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Social Citizenship and Institution Building:
EU-Enlargement and the Restructuring of Welfare States in East Central Europe

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Abstract

With the EU-enlargement process well underway, this paper focuses on social citizenship as a conceptual frame for analyzing the restructuring of social institutions in applicant countries in East Central Europe. So far, comparative welfare state analysis has concentrated mainly on the developed economies of the OECD-countries; there is little systematic analytical work on the transitions in post-communist Europe. Theoretically, this paper builds on comparative welfare state analysis as well as on new institutionalism. The initial hypothesis is built on the assumption that emerging patterns of social support and social security diverge from the typology described in the comparative welfare state literature inasmuch as the transformation of post-communist societies is distinctly different from the building of welfare states in Europe. The paper argues that institution-building is shaped by and embedded in the process of European integration and part of governance in the EU. Anticipating full membership in the European Union, the applicant countries have to adapt to the rules and regulations of the EU, including the "social acquis." Therefore, framing becomes an important feature of institutional changes. The paper seeks to identify distinct patterns and problems of the institutionalization of social citizenship.

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The restructuring of Europe after 1989/90 has led to major transformations of societies and social institutions. Across the board, the countries in transition in Eastern and Central Europe have pursued rigorous liberalist economic policies -- described as "shock therapy" -- which have greatly affected political, economic and social relations in these societies. The restructuring of social institutions is one of the major challenges facing post-communist societies today. Given the perspectives of EU-enlargement, most applicant countries are anticipating full membership in the near future and adapting to the rules and regulations of the European Union. The following paper will focus on the emerging new patterns of (re-)building social institutions and social citizenship in the applicant countries in East Central Europe in the context of EU-enlargement.

Since multi-level governance in the European Union includes social standards and social rights as an important dimension of post-Maastricht Europe, the restructuring of welfare states and social policies is closely intertwined with EU-norms, rules and regulations. As Pierson and Leibfried argue: "National welfare states remain the primary institutions of European social policy, but they do so in the context of an increasingly constraining multi-tiered polity." (Leibfried/Pierson 2000:268) While the EU has not assumed an activist role in the field of social policy (despite the Commission's attempt to construct a "European social model" in 1994), notable changes occurred since the mid-1990s.¹ The Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) includes a fully developed Social Chapter which consolidates and universalizes the social dimensions. The Social chapter broadens the two "original mandates" -- health and safety in the workplace environment and gender equality -- and places them under qualified majority voting. Moreover, the British government has finally signed the social protocol, and the inclusion of new EU member-states, notably Sweden, Finland, and Austria, has strengthened the coalition of countries supporting the social policy consensus in Europe.² Social policies are still primarily shaped and sustained by member states, but the tentative adoption of the

¹ According to Leibfried and Pierson, three characteristics of the emerging multi-tiered system stand out: a propensity towards "joint decision traps", and policy immobilism; a prominent role of the courts in policy developments; and an unusually tight coupling to market-making processes (Leibfried/Pierson 2000: 287).

² The Swedish presidency of the European Council 2001 emphasizes three „e`s“: enlargement, employment, and environment.

“Charter of Fundamental Rights” at the Intergovernmental Conference in Nice (2000), includes a full chapter on “solidarity,” further lending support to the European “*social acquis*”.

The discourse about social standards and social rights is all the more important given the perspectives of EU-enlargement which is now the key issue in Europe. Since the mid-1990's, the European Union has actively moved to include the post-communist countries in the Union. In 1998, the European Commission approved Accession Partnerships for 10 applicant countries in Central Europe, Cyprus, and Turkey, and the first round of accession negotiations was opened with Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Cyprus. In December 1999 the Commission proposed an additional six countries, including Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania, and Slovakia (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg1a/enlarge>). The Council of Ministers meeting in Nice confirmed the prospective membership of the 12 countries, introducing new institutional provisions concerning their representation in the European Parliament, the re-weighting of votes in the Council, and their size and representation in the Commission.³

