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**Authorizing affluence:
European Union social policy and the promotion of the commerce society
A critical theoretical analysis**

Kristin Alisa Edquist

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Doctor of Philosophy

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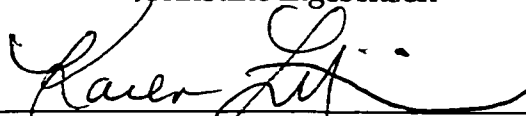


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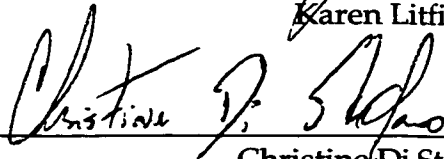
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Abstract

Authorizing affluence:
European Union social policy and the promotion of the commerce society
A critical theoretical analysis

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This dissertation analyzes three areas of contemporary European Union (EU) social policy – social exclusion, gender equality, and employment – in an attempt to understand the implications of European integration for societies within EU borders. Presenting original research, including personal interviews with local and regional authorities, leaders of EU-sponsored projects, and representatives of various non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it argues that European integration is a process whereby European-level institutions, at the behest of EU member-state authorities, enlist state, regional, and local authorities, business and labor representatives, and non-state actors including NGOs in a project of development defined as economic growth. In particular, it analyzes non-legislative EU policy instruments in the three policy areas, and argues that these instruments place a priority on social relationships of market exchange, and compel regional and even local authorities and NGOs to encourage market exchange relations between individuals and groups. This occurs even in EU gender equality policy, whose ultimate aim, it is argued, is to promote women's role as discrete economic actors. As a result of these dynamics, European integration holds implications that vary geographically, especially from North to South, and sociologically, depending on a given locale's level of institutionalization of social relations. Thus, the dissertation differs from neo-functional and liberal intergovernmental EU integration scholarship in that it views states and supranational institutions primarily as collaborators, rather than competitors. And it differs from functional integration and liberal feminist analyses of EU social policy because it focuses on the ideological and sociological, rather than functional or sex-dependent, implications of integration. As such, it contributes a distinct cross-disciplinary approach to European integration scholarship that combines important insights from critical sociologists, critical geologists, and critical feminist theorists, and therefore broadens our understanding of the larger significance of the European Union for the persons and societies that experience integration on a daily basis.

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Introduction

Prioritizing Market Exchange:

Social Policy and the Future of Social Relationships in European Union Societies

In terms of innovation, European Union (EU) social policy has few peers. Within EU borders, officials at international, national, regional, and local levels combine efforts with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civic organizations, and individuals to meet the needs of the millions of citizens and residents of the EU. This is done through projects and programs that are habitually inventive and resourceful, that draw upon the expertise of highly knowledgeable specialists and officials, and that attempt to involve whenever possible the people whose needs and situations are at issue. These projects and programs include local employment initiatives that encourage job creation in response to local social needs¹; mentoring programs involving multi-national corporations that help young women professionals in male-dominated industries²; and counseling programs for parents attempting to

¹ The EU has sponsored various local and regional “bottom-up” projects aimed at creating employment in regions covered by the Structural Funds. These projects include “territorial employment pacts” and “local development and employment initiatives (LDEIs)” among whose guidelines for assessment and selection include attention to gender. For example, one of the assessment guidelines listed in a 1998 Commission document on territorial employment action programs reads, “Is there a gender perspective in the programme?” European Commission (1998). Guide to territorial employment pacts. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Commission, p. 16.

² These projects include the following two: “Mentoring women in Europe,” *Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities* project number DEb/06/97, organized by Gender Studies department, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany (N. Tschirner. (1998). Telephone interview, December 14, 1998); and “Preparing women to lead” mentoring project, *Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities* project number DEc/78/97, organized by Mrs. Lukoshat, Technical University of Berlin and Professor Barbara Scheffer-Hegel, European Academy of Women in Politics and Business. The first project involves the participation of the following businesses: Deutschelecom, Volkswagen (through a New Opportunities for Women {NOW} project), DetscheBank, and Daimler-Benz.

reconcile employment and household responsibilities.³ These are just a handful of the hundreds of social policy measures enacted under the auspices of the European Union.⁴

Yet EU social policy receives relatively shallow attention from European integration scholars. Generally, integration scholars interpret this policy just as they would any other EU policy, namely in terms of its implications for the sovereignty of EU member states. Along these lines, some scholars (particularly historical institutionalists) argue that the institutionalization of European-level policies restricts states' decision-making leeway (Paul Pierson, 1995); others argue that European-level policy results from both functional "spillover," which impinges on state sovereignty, as well as from elite decisions based on international structural developments (Wayne Sandholtz & John Zysman, 1989); yet others argue that European integration represents nothing more than inter-governmental bargaining, and that relative state power, combined with domestic interest-formation, determines the decisions enacted within European-level institutions (Andrew Moravcsik, 1991; 1993). Insofar as these approaches explore EU social policy, it usually is interpreted as more "progressive"

³ "European Family Dialogue," a project sponsored by the EU's Fourth Action Programme for Equal Opportunities as project Bb/01/97, and organized by Annemie Drieskens of *Bond van Grote en van Jonge Gezinnen* (League of Large and Young Families), a.k.a. *Flemish Family Organization*, a family organization headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.

