to the question is once again contextual and relates in my opinion to the pragmatism of the policy of state institutions (which can be more or less effective, or doctrinally weak), and the logic of the development of the social movement which cannot sufficiently implement given scientific or "practical" goals, but at the same time keeps the political potential for social change. This could be observed, for example, in the case of the "voluntary biological monitoring" (VBM) where:

activities which involve unpaid people, [was recruited, MN] from specialist amateurs to more typical members of the public, in collecting data about the spatial or temporal distribution of species and habitats. These activities can, on the surface, be easily identified with a top-down form of participation which does not challenge existing power and knowledge structures.⁴¹

This type of activity is linked to the tradition of natural history which has flourished in Europe (and particularly in Britain) since the 18th century. The early collection of data on flora and fauna was the result of a curiosity about nature and was collected (this should be particularly underlined) the newly discovered leisure time.⁴² Nowadays, the same movement is a "demand-driven" response to the scientists' or politicians' needs for information. Summing up: step by step VBM has reached a point where political questions had to be finally asked.

The other subject which could be discussed in the context of evolution of *voluntas* relates strictly to this ongoing increase in the amount of leisure time (outside of work, and outside family) as a *sine qua non* of voluntary action. The tendency for managing time, and the significant increase in mass participation in the context of the expanding public sphere gives chances to "take part" in all kinds of public gatherings, from political meetings (or processions) to Huisinga's *homo ludens* contexts of carnivals, large sport events, and contemporary festivals. I would like to call this type of the voluntary work entertainment *voluntas*.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² Ibidem.

As we know from our interviews, this type of voluntary activity is located somewhere between an introduction to civic participation (the effort to do some things for the community), simply “having fun” (or just playing), and collecting competences potentially useful for the future work. This multi-motivation analysis of the one phenomenon gives arguments for the interpretation of the new “entertainment *voluntas*” as a different type, not because of the exogenous pressure (as in the case of environmental *voluntas*), but similarly to social and political *voluntas* because of the endogenous tensions in western society itself. The first step in understanding it could be Huizinga’s theorizing (1938) about “playing” and its importance for modern society.⁴³ His construct of the *homo ludens* may be the important aspect of the suggested modern entertainment *voluntas*, or more precisely, playing *voluntas*. When the key category of ‘play’

is the opposite of seriousness, at least for mature adults (...) and when the serious business of life becomes unpleasant or intolerable, we can always resort to play either by seeking an alternative to reality in play, or else by transforming reality through play. Play is not only the easiest and most accessible path to the vision of a sublime life, it is also the *ideal path*.⁴⁴

Or using the words of Huizinga: the play itself (as the context of *homo ludens*) is

a voluntary activity or occupation executed within certain fixed limits of time and space, according to rules freely accepted but absolutely binding, having its aim in itself and accompanied by feeling of tension, joy, and the consciousness that it is different from ‘ordinary life’.⁴⁵

The typical condition of mass participation in play is rather being a spectator as a type of substitute for play in the original sense (for example being a football fan, or just a spectator). What seems to be important is the entertainment *voluntas* (as a kind of substitute for play) could be a relatively new phenomenon when we analyse the emergence of the new mass society, which meets aspects of the evolution of the new labour force.⁴⁶ The new conditions of sport spectacles (when we look at the football fans, ex-

⁴³Robert Anchor, *History and play. Huizinga and his critics*, History & Theory, February 1978, Vol. 17.

⁴⁴Ibidem, p. 70.

⁴⁵Ibidem, p. 71, following Huizinga 1955.

⁴⁶Gradual improvements in the quality of life (of the great many participants), of the way of spending growing amounts of leisure time, and the change in the structure of the

ample) makes room for an activity which is located somewhere between playing in the sense of action, "being a consumer" or consuming the show (or match), and being a part of the organization, but it is not clear which motive is the main one for participants (observing the show as close as possible, or collecting experiences in the sense of being a kind of co-origiator, a "performer" or a worker). Entertainment *voluntas* could be a variant of (or close to) labour *voluntas*, if we observe the bad conditions and growing barriers to the entry side of the labour market. This hypothesis is grounded in our investigation in Poland. The best example of the complexity of the motivation of volunteers could be experienced among volunteers in festivals or big sports events, sometimes described as "event volunteering". As suggest the authors of an article about the management of sports events volunteers,⁴⁷ the main potential of these already mentioned "unpaid workers" is "enthusiasm, a good relationship and empathy with the public, and [provision of] a cheaper labour force". But in the same time "the weakest link" is their reliability because of comparative conditions of the paid worker who could be easier managed by conventional financial tools. Here we can find the main specificity of "being volunteers" in the context of events (from the organizational point of view): a double condition. From one side the volunteers is a kind of imperfect worker on account of the reliability argument. From another aspect he or she represents a different type of motivation which needs to be reinforced by a different kind of tools, for example a "psychological contract".⁴⁸

THE VISION OF "VOLUNTARY WORK" AMONG STUDENTS FROM POZNAŃ

I want here to examine the motivation for volunteering more carefully. At first it should be analysed, what is voluntary participation for young people; I will then try to explore the content of the anticipated motivation to work as a volunteer. In research which finished in the summer of 2011, the group of scholars, mainly sociologists, asked respondents questions

labour market from a relatively homogeneous mass of blue workers to the diverse worker of the service sector.