Social policy and employment are key areas for the European Union to assess the depth and scope of recent transformations. Regular reports published by the Commission evaluating the progress towards meeting the “Copenhagen criteria” and the implementation of institutional reforms show that all countries (with the exception of Turkey) have already fulfilled the political criteria (institutions guaranteeing democracy), and significant progress has been made in establishing a market economy (with Romania showing the greatest problems).⁴ But only Cyprus and Malta fully meet the economic criteria; severe problems remain in the post-communist countries also regarding legal and institutional adjustment.⁵ As crude as these criteria may be, the Commission Reports identify major problems in the region showing that adaptation processes still lack coherence and cohesion. In fact, recent studies conducted in East Central European countries have voiced concern about social exclusion, high poverty rates, and the lack of a universal notion of social protection (Deacon et. al. 1999; Koncz 2000; Szalai 2001).

³ Treaty of Nice (2000), Protocol on the Enlargement of the European Union.

⁴ Full EU-membership for these countries requires meeting the criteria set by the Copenhagen conference (1993) of the European Council; these include development of democracy and the rule of law, protection of minorities, economic reforms, including employment and social affairs, and the adaptation of the *acquis communautaire* of the EU (e. g. Avery/Cameron, 1998).

⁵ From the European Commission: Regular Report, October 13, 2000. The report includes the six countries first included in the negotiations in 1998, and the six countries added in 1999. The following refers to the country Regular Report on Hungary, Oct. 13, 2000, and the Regular Report on Poland, Nov. 8, 2000. The latter report states for the area of social policy and employment that „little progress has been made as regards to the adoption of legislation.“ In terms of economic, social and cultural rights, the issue of equal opportunities Poland has made no progress; job gender-specific job advertisements and domestic violence are explicitly mentioned.

While most observers agree that the political transition to establish democratic rules and procedures in post-communist East Central Europe is well-advanced, key problems have arisen in the realm of economic restructuring, including problems of social exclusion and deprivation. Despite the promising growth of the annual GDP in recent years, deeply rooted political conflicts, as well as social tensions and marginalization have not diminished. Lasting massive unemployment, third world-type poverty, and a widening gap between rich and poor raise doubts about the scope and depth of the transition in the future. The building of social institutions and the establishment of social rights for citizens has become an issue of utmost importance to these societies, often linked to the very “essence” of democracy itself (Szalai 2001). As Julia Szalai writes: “In order to prevent the ultimate splitting of Hungarian society, most urgently, the legal guarantees for universal social rights should be laid down in a categorical manner.” (Szalai 2001:47)

With the EU-enlargement process well underway, this paper will focus on *social citizenship* as a conceptual and political basis for the social dimension within the new Europe. So far, there is little systematic analytical work on the transitions in Eastern and Central Europe. More than a decade after the regime change, however, it is worth analyzing social institution-building more thoroughly.⁶ In light of major changes in Europe it addresses welfare development in the countries in transition in East Central Europe. With respect to the significance of social citizenship for the process of European integration, the research owes much to social constructivist theories of European integration (e.g. Rosamond 2000; Pierson 1996). According to this approach, institutionalized norms, rules and regulations shape perceptions and practices in European politics, which in turn affect the process of conceptualizing national policy programs, in this case regarding the countries in transition.

Conceptually, the analysis seeks to explain the institutionalization of social policies in light of the prospects of full membership in the European Union. Preliminary research shows that trust in social institutions is low due to the high degree of uncertainty in establishing reliable social institutions and programs. I hypothesize that *framing issues* in a particular way, for example by codifying social programs as citizenship rights, rather than as poor relief, may support the process of universalized institution-building in the transition countries. Very little is known, however, about how these frames of reference shape the perceptions of those actors in the transition countries who are responsible for policy-making and accountable to their constituencies. More research is needed to assess the procedural power of EU norms and regulations on these countries. Nevertheless, there is some substantial research supporting our claim that cognitive frames serve to adapt to (or diverge from) established rules once the rules and procedures are established. The frames are often informed by historically shaped, culturally embedded patterns of how problems are conceptualized, how policy choices are confronted, and how outcomes are shaped. It can be argued that this holds true for the

⁶ This research is part of a larger project. The author wishes to thank Katrin Toens for comments and contributions for an earlier version of this paper.

enlargement process (Schimmelfennig 2001); it is well-worth exploring this process further in times of fundamental structural change now underway in East Central Europe.