⁴ *Community Action Programmes* sponsored by the Commission under the auspices of the Structural Funds usually sponsor around 70 projects. Some of them are multi-annual, and most are funded partially – from 50% to 80% – by the Structural Funds. For example, the *Fourth Community Action Programme for Equal Opportunities between Women and Men* sponsored 73 projects in 1998, of which approximately forty were new and of which approximately 30 would be concluded in that fiscal year. European Commission. (1998b). *Directory of the Projects 1998: Medium-term Community Action Programme on equal opportunities for women and men*. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General V Employment & social affairs.

than some member-state policy, but otherwise lacking in importance, even though evidence exists that it has shaped national policy.⁵

Unfortunately, therefore, these approaches do little to illuminate the ideological or sociological nature of European integration, which is arguably the most interesting aspect of the European project. Indeed, within the narrow confines of this debate, the fact is lost that EU social policy addresses the needs and societal issues of persons from a vast array of cultural, linguistic, religious, and ethnic traditions. The debate also occludes the sheer complexity of EU social policy, and the fact that any attempt to address socio-economic issues at a European level is a remarkable endeavor, touching at the heart of significant debates in political philosophy, sociology, and geography, to name only a few areas of study. Thus, while European integration scholarship focuses on states' abilities to protect their interests in a situation of economic interdependence, European integration through EU social policy rolls merrily along, involving sub-state regional authorities, municipal authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and EU citizens and residents themselves in projects effected at increasingly localized as well as international levels.

In this dissertation, I argue that EU social policy represents something different from another example of the erosion of state sovereignty by supranational institutions, or the expression of member-state power differentials. Rather, EU social policy represents an integral yet under-examined dimension of European integration, in

⁵ As we shall see below, the principles identified in the EU's *Fourth Action Programme* on gender equality between women and men (hereafter the 4th AP) were adopted verbatim by the Spanish *Instituto de la Mujer* (Women's Institute) – the national equal opportunities office – in designing Spain's national – and importantly, provincial – Action Programs on equal opportunities. See Chapter 3.

which member states enlist an ever-broader range of people and kinds of social relationships in a project of development defined as economic growth.⁶ Drawing from socialist-feminist approaches to late-capitalist political culture,⁷ and from critical sociological and geographical scholarship, I examine three social policy issue-areas and show that EU social policy encourages national, regional, and local officials to promote market exchange as the primary social relationship in European societies. As such, I hold that EU social policy represents the foremost means available to member states to shape the process of interpreting⁸ the needs of the citizens and residents who live the European project on a daily basis.

Furthermore, I argue that even as EU social policy increases member-state policy reach⁹ in this manner, it also limits the range of policy options available to

⁶ I borrow this phrase from Harcourt (1994b). W. Harcourt (1994b). Negotiating positions in the sustainable development debate: Situating the feminist perspective. In W. Harcourt. (1994). *Feminist perspectives on sustainable development* (11-25). London: Society for International Development.

⁷ In particular, I draw from Nancy Fraser's (1989) outline of "the politics of need interpretation" in late-capitalist societies. See N. Fraser. (1989b). *Struggle over Needs*.

⁸ By including the *interpretation* of social needs in Europe, I draw from Nancy Fraser (1989b, 1989c), who has outlined an approach to analyzing what she calls "the politics of need interpretation". In this approach, Fraser identifies three primary discursive tactics in the politics of need interpretation, including *politicization*, e.g., through statements referring to the identity of a social group; *depoliticization* or *privatization*, such as statements referring to the individual character the issue can take, statements declaring that the issue is not the responsibility of public authorities (but rather of individuals in their private lives, or of individuals and their employers); and "*expert*" discourse. Fraser's treatment of social needs as subject to interpretation, and her treatment of institutions as sites of and sources of political discourse, is invaluable. N. Fraser. (1989b). *Struggle over Needs: Outline of a Socialist-Feminist Critical Theory of Late Capitalist Political Culture*. In N. Fraser. (1989). *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory* (see especially pages 173-187). See also N. Fraser. (1989c). Women, welfare and the politics of need interpretation. In N. Fraser. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse and gender in contemporary social theory* (144-160). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