⁴⁷Nichols Geoff, Ojala Ellen, *Understanding the Management of Sports Events Volunteers Through Psychological Contract Theory*, *Voluntas* 20, 2009.

⁴⁸*Ibidem*.

about their involvement with “voluntary work”.⁴⁹ The main positive answers related to the seven factors which coincided with the period-aspects described above.

The main and strongest factor correlates with the context of the new entertainment *voluntas*, which is the most typical for accidental voluntary activity. Event volunteering seems to be close to the “ideal type” (see tables 1 and 2 in the appendix).

The second factor statistically noticed in our investigation brings in the association with the most traditional view of *voluntas* – the belief that voluntary work is a way to make society better, to give something good back to society, and, for example, to do something valuable for oneself and for other people. This answer has similar correlations as in the case of the above-mentioned factor.

Particularly interesting are the third and the four factors, which describe the syndrome I call “voluntary labour”; this consists in our investigations of answers such as: people work as volunteers because they cannot find paid work; voluntary work is a way to round out knowledge from school, a way to collect experiences useful in professional work, or a way to find a good job. The same motive was found in the interviews with volunteers. However, it was almost always mentioned not as the first answer, but as a secondary motive or argument to support or rationalize the argumentation for this kind of activity.

The last and the weakest factors relate to the tradition of family or previous experiences. These answers present voluntary work as a kind

⁴⁹The broader research project, entitled “The organization of large events: The pros and cons of engaging volunteers” was designed by the team assembled around the Department of Economic Sociology and Local Government of the Institute of Sociology, Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, Poland. The project was carried out over ten months, from the autumn of 2010 to the summer of 2011. During the project, researchers collected 60 in-depth interviews from organizers of voluntary work, managers, and tutors, and also carried out social surveys with young students and volunteers (1400 questionnaires) in three large Polish cities: Gdańsk, Poznań, and Wrocław. The answers to the questions of “what does voluntary work mean?” have been grouped together on the basis of factor analysis into seven groups (tab. 1.). voluntary work means: (1) a way to meet famous people or to get to know the “backstage” of the game (in relation to the events); (2) a way to simply have fun; (3) a way to spend engagingly leisure time; (4) a way to make society better; (5) a way to do something good for society; (6) a way to do something valuable to oneself and for other people; (7) a way to feel part of society; (8) something to do because it’s hard to find paid work; (9) a way to round out knowledge from school; (10) a way to collect experiences useful in professional work; (11) a way to find good work; (12) something done because I’ve worked this way before (continuation); (13) continuing a tradition of their own family; (14) a way to gain a career in politics.

of way of life which is passed on from generation to generation. Our respondents' answers were as follows: people work as volunteers because they have worked that way before (continuation), or they are continuing the tradition of their own family. This may suggest that it is "a splinter" of the ethos of the Central European concept of the intelligentsia, which is itself another allusion (like the previously mentioned second factor) to the former for the modern concept of civic *voluntas* (see table 1).

FINAL STATEMENT

Before I conclude with my interpretation of late modern voluntary work, I will show some facts about voluntary work in Poland, as an empirical context for the presented interpretation. At first, the post-transformational model of voluntary work seems to be different to that of most north and western European countries. The percentage of people who stated that they work as volunteers for an organization is relatively low (6–7%) (CBOS 2011). At the same time, the statements of positive orientation toward cooperation with others—in helping those who need support—is around the level of 50–60%, and increased from 2002 to 2011 (see figure 2).

60% of respondents in 2011 declared that voluntary work is not respected in their social environment (neighbourhood), and 20% had no answer. For more than 60% of respondents, this disrespected activity means unpaid work for public institutions (e.g. hospitals), and for more than 50%, it is work for associations. When we try to summarise, voluntary work (based on the above data) is a relatively unpopular activity defined broadly in the social work context. As we know from our investigation, it is either a kind of action familiar from spending leisure time in a commitment with the other.