The initial hypothesis of the paper therefore holds that the prospects of inclusion in the EU establishes a framework of reference that provides an important (cognitive and symbolic) resource in the institutionalization of social policies.

In the following, I will mainly address conceptual issues involved in the analysis of changes in post-communist Europe and discuss their meaning for social citizenship. Drawing on comparative institutionalist and social constructivist theories of European integration, the paper seeks to explore the institutional framework for social policy and social citizenship within the context of European integration by focusing on the emerging welfare state arrangements in post-communist Europe. Some of the broader issues involved in the project include the following: What kind of welfare state arrangements are emerging in the region? How does European integration affect the restructuring of welfare policies, and what is the role of EU-imposed social standards and regulations in conceptualizing and establishing social policy programs? Is there a "Europeanization" of social standards in the "new world of welfare" emerging in Central and Eastern Europe or are these countries departing from the welfare consensus common to most European societies? The initial hypothesis is built on the assumption that emerging patterns of social support and social security diverge from the typology described in the comparative welfare state literature inasmuch as the transformation of post-communist societies is distinctly different from the building of welfare states in Europe.

In the first section, I will address the meaning of social citizenship as a conceptual framework for the analysis. I will then focus on the new world of welfare policies in Central Europe and lay out the analytical dimensions of state-society relations in the countries in transition; here, examples will mainly be given from Poland and Hungary, two countries most involved with accession negotiations for some time. The mapping of these new welfare policies should, however, be open for further comparative analysis. In the third section, I will discuss the significance of the "social dimension" within the European Union and conclude with some thoughts on its significance within the process of enlargement.

Conceptual Issues: Comparing Welfare States and the Meaning of Social Citizenship

Comparative welfare state analysis found that welfare states are deeply entrenched in European politics (Pierson, 1994; Pierson/Leibfried, 1995; Schmidt, 1998). At the same time, the institutional and legal set-up of welfare policies exhibits great variations from country to country. In order to systematically compare and contrast the multi-variant cases, comparative welfare state analysis has grouped countries according to the range and scope of welfare rights granted to citizens. In one of the most influential works, Esping-Andersen distinguishes "three worlds" of welfare capitalism: liberal, conservative/ corporatist, and social democratic (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Focusing on the question to what extent welfare states enable their citizens to lead an economically

and socially agreeable life independent from the market, he forms clusters of welfare states according to the extent of “decommodification” (reducing the significance of being a “commodity,” or reliance on wage labor). The regime typology is built on a power resource model, that is to say, Esping-Andersen assumes that the degree of decommodification depends on the power and influence of social groups in society, such as unions and parties on the left. In the Social democratic welfare regime type (Sweden, Norway) decommodification is highest whereas the liberal welfare regime type (US, Canada, Great Britain) relies heavily on market-based mechanisms; i. e. private insurance schemes (pensions, education, health). The conservative regime (Germany, France) is placed in the middle, since it supports some groups in society more than others (based on corporatism and a stronger role of the church). Another cluster of states can be found in Southern Europe (“Latin Rim”) (Lessenich/Ostner 1998).

This typology has served as a frame of reference in most comparative international studies (e.g. MIRE, 1994 and 1997). However, recent research on welfare states points to the limits of Esping-Andersen’s model (Lessenich/Ostner, 1998). I will therefore modify the comparative approach for my purposes. *First*, the model hypothesizes a high degree of path-dependency. Research conducted about changing welfare policies in the past two decades shows that policy choices vary even in countries with similar features; to what extent this is the case is influenced by a number of internal and external factors (Blanke et. al., 2000). Applying the variation hypothesis to East Central Europe, preliminary research shows that countries pursue quite different paths, notwithstanding the shared communist legacies and similar pressures of privatization. Analytically, we should therefore apply a rather weak version of the path-dependency hypothesis.