⁹ Policy reach includes policy capacity—the ability of public agencies to function properly – and policy goal-setting that occurs at least occasionally outside the auspices of public agencies. (For this definition of policy capacity, I draw from Charles Polidano (2000), who says, "policy capacity involves the relations between multiple variables, including how departments interact with one another and central agencies, how departments and central agencies interpret, understand and communicate objectives, how individuals and policy communities define excellent policy work, how recruitment and staff training takes place, and how much policy capacity exists in research institutes and think-tanks... Within this broad

policy makers and the bureaucracies and institutions that implement social policy, by encouraging the prioritization of producer-consumer relationships in regional, local, and even familial settings. Indeed, I show that even the often-invoked policy principle of “subsidiarity”¹⁰ does not protect local governmental authorities (or regional or national authorities, for that matter) from EU social policy’s logic of development as economic growth, or from its view of citizens and residents as discrete actors with needs that can be met through market exchange.

Finally, I argue that EU social policy deserves sustained attention because it highlights an important geographical dimension to European integration that is often obscured in European integration scholarship. The prioritization of market relations over other social relations creates a dynamic in which certain EU member states, particularly southern states, are pressed to emulate their northerly peers. As we shall see, the states, regions, and municipalities whose social institutions uphold non-

definition, policy capacity becomes something that can vary over time within any public service.” Polidano, Charles. (2000). Measuring Public Sector Capacity. *World Development*, 28, 5. [Online.] Available <http://web4.infotrac.galegroup.com/> [June 2, 2001].

¹⁰ Subsidiarity “is the term used in Catholic social thought for the notion that ‘it is an injustice, a grave evil, and a disturbance of right order for a larger and higher organization to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower bodies’” (Silver, 1994: 547, quoting Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931). H. Silver. (1994). Social exclusion and social solidarity: Three paradigms. *International Labour Review*, 133, 5-6 (547). In formal EU policy, it is the principle that presumes that decentralized policy making is preferable to centralized policy making, thereby putting the burden of proof on those who argue for centralized policy. According to one report on subsidiarity, the principle is applied to decide between uniform or differentiated policy design, central or local administration, and central or local government (Centre for Economic Policy Research, 1993: 5). The report elaborates that “the ‘central-local’ contrast does not imply that there are only two levels to be considered; in principle, questions of subsidiarity can be raised as much about the relationships of villages to districts or districts to regions as about that of member states to the European Community” (ibid.). Centre for Economic Policy Research (1993). *Making Sense of Subsidiarity: How Much Centralization for Europe?* Monitoring European integration 4, a CEPR annual report. London: Centre for Economic Policy Research.

In practice, however, it should be noted that the principle of subsidiarity is probably best associated with arguments in favor of protecting member-state sovereignty – or at least stalling European integration – as in British Conservative arguments during the 1980s.

market-oriented social practices, and whose societies engage in other kinds of social relationships, are not held as models of “best practice” in EU social policy – even when their social practices create the very outcomes that EU social policy purportedly seeks. These states and societies tend to fall in southern Europe, where there is a shorter history of social-democratic and neo-liberal market relations. At the same time, EU social policy challenges social practices and political institutions in those societies that place a heavy emphasis on state intervention in the satisfaction of citizen needs. Thus, Nordic societies face a different sort of challenge from European integration.

None of these dynamics are evident in most EU integration scholarship, where state sovereignty is the primary issue. To be sure, my argument contains aspects of neo-functional and intergovernmental approaches: after all, I argue that state (as well as regional and municipal) decision-making leeway is limited by EU social policy,¹¹ and that elite perceptions imbue EU social policy with the prioritization of market exchange relations. One could also argue that I imply that relative state power has some influence on policy outcomes. But unlike neo-functional approaches, I take a more circumspect view of the ideological nature and social implications of EU social policy. And unlike liberal intergovernmentalist approaches, I argue that state elites hold the power not only to mediate among different interests, but also to *shape* social discourse through social policy, including EU social policy.