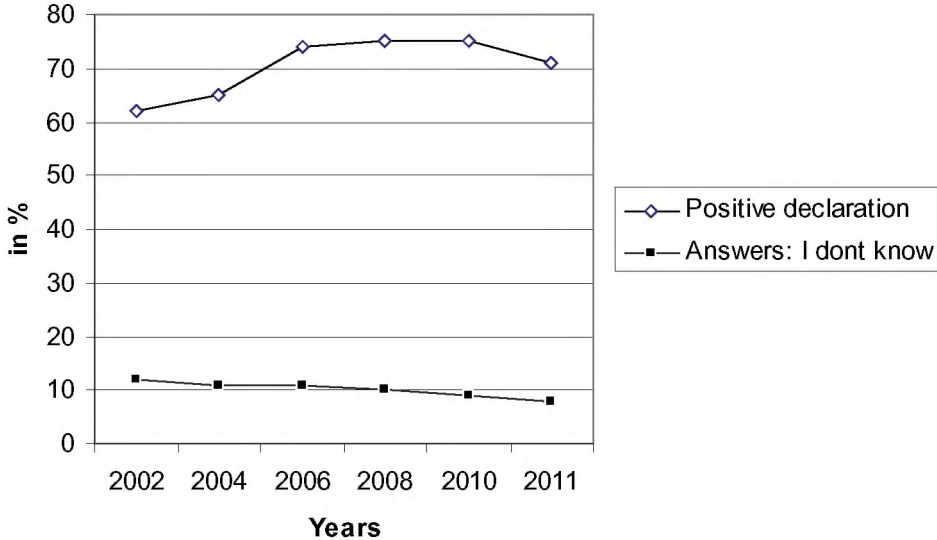
The system's "sticking plaster" metaphor offered an interpretation which focused on the late modern domination of ineffective systems of regulations. The questions of volunteering needs to be interpreted as a problem of dialectic. The position of *voluntas* as an attitude or motivation seems to be more and more a "niche" activity. At the same time, the kind of activity of citizens which we call "voluntary work" seems to be more popular, and more important particularly because of the structural pressure on the social position of the worker, the increased expectation of the employ-

Table 1. Results of factor analysis based on the question, "what does voluntary work mean?"

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Voluntary work is a way to meet famous people or to get to know the "backstage" of the game (in relation to the events).	0.682						
Voluntary work is a way to simply have fun.	0.626						
Voluntary work is a way to spend engagingly leisure time.	0.619						
Voluntary work is a way to make society better.		0.758					
Voluntary work is a way to do something good for society.		0.731					
Voluntary work is a way to make something valuable for oneself and for other people.		0.677					
Voluntary work is a way to feel part of society.		0.666					
People work as volunteers because they cannot find paid work.			0.657				
Voluntary work is the way to round out knowledge from school.				0.735			
Voluntary work is a way of collecting experiences useful in professional work				0.702			
Voluntary work is the way to find good work.				0.616			
People work as volunteers because they have worked that way before (continuation).						0.761	
People are continuing a family tradition.						0.740	
Voluntary work is a way to gain a career in politics.							0.756

Factors analysis. Rotation - Varimax with the Keiser's normalization

Figure 2. Positive and neutral answers over the years 2002–2011 to the question: "Can people like you in cooperation with the others help those who need support solving problems of the local social environment, or of the district, city, or area?".



Source: Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej [Center for Public Opinion Research], report BS/63/2011 entitled "Młody, bogaty, wykształcony, religijny – mit polskiego wolontariusza" [Young, rich, educated, religious – the myth of the Polish volunteer], May 2011.

er in the global competitive service sector, and more than anything else, the consequence of the deconstruction of the concept of full employment. As a result, voluntary work becomes a kind of substitute which from the other side showing an area where so much has happened, and so much change in social life, and we can discuss in a similar area new kinds of social problems. Showing data in some points has, I hope, demonstrated empirically the reasonability of the intention to expand the Enlightenment, and the modern concept of voluntary work, but because of its complexity the problem of new *voluntas* needs to be seen as a more systematic scientific project.

Appendix

Table 2. Spearman's rho correlation between answers to the questions of voluntary work: what does it mean, offered in the block of questions in the survey in Poland (N=1420).

	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Voluntary work is a way to meet famous people or to know the "backstage" of the game (in relation to the events).		0.361**	0.316**
		0.000	0.000
(2) Voluntary work is the way to simply have fun.	0.361**		0.575**
	0.000		0.000
(3) Voluntary work is the way to spend engagingly leisure time.	0.316**	0.575**	
	0.000	0.000	

** Double sided correlation significant.

Marek Nowak – sociologist and Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Sciences, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. He specializes in the problems of an economic sociology, social mobility, and social activism. He is the author of a book about institutionalism, and co-editor of collections of texts concerning radical social change (with K. Brzechczyn: *O rewolucji. Obrazy radykalnej zmiany społecznej* [On Revolution. Pictures of Radical Social Change], Wydawnictwo Instytutu Filozofii UAM, Poznań 2007), revitalization of the city (with M. Nowosielski, *Declining Cities/Developing Cities: Polish and German Perspectives*, Wydawnictwo Instytutu Zachodniego, Poznań 2008), and spatial mobility (with M. Nowosielski: *(Post)transformational Migration. Inequality Welfare State, and Horizontal Mobility*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2011). He is the head of the Poznań Branch of the Polish Sociological Association.