Second, gender-sensitive analysis found that the welfare regime clustering neglects the gendered social construction of welfare programs. Ann Orloff (1993) argues, for example, that social institutions are historically formed and based on different constructions of citizenship with male and female connotations. The focus on “decommodification” is misleading, since it ignores social activities other than market-based employment. It gives only passing attention to family and other social services, and it excludes power relations between women and men. Following Orloff, a number of authors have argued that the relation of the welfare state to paid labor should not be divorced analytically from its relation to the organization of caring and reproductive labor, much of which is done by women but not acknowledged as a basis for welfare rights and benefits in the same way as men’s wage labor (Fraser, 1997; Langan/Ostner, 1991, O’Connor, 1992). In fact, as British social scientist Jane Lewis points out, there are many ways of constructing typologies of welfare regimes. One alternative way, for example, is to analyze “caring regimes,” e.g. the conditions under which people engage in family and care work (Lewis, 1997). In transition countries, women are involved to a much higher degree than men in coping with the social costs of economic transformation, securing family survival, fighting poverty and social exclusion, as well as discrimination in the workplace.

Since gender forms a decisive cleavage in transforming societies, a gender-sensitive approach is best suited to assess the emerging welfare state patterns.

Third, comparative historical analysis insists on variations in power coalitions that have influenced policy outcomes (Sainsbury, 1998). Social rights and social institutions are not only informed by working class movements and leftist parties in power (as proposed in Esping-Anderson's work); for example, the impact of civic initiatives, for example formed by social workers or women's groups, as well as charity organizations, prove to have a significant influence on the building of social institutions. So far, transition countries have suffered from high political volatility and low political party cohesion. A lasting impact of "leftist" governments on institution building will be difficult to prove. The approach should therefore be open to multi-faceted organizational influences. For example, the mushrooming of NGOs and civic groups in the region seem to have influenced the building of social policies, and research should take these actors into account.

A key to understanding the different dimensions of welfare states is *social citizenship*, a concept widely applied in the welfare state literature. Rights and liberties that citizens enjoy can be distinguished in three categories: civil, political and social rights. According to the writings of T. H. Marshall (1950) these three forms developed in a consecutive, albeit complex manner. In the first category of rights, Marshall groups civil rights, i.e. basic human rights, such as the integrity of body, freedom of speech, religion, which emerged in the 18th century (French Revolution; American Revolution). Political rights compose the second group, including the right to vote, universal citizenship, political participation and representation, which developed since the late 19th century. Social rights constitute the third group of rights, including the right to basic support and income, as well as welfare rights, which became characteristic in the second half of the 20th century. Countries follow distinctly different paths in establishing these three sets of rights, but it can be stated that the notion of social rights is nowadays deeply embedded in all European countries. It is also featured in important EU-documents, including the "Charter of Fundamental Rights" adopted at the Nice summit in 2000.

Conceptually, the notion of social citizenship presents a more encompassing concept of social policy provisions as compared to specific fragmented welfare programs like poverty relief, or means-tested benefits. Social rights refer to *institutionalized rights and routinized practices* of citizenship in a given society. Using this concept allows us to address important questions in the countries in transition: Are social policy programs universal in scope and meaning or targeted at particular social groups and therefore fragmented? Are programs primarily contribution-based or do they feature mechanisms of redistribution? Is social citizenship embedded in a comprehensive concept or does it remain rudimentary? The citizenship approach, moreover, opens a gender-sensitive perspective on the transition process in Eastern and Central Europe. On the basis of citizenship rights, social citizenship provisions would be encompassing and gender-sensitive; they would be grounded in a universal notion of citizenship, rather than in ascribed roles and different functions of women and men, a perspective

which is no longer considered to be legitimate in the light of social justice and gender equity today (Maier/Klausen 2000).

From an institutional perspective, four different institutions provide social services and support: family, state, market, and civil society.