I show how this dynamic works by examining three areas of EU social policy, namely social exclusion, gender equality, and employment. EU social exclusion policy

¹¹ To recall, this argument is especially emphasized by historical institutionalism, a specific kind of neo-functional argument.

is policy designed to *prevent* or *alleviate* the exclusion or marginalization of individuals or groups from key processes in late-capitalist societies, particularly employment, and especially as experienced in large urban centers. EU gender equality policy is policy designed to prevent or alleviate inequalities between women's and men's level of political participation, employment experiences, employment wages, and life chances. The bulk of EU programs and projects addressing social exclusion and gender equality are designed and implemented under the auspices of the EU Structural Funds, a (sub-state) regional development fund to which all EU member states contribute. EU employment policy involves a variety of policy instruments in different policy areas. In this dissertation, I discuss the context in which employment policy has been made at European level – the Social Dialogue – and then I discuss the latest Community-level initiative to address employment issues, the National Action Plans (NAPs) on employment. The Social Dialogue is a formal collective bargaining forum involving the “social partners,” i.e., business and labor representatives. NAPs are non-binding guidelines established by EU member states to ensure that all states endeavor to tackle the persistent problem of unemployment in the EU.

My argument therefore speaks not only to European integration scholarship, but also to current debates in international relations scholarship and in critical and feminist theory. Specific to international relations, my argument contributes to the “norms” debate, that is, discussion about the roles played by principles or norms in inter-state relations, and suggests that norm “emulation” (Ann Florini, 1996) is a formal practice in some EU member states. My argument also furthers this discussion

by raising questions about the socio-political implications of norm emulation. Specific to critical feminist theory, my argument supports the critique of liberal political institutions, but also illustrates that critical feminists must pay much closer attention to international political institutions and their role in shaping the political culture of late-capitalist societies. By outlining and examining the implications of EU social policy, I hope to contribute not only to our understanding of European integration, but also to our understanding of the increasingly important international dimension of all social policy, and how that dimension helps shape the lives of those who design, implement, and enact social policy, as well as the lives of those who experience it on a daily basis.

The dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 1, "European Integration Theory and EU Social Policy: A Critical Overview," is a short review and critique of current EU integration theory. It serves as a backdrop to the subsequent chapters that examine the three policy areas. The chapter outlines the two predominant approaches to European integration dynamics – neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism– and shows that neither approach is capable of exploring the ideological dynamics I see at work in European integration. Generally speaking, both approaches presume the desirability of economic development as a central goal of integration, but then fail to explore the implications of this project for European societies, even when the project holds priority in non-economic policy. Further, even when neo-functional approaches highlight patterns of cultural domination, they gloss over the quotidian ways in which individuals and groups live or re-invent their social relationships, and as one observer notes, they tend to occlude people's agency (Nancy

Fraser, 1989c: 156). And while liberal intergovernmentalism allows better prediction of state preferences, it does not include an international dimension in domestic state politics. This view of domestic politics renders it incapable of showing an increase in state policy reach through EU social policy, and incapable of illustrating how EU membership affects the actions of sub-state actors. I argue that because of these weaknesses, we need to move beyond neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism to explore the ramifications of states' increased abilities to interpret citizens' needs. Finally, I propose adopting a critical perspective that illuminates the ideological nature of European integration and enables us to access not only the strength, but also the character of EU social policy's influence on state, regional, and local actors, and ultimately on EU citizens and residents. I develop this perspective in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2, "Social Cohesion through Economic Growth: The New European Social Model," outlines the design and implementation processes of EU social exclusion policy. It includes an overview of the origins and evolution of the concept *social exclusion*, as it has played out in Europe, and then analyzes EU-sponsored social exclusion programs and projects. Evidence suggests that social exclusion is not a problem in some southern EU member states (Martin Rhodes, 1997), yet the EU fails to use southern models of inclusiveness in developing solutions to the problem of social exclusion. Rather, EU policy links social exclusion and its obverse, social inclusion or *social cohesion*, with the project of economic growth such that societies are considered inclusive or cohesive only when they engage in projects of economic growth. I show

that linking social cohesion with economic growth limits the range of policy options available to EU member states that desire EU funds, and implies that less developed and less consumer-oriented societies are either “exclusive” or “backward.” In fact, I argue that economic growth and the idea of community cohesion are so closely intertwined in EU social exclusion policy that it is nearly impossible to formulate systematic non development-related conceptions of social cohesion. Finally, however, I show how at least one EU-sponsored social exclusion project introduces a means by which individual actors can resist the social and political process of individualization, by “bending” the EU’s policy agenda.