Social Policy: The Providers

State/Public Sector	Family
Market /Private Sector	Civil Society/Informal Sector

Historical legacies, the influence of social groups or movements and political coalitions as well as cultural traditions shape the institutional design and policy processes in a particular country. In each of the social domains three main dimensions can be distinguished to assess the scope and depth of social citizenship: institutions, methods, scope of social services and programs.

Table 1: Assessing social citizenship: Institutional providers and dimensions of social support

Dimensions of Provision	Providers			
	State/Public Sector	Market	Family	Civil Society
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - State administration (national level) - Local/regional authorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private insurance - Company support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inter-generational and/or intra-generational - Extended or nuclear family - New forms, e.g. single-parents, same sex communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Charity organizations (e.g. church) - Voluntary associations - informal networks (e.g. neighborhoods, self-help groups)
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - legal regulations - taxation/redistribution - regulation and administrative procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - profit/non-profit organizations - insurance agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - male-breadwinner - dual-breadwinner - caregiver parity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - informal/voluntary - grass-roots, non-hierarchical - collective action, corporate arrangements
Scope of social services and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - universal programs - targeted programs - major actors to guarantee social rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - selected groups, discretionary coverage - based on contribution - limited range 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - major amount of care-work - household-work - indirect access to social rights (e.g. parental or maternity leave) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - community or group-based - unlimited scope, limited access to social rights

The New World of Welfare: Social Citizenship in Transition Countries in East Central Europe

Earlier research on the transition countries found only incremental changes in the area of social policy and social assistance. In comparative studies of welfare state development, Ulrike

Götting (1994, 1998) shows, for example, that policy changes in the immediate post-communist period were, at best, “moderate.” The restructuring of the economic system, legal and administrative reforms, and outside influences have meanwhile led to more substantial changes in welfare policies. Initial expectations that a universalist (Swedish) model of welfare could replace the paternalistic communist state experience proved unrealistic. With states' capacities to cope with social costs of transformation decreasing and poverty rates increasing, social policy arrangements are facing more fundamental challenges. Recent reports depict a more complex picture of the development of social policies and social citizenship (e.g. Deacon, 1998; Heinen, 1999; Szalai 2001; OECD, 1996; UNICEF, 2000).

Using unemployment as an indicator, for example, the data show that there is a great need for social support and new social programs in all transforming countries; in all post-communist countries unemployment rates are high and, with the exception of Hungary, well above the European average.

Table 2: Unemployment rates, selected years and countries⁷
(Unemployment as a percentage of the labor force)

	Total			Male			Female		
	1990	1995	1997	1990	1995	1997	1990	1995	1997
Hungary	1.7	10.2	8.7	1.8	11.3	9.5	1.4	8.7	7.8
Poland	6.3	13.3	11.2	12.2	12.1	9.6	14.7	14.7	13.2
Slovakia	6.6	13.1	11.6	6.3	13.8	10.8	6.9	12.6	12.5
Latvia	2.3	18.9	14.4	1.8	19.7	14.3	2.8	18.0	14.6
Europe	5.0	9.9	9.8	4.3	9.2	9.2	6.9	11.1	10.7

Despite the need for new social programs, social citizenship is a highly contested concept. The notion that social support is part of a *broader concept of citizenship rights*, which should not only be need-based, as is the case with respect to classic poor relief programs, nor simply left to the markets, is not very well established. For example, as Julia Szalai (2001) shows for the case of Hungary, the “Social Welfare Act” passed in 1993, introduced “contribution-based schemes” for social policy provisions and pitted “deserving” and “undeserving” segments of the population against each other, opening the space for fierce rivalry between groups for the status of “most needy”. Under this scheme, the inverse effects include more support for those who are better positioned in the market

⁷ Adapted from: *World Labour Report 2000, Income Security and Social Protection in a Changing World*, International Labour Office, Geneva, pp. 282-183.

(commanding more efficient resources and lobbying more effectively) than for the increasing segment of the population in need of temporary or long-term support.