Chapter 3, “EU Gender Equality Policy: Enlisting Feminists in the Project of Economic Growth,” outlines the history and implementation of European-level gender equality policy. I review briefly the Equality Directives adopted by EU member states, then move on to the non-legal programs and projects implemented in the name of gender equality, including the *Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities Between Women and Men*. I show how the EU’s tactic of encouraging and in some cases requiring the “mainstreaming” of consideration of gender differences into all EU, state, regional, and even local policy-making processes helps mitigate the North-South dimension to EU social policy mentioned above. The EU’s reliance on transnational projects and on the participation of NGOs also tempers this North-South dynamic. But I also show that this does not necessarily mean that local, regional, or national policy-makers enjoy more leeway in determining the shape of women’s needs; rather, EU gender equality policy encourages even contending voices such as the Brussels-based

European Women's Lobby (EWL) to call for the individualization of women's needs. This notion of women's citizenship advocated by policy makers clashes not only with southern societies' life patterns, but also with the close state-society relationship developed in Nordic EU member states. Thus, EU gender equality policy illustrates that contrary to the argument of some feminist critics of sustainable development, even northern or western states, and not just the underdeveloped South, have a complicated relationship to the project of development defined as economic growth. The policy also demonstrates that formal member-state agreement is not required in order to create uniform social policy in the European Union.

Chapter 4, "Prospecting for Need: EU Employment Policy and the Rush for High Employment Rates," outlines the latest and most concerted EU social policy effort, namely the quest to increase employment rates in EU member states. It explains the reasons for this effort, including persistent, structurally based unemployment problems throughout all EU member states. It then outlines the various European-level institutions established to address this concern, including attempts at social (worker) protection legislation, a European-level business-labor negotiation forum, the Luxembourg process (an initiative that requires annual member-states Action Plans on employment) and Community Initiatives similar to social exclusion and equal opportunities initiatives. I show how all these efforts maintain the general trend in EU social policy of prioritizing market exchange relations over other social relations. I then examine in particular one form of Community Initiative to illustrate the extremely

innovative nature of EU efforts, and to illustrate the breadth of social relations that are subject to EU – and hence member-state – attention through EU social policy.

Chapter 5, “What Does Critical Social Science Really Tell Us about European Integration?” examines several EU-sponsored projects in more detail, from the perspective of Nancy Fraser’s (1989b, 1989c) outline of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late-capitalist political culture. Using the concepts of this theory, I examine several EU-sponsored projects in their immediate local and regional political contexts, and in their national contexts. This examination shows the difficulties of identifying dissenting voices from “complicit” voices in late-capitalist political discourse, particularly in European political cultures: in these different contexts, EU social policy appears by turns oppositional, expert, or even privatizing. I offer suggestions for improving Fraser’s (outline of a) theory, such as adding chronological and geographical dimensions to the model.

In the Conclusion, “Toward a Reconciliation of European Post-statism and Critical Theory,” I provide a brief summary of my project, and suggest that we need to understand European integration as a late-capitalist project performed through post-statist means. I explore the meaning of this statement, paying particular attention to the problem of rendering social actors mere victims in critical approaches. I suggest one way to avoid this problem is to take a definitive, non-relativist stance when conducting social inquiry, such as by adopting a stance that considers sees masculinist/feminist cleavages as the primary cleavages in European societies. I then outline the tools left to the social actors that are “feminized” by EU social policy,

including the tools left to would-be policy saboteurs. (The policy saboteur is a concept I introduce in Chapter 2.) Finally, I outline the areas of future research suggested by this dissertation. These include the relationship between culture and European integration, and the question whether other social relations besides market-exchange relations can result from EU social policy.

Chapter 1

European Integration Theory and EU Social Policy: A Critical Overview

Introduction

The 1984-1986 signing of the Single European Act (SEA) marked a critical turn in European Community (EC)¹² policy-making. The SEA created a single market for goods and services among the fifteen EU member states, and established qualified majority voting, rather than unanimity voting, among member states on internal market-related issues. The SEA ended a long period of pessimism in the European project (Robert O. Keohane & Stanley Hoffman, 1991).

The signing of the SEA also injected new life into scholarly analysis of the EC and its successor, the European Union. Since the signing of the SEA, debate generally has revolved around neo-functional and intergovernmental analyses of integration. Neo-functional approaches contends that non-state actors gradually have acquired autonomy relative to state actors; liberal intergovernmentalism continues to see the EC's institutions as effects of relative state power dynamics. In this chapter, I outline these approaches and show that while neo-functional and intergovernmental views on EU member-state sovereignty may differ, the arguments do not represent polar opposites as their proponents sometimes imply. Moreover, I argue that neither approach addresses the ideological aspects of European integration. Because of these

¹²The origins of the European *Union* (EU) can be traced to three different communities: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). Later these three communities taken together were usually called the European Community (EC), the term many scholars use to refer to this conjunction. After adoption of the Maastricht Treaty [in 1992], the EC became one of the three pillars of the EU (Martin, R. (1999). *The Regional Dimension in European Public Policy: Convergence or Divergence?* New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., p. 177). In this dissertation, I will use the term EU except when referring to situations prior to 1992 or when the authors I discuss use another term (such as EC).

problems with the two approaches, I argue that we need to move beyond the neo-functionalism–intergovernmentalism debate, and explore the implications of the increase in state policy reach, under conditions of economic growth, for the people who experience the EU on a daily basis.