I will identify and sketch the major dilemmas for the institutionalization of social citizenship in the following along the four provider dimensions:

Debilitating states: With respect to the different social institutions providing social services, the *weakness of states* to guarantee social rights is one of the most striking features of the transition period (Elster/Offe/Preuss, 1998). This is not only the case with regard to the problem of under-funded social programs -- an issue in all of the transition countries. Rather, there are built-in institutional mechanisms that contribute to the fragile scope of social citizenship. *First*, reports from Hungary, Poland, and other countries show that there are conflicting views about the root-causes of social exclusion, poverty and increasing income-inequality resulting in contrasting conceptions about the responsibilities of states to offer social protection and to prevent poverty. The predominant market-driven approach to economic restructuring generally neglects deeply-rooted structural causes, and fails to consider comprehensive approaches to social integration. This logic is ill-equipped to embrace comprehensive notions of social citizenship. *Second*, processes of lobbying the state clearly favor resource-strong and privileged segments of the population. There is substantial evidence that the legacies of the communist era include unequal access to the channels of power and influence. As Julia Szalai writes “Each day brings news of petitions emphasizing the obligation of the state to compensate various strata of the population for their losses caused by inflation. It would appear that Hungarian society, now in the process of systemic changes, wants the state to be weak politically, but stronger in its economic power than ever before. The developments quite clearly indicate that while the time for detotalization has come, the era for denationalization is still on its way.” (2001:32) *Third*, crucial political decisions for administering social policies had counterproductive effects for establishing the notion of universal social rights. In Poland, for example, decentralization, introduced with large-scale administrative reforms in 1999, leaves funding of social assistance and family support to the communities. However, particularly in rural areas and in poorer regions of the country, many communities are incapable of meeting their obligations, leaving in particular women and children in conditions of great need. After experiencing the first results of institutional reforms, findings suggest that states fail to enforce rights in the realm of social policies even when laws exist (Heinen, 1999). Similar indications of state weakness can be found in other countries. In Hungary, decentralization of the state has produced severe problems for social policies (Szalai 2001:31) The shifting of power from central to local and regional administrations led to an unclear division of responsibilities and duties within the new democratic system of governance.⁸ The law left social support to the discretion of

⁸ The report of the EU-Commission on Hungary (1999), section on regional policy and cohesion, finds that the 1996 law on regional development has not been implemented sufficiently; the law reestablished Regional Development Councils but does not allocate financial resources; there are still weak regional organizations. – Julia Szalai argues that both,

communities, with the result of great discrepancies between the communities, increasing inequalities rather than alleviating them (Szalai 2001:30).

Defecting firms: One of the most troubling aspects of the new economies is the large share of the informal economy. The importance of the informal sector of the economy in transition countries has increased significantly in recent years (estimates are up to 30 percent in East Central Europe). The problems arising from this development are multifold. First, informality undermines fiscal consolidation of the state. Due to corruption and black market mechanisms, firms involved in these practices evade taxes, thus reducing the capabilities of states to allocate adequate funds to social programs. Moreover, the existence of a larger informal sector undermines trust in state institutions to provide social support. Protective umbrella-style institutions, which have been observed in the transition countries, provide the “strong hand” allocating resources, but they undermine public trust in state institutions. (In Russia, the state has sharply lost credibility in the social realm; the failure of the state to provide even for basic social needs has strengthened the credibility of these other “actors.” As one Russian scholar commented in an exploratory interview with the author, it is more important to be in good standing with the Mafia to find support in case of need than to hope for timely state support.)

Because of lasting and high rates of unemployment, the establishment of new social institutions, such as unemployment insurance, are of high importance; yet insurance schemes are still fragile and companies are reluctant to share in the costs to restructuring the workforce. Pressure to reduce the workforce during the transition has been high. According to UNICEF data about 26 million jobs were lost in the transition countries (14 million of these jobs were held by women); but there are significant shifts in employment as well; sectors expanding are often in banking and financial services. However, retraining and unemployment support is either weakly institutionalized or under-funded. Another problem is gender discrimination. Facing higher rates of unemployment and sex discrimination in the work place has led women to seek support from outside actors rather than relying on firms.⁹ A wide variety of non-governmental organizations, including EU-supported programs, try to fill the gaps of professional retraining and support; to become a “business woman” is an important image now in Poland and elsewhere. For example, a study about women's organizations in Poland found that most NGOs were in some way providing social services, often supporting women to work and aiming to enhance their professional opportunities in the labor market (Fuchs 2000).

Reprivatization of social cost: In order to buffer the crisis of transition, families have become major fall-back institutions of support (Koncz 2000). Informal family and neighborhood ties assume an increasing role in providing social services and securing survival. In fact, the scale of coping

the Social Welfare act and the Act on Local Governments, need amendments to secure coverage.

⁹ The EU-Commission country report for Poland (2000) states that the issue of equal opportunities Poland has made no progress; job gender-specific job advertisements and domestic violence are explicitly mentioned as areas of concern.

strategies ranges from individual exploitation within the family to new forms of family support schemes, showing the strength of individual coping strategies (as compared to state programs) in securing a decent life. Most often, however, there is no legal or economic compensation for the work in providing social services. Also, in assessing social support, significant gaps between *de jure* and *de facto* regulations can be found. This is, for example, the case in the granting of family leave. Influenced by the prospect of entering the EU and adapting to European regulations, child-rearing leave in Poland was equally attributed to fathers and mothers; nevertheless there is nearly no money allocated for this provision (Heinen 1999:56). Therefore, traditional gender roles are reinforced, further inhibiting chances to secure decent support, e. g. for health and old age pensions schemes, given the contribution-based system.

Weakness of civil society: Overall, the literature on transition found that institutions of civil society are rather weak in respect to their impact on social relations and their influence on political decisions. Labor unions often fight to preserve privileges for particular segments of workers and collective bargaining processes may be malfunctioning.¹⁰ However, in respect to social services several studies about the transition countries point to a significant increase in social services provided by voluntary and non-governmental institutions (e.g. Götting, 1998). In countries where churches are influential, like in Poland, the church and related charity organizations are among the more active parts of society devoting resources, for example to running programs for handicapped, fighting alcohol abuse, and supporting needy citizens. Despite the immensely important services these institutions may provide, the discretionary nature of such services (charity as opposed to a social right) undermines universalist notions of social citizenship. Civil society institutions, voluntary groups and charity organizations therefore primarily serve to fill the gaps left by the departed state.

Framing Social Citizenship: Social Policy and EU-Institutions

While neither intergovernmentalism nor classic neo-functionalism have sufficient explanatory power to theorize the integration process after the signing of the Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties, the notion of multilevel governance seems to be best suited described the process of European integration (Kohler-Koch/Jachtenfuchs, 1996; Marks, 1998; Rosamond 2000). Governance is embedded in a multidimensional institutional setting based on collective decision-making in EU-supranational as well as in intergovernmental institutions in which not only national governments, but also various EU-actors, policy-networks, and transnational actors shape policy outcomes. Decision-making in the EU-enlargement process is shaped by the normative and institutional framework laid out in the *acquis communautaire* of the EU; the criteria outlined in the Copenhagen summit (1993) are binding for the applicant countries. Thus, institutional and legal adaptation is required even before these countries become full members of the EU. This process may be conceptualized as an

¹⁰ „Social Dialogue“ is a key phrase for institution building required by the EU.

“anticipating adaptation” following a neo-institutionalist perspective. That is to say, countries may adapt to the rules and norms of EU-governance even before they are members of the Euro-polity, anticipating their full membership in the future. This form of adaptation is rather unique and only feasible because of high institutional “thickness” in the EU. The model applied assumes that once regulative institutions, such as the EU, are established, they generate power to shape policies in adjacent regions in particular if the rules and regulations of the organization are legally binding, highly routinized and grounded in a network of institutional decision-making.