Neo-Functional Approaches to the European Union

The signing of the SEA gave neo-functional arguments new life. For scholars following the neo-functional tradition, the signing of the SEA marked a change in the nature of Community politics, from interstate politics to supranational politics. Two scholars who build on the neo-functional approach are Wayne Sandholtz (1994) and Paul Pierson (1995). Sandholtz begins with the traditional functional argument that states cooperate in international organizations (IOs) in order to overcome market failures and provide decision-making efficiency. Sandholtz then builds on this position by arguing that IOs “shape interests and define the paths of political influence” through three processes: altering the menu of feasible outcomes; creating new political channels and arenas at international levels¹³; and affecting domestic politics and institutions, or “transforming” states. In the context of the European Union, this means, “EU rules and procedures can become instruments in domestic political debates. They can constrain domestic policy making. In rarer instances they can even bring about

¹³One indicator of this process occurs when “groups seek to influence the autonomous decision-making of an IO, or collaborate with an IO on behalf of shared policy objectives...bypass[ing] national government and engag[ing] in supranational politics” (12). As an example, Sandholtz mentions the use of EU law by EU citizens and companies (25). This is another way in which Sandholtz distinguishes his argument from functional arguments: by not assuming a unitary state. Sandholtz, W. (1994). *Membership Matters: Limits of the Functional Theory of International Institutions*. Unpublished manuscript, University of California.

changes in domestic institutional structures” (1994: 27). Finally, Sandholtz insists that EU membership has changed the nature of state relations, because “exit” no longer is an option for EU member states. “When there is a common policy they dislike, EU governments are unlikely simply to walk away because it would mean abandoning other bargains that produce clear benefits (for the country as a whole or for specific groups)” (op. cit. 10). This means “states have an interest in the mass of EU bargains as a whole” – that is, the nature of statehood has changed through the process of European integration (especially as effected through the signing of the SEA): states no longer are simply self-interested; they have incorporated the interests of other states, as well (ibid.).

Pierson’s argument reflects Sandholtz’s in several ways. Just as Sandholtz insists EU institutions constrain states’ decision-making leeway, Pierson’s historical institutionalist perspective understands European integration as a process that limits member state control over long-term institutional development (1995: 1). Rather than viewing integration as an intergovernmental enterprise, Pierson says, we should “view integration as a path-dependent process that has produced a fragmented but still discernible multi-tiered European polity” (op. cit. 2). And just as Sandholtz argues that exit is not an option for member states, Pierson agrees that “the constantly increasing costs of exit in a densely integrated polity have rendered this option virtually unthinkable for EC member states” (op. cit. 5).

Historical institutionalism is less strident in its claims than Sandholtz’s neo-functional approach, however: Pierson is careful not to overstate the autonomy of non-

state actors in the process of EU integration. For example, Pierson concedes that what appears to be Commission autonomy may simply reflect state leaders' "deft use of oversight" (op. cit. 24). Additionally, he suggests that the ease with which analysts conjure up reasons for state support of EU-level policy indicates that the policy may in fact coincide with state preferences (op. cit. 25).

Nonetheless, these approaches do little to explore the implications of Sandholtz's very interesting argument that EU institutions "shape interests and define the paths of political influence," or that domestic interests – and potentially societal beliefs – are assimilated into other domestic societies. Neither do they explore the implications of the observation that EU membership creates new political channels and arenas at international levels. Rather, these are generally seen as positive developments for EU citizens. For instance, Sandholtz gives the example of EU citizens calling upon EU law to defend their rights (1994: 25) – a presumably positive, but unexplored outcome of the erosion of state sovereignty. The ultimate concern of this approach remains the functional change in statehood, not the ideological nature of this change. From the perspective of neo-functionalism, we understand that state sovereignty has been eroded, and we understand to some degree how this has occurred. But we are left wondering what sort of policies – ideologically speaking, not functionally speaking – we can expect to be enacted in this new "multi-tiered European polity."

This question is important, because since the advent of the SEA, the EU has integrated yet further, and through its social policies has deepened member-state reach

into societies and social practices in Europe. What is more, EU social policies offer a particular perspective on social phenomena, a particular explanation for the needs that the policies address, and a particular solution to these needs, namely development as economic growth. We shall see in the following chapters how the EU has succeeded in contextualizing certain social phenomena, including social exclusion and gender inequality, such that they become problems resolvable through market interactions, rather than through state provision or another form of social cooperation, such as extended family relations that are not directly mediated by markets. First, however, I review the liberal intergovernmental response to neo-functionalism, and illustrate that while it improves on neo-functionalism's inability to predict the policy areas in which states will face the most constraint, it too fails to illuminate the ideological dimension of the dynamics of EU integration.

Liberal Intergovernmental Approaches to the European Union

Liberal intergovernmentalism improves on neo-functionalism insofar as it outlines the conditions under which states will desire policy coordination with other states, and indicates which issue areas are more likely to see inter-state policy coordination. It therefore responds to neo-functional contentions that European integration changes statehood, and that the EU represents a unique challenge to state sovereignty. For example, Andrew Moravcsik (1993) argues that despite its unique characteristics, "...the EC can be analysed as a successful intergovernmental regime designed to manage economic interdependence through negotiated policy co-ordination" (1993:

474). The distinction between this approach and historical institutionalism is that while the latter “would revive neo-functionalism’s emphasis on *sui generis* characteristics” such as the “importance of unintended consequences of previous decisions,” liberal intergovernmentalism continues to see the EC’s institutions as effects of relative state power dynamics (op. cit. 473). Indeed, Moravcsik sees a stark distinction between liberal intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism:

Where neo-functionalism emphasizes domestic technocratic consensus, liberal intergovernmentalism looks to domestic coalitional struggles. Where neo-functionalism emphasizes opportunities to upgrade the common interest, liberal intergovernmentalism stresses the role of relative power. Where neo-functionalism emphasizes the active role of supranational officials in shaping bargaining outcomes, liberal intergovernmentalism stresses instead passive institutions and the autonomy of national leaders (op. cit. 518).

Yet the two approaches are not mutually exclusive, as Moravcsik recognizes.

Liberal intergovernmentalism is in fact inspired by the insights of neo-functional scholars into their own approach’s shortcomings (op. cit. 480). Indeed, I would argue that in its most persuasive forms, such as those promoted by Sandholtz and Pierson, neo-functionalism simply emphasizes a different phase in the policy-making process than liberal intergovernmentalism.¹⁴ Neo-functionalism deepens our understanding of

¹⁴ Consider what they each explain: historical institutionalism contends that supranational officials are more or less constrained by states in *implementing* policy decisions, while liberal intergovernmentalism argues that member states are more or less constrained by societal actors in *bargaining for* and *making* policy decisions. Stated differently, historical institutionalism says *states* are the “principals” and supranational actors are the “agents;” intergovernmentalism says *societal actors* are the “principals” and states are the “agents.” As such, liberal intergovernmentalism is not contradictory to historical institutionalism, but rather explains processes that come prior to (and set the context for) the processes that are at issue in historical institutionalist analysis. The difference between the approaches lies in emphasis, not in concepts or even understandings of power.

To be sure, historical institutionalism does emphasize that the slight autonomy acquired by supranational actors in policy *implementation* may “make them more significant players in the next

the potential for new policies that is created through EU membership; meanwhile, liberal intergovernmentalism gives us more guidance as to when – under what conditions, and with what results – we can expect states’ preferences to be mitigated by past decisions.

Take liberal intergovernmentalism’s analysis of social policy-making as an example. This approach posits that states have more autonomy or “slack” in supranational decision-making when “the net costs and benefits [to societal groups] of alternative policies are diffuse, ambiguous, or insignificant, and the risk is low” (op. cit. 486).¹⁵ States are more likely to have slack in socio-economic and structural issue areas than in commercial liberalization issues¹⁶ (see Table 1, below). Likewise, Pierson’s (neo-functionalism-inspired) historical institutionalism posits that non-state actors such as the Commission acquire decision-making autonomy when state policy preferences are uncertain and shifting (Pierson 1995: 24). However, this approach does not indicate the issue areas in which this will occur, whereas liberal intergovernmentalism does.

round” of policy *making* (Pierson 1995: 25). But in the larger context of integration, this argument seems beside the point. If non-state actors are the agreed “agents” of state actors in the first place, there is bound to be considerable overlap in the policy “preferences” or ideological positions of actors with supposedly opposing interests. Like Moravcsik, Pierson overstates somewhat the distinction between the two approaches. P. Pierson (1995). The path to European integration. A. Moravcsik (1993). Preferences and power in the European Community: A liberal intergovernmental approach. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31, 4 (473-524).

¹⁵ In this situation, states can afford to take “a more ‘enlightened’ or longer-term view, balancing winners and losers to construct broader coalitions...or pursuing more ideologically controversial goals” A. Moravcsik (1993). Preferences and power in the European Community, p. 488.