While the speed and scope of economic integration is not matched by social integration, the idea of European-wide social standards, or the “*social acquis*”, gained a higher profile more recently in the EU-process. This development was again highlighted in the process of drafting a European “Charter of Fundamental Rights” which defines social rights in a comprehensive manner.¹¹

According to a conference organized by the EU-Commission in Prague on May 11 and 12, 2000, social policy is “at the heart of the enlargement process”. The participants of the Prague conference emphasized the need:

“1) to ensure that social protection is not marginalized in relation to other policies, but, on the contrary, to modernize it in response to demographic change and ensure more satisfactory cover of increasing unemployment and social exclusion; 2) to develop financially-sound social protection systems which can also help to smooth the process of economic transition (for instance, by stimulating employment) and maintain political stability” (DG Employment and Social Affairs, 2000:19).

The incorporation of the Commission guidelines for social policy into the institutions, laws and national practices of the candidate countries is considered to be an important precondition for EU-Membership.

The impact of European integration on the candidate countries is complex and multifold. From an optimistic viewpoint, membership in the EU will provide support for the economic and social transition, including the region in a vibrant European market and completing its “return to Europe” (Spanish model). From a negative perspective, East Central Europe will at best provide an arsenal for cheap labor (which seems to be the comparative advantage of the region), with the social ills outlined above persisting for a longer period of time, while not alleviating social exclusion, discrimination, and poverty (Latin-Americanization).

The approach proposed here follows a more complex model. The prospects of inclusion in the EU establish a framework of reference that constitutes an important resource in the institutionalization of social policies and social citizenship in a variety of dimensions. Institutional and legal adaptation in

¹¹ The „Charter on Fundamental Rights“ consists of seven chapters: Rights, Freedoms, Equality, Solidarity, Citizens’ Rights, Justice, and General Provisions. Chapter IV on solidarity, articles 27 to 38, contains provisions ranging from the right to collective bargaining (2), to fair and just working conditions (31), provisions for maternity and parental leave (33), social security and social assistance (34), health care (35), environmental protection (37) to consumer protection (38). The priority of member states is coded in the statement that rights are granted „in accordance with national legislation“ (e. g. article 34), but the scope of rights is far-reaching.

the candidate countries proceed in different ways that correspond to the distinct conditions shaping options and choices in the field of social policies. The notion of social citizenship can provide a cognitive frame for these pathways. *First*, to ensure a universalist notion of social support, *state structures*, in particular relations between local and state administration need to be reworked. One way to accomplish an improvement of social services on the local and regional levels would be to enhance decentralization and clarify administrative responsibilities of local governments, while establishing the crucial responsibility of the central state, a process which should include mechanisms of redistribution (e. g. comparable to the German burden equalization between the states). The linking of structural funds to this process could be one tool to inducing the equalization of support. *Second*, a comprehensive notion of social rights, common in EU-countries can support those seeking to establish such comprehensive concepts in their countries (see e. g. Szalai 2001). Fighting corruption and reducing informality is one important feature. Moreover, supporting *employment policies* can be another effective way to universalize social benefits and security schemes. Using policy-coordination, a policy mode within the EU described by Helen Wallace to “share experience and to encourage the spread of best-practice” (Wallace 2000: 33), such concerted coordination could serve to support active employment policies, reduce the informality of employment patterns, and even combat gender discrimination.

Third, *gender equality* is an important feature for social citizenship. Improving access to employment, establishing wage equality, equal employment and affirmative action policies could improve the situation. In this respect gender mainstreaming, which is now a major concept in the EU providing a repertoire of action, may be a very important conceptual tool to enhance the social status of women and families more generally, by improving the employment situation of women. Gender equity can not *per se* abolish poverty, but enhance the situation of women and families, and reduce the pressing problem of child poverty and support the building of social capital urgently needed to reduce social exclusion.

Last, but not least, on a highly symbolic level, the “Charter on Fundamental Rights” adopted by the EU can support the framing of social citizenship in a universal rather than in a rudimentary manner. The rights outlined in this new document are encompassing, and it can serve as a reference frame in the process of institution building.

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