¹⁶ Peter Lange makes this point as well, stating that the Council of Ministers and the European Council are particularly sensitive to pressures from domestic coalitions in the “social dimension,” as opposed to regional (structural) policy, whose costs are diffuse and less evident to those who pay them than are social policy costs. As a result, national governments will face conflicting pressures as they try to act at the European level. P. Lange (1992). The Politics of the Social Dimension. In A. M. Sbragia, ed., *Euro-politics: Institutions and Policymaking in the “New” European Community*, p. 236. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.

Table 1
Liberal intergovernmental predictions of inter-state policy coordination
across three issue areas¹⁷

Issue Area	Sources of Societal Interest	Determinants of state action
Commercial Liberalization (e.g., tariffs and quotas, agricultural price policy)	Overt pressure, mostly from producers, whose net expected gains and losses reflect competitive position in international markets, levels of intra-industry trade, and the certainty of policy outcomes	Where producer interests strong, unified and certain, governments will conform to them; otherwise, they are more likely to risk liberalization when faced with overt and intractable policy failure, signalled by low investment and growth, unsustainable external disequilibria, and/or intolerable fiscal compensation
Socio-economics Public Goods Provision (e.g., monetary, environmental, social and regulatory policies)	Two-dimensional pressure: from producers, based on the criteria above, and from the public in favour of public goods provision	When societal interests strong and unified, governments conform; when not, they co-ordinate actions to combat policy failure, judged on either of the two dimensions
Political, Institutional or Redistributive Policies (e.g., EPC, Euro-parliamentary affairs, structural funding)	Pressure from narrow groups only where the implications are calculable, otherwise only a loose public or elite opinion constraint	Except where implications are calculable, governments and parliamentary elites enjoy relatively broad autonomy to pursue symbolic goals or side payments

Nonetheless, there are problems with the liberal intergovernmental approach, which reflect the problems with neo-functionalism, and which become evident as we study Table 1 (above). The table provides a relatively straightforward prediction of the leverage enjoyed by member states in determining supranational policy in different policy areas. However, even as liberal intergovernmentalism suggests that states will have more “slack” in making decisions at international level in certain issue-areas (an argument that actually resembles the neo-functional suggestion that EU membership creates new political channels and arenas at international levels), the table does not include an ideological dimension to policy. Just as with neo-functionalism, there is no

¹⁷ This table is taken directly from A. Moravcsik. (1993). Preferences and Power in the European Community: A Liberal Intergovernmental Approach. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31 (495).

means of detecting a change in the political persuasion of societal influences, if their function and strength remain the same. State interests and societal pressures are defined only in terms of strength, not political persuasion, which means that any policy influences, such as those introduced through EU policy, may go undetected in the liberal intergovernmental model.

Additionally, liberal intergovernmentalism remains pre-occupied with the possibility of coordination of state policies, while the policies of *sub*-state actors, such as regional or local governments, remain outside the picture. This is an important oversight, because as we see in the following section, much EU social and structural policy is effected through the EU Structural Funds – a policy instrument whose funds are distributed to sub-national regions, not member states. While some analysts argue that the Structural Funds actually are “side-payments” to poorer member states – and thus that they actually are geared toward states – this does not discount the fact that the Funds lend prominence to regional authorities, and indeed reinforce their influence on domestic politics. That this influence is tied to their cooperation in projects of economic growth, and encourages the mediation of regional social relations by market exchange, complicates the argument outlined in the table above.

The EU Structural Funds: Moving Beyond Inter-State Politics

The EU Structural Funds are a group of four funds¹⁸ that are distributed to sub-national regions to reduce economic disparities across them. The first of the four funds, the

¹⁸ The Structural Funds are the collective term for the European Social Fund, which finances programs in social issues, the “European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) to finance

European Social Fund, was created with the Treaty of Rome in 1957; the others followed thereafter. The funds' size and importance increased with the economic downturns of the 1970s and 1980s (European Commission, 1998c). The funds' purpose is to "influence the distribution of life chances across space" (Jeffrey Anderson, 1995: 127). The Structural Funds form the bulk of EU social policy spending,¹⁹ and encompass EU spending on social exclusion and gender equality policy, among other social policy areas.

The 1988 reform of the Structural Funds has received considerable scholarly attention. The reform aimed to increase the size of the funds so as to enhance their efficacy, and to concentrate resources in the less prosperous areas of the Community (op. cit. 144). Most controversially, the EU Commission – the EU's legislative body – obtained increased oversight of the Funds. While the monetary value of the Funds remained well below the amount devoted to the EC's Common Agricultural Policy, the 1988 reforms nonetheless represented "a significant upgrading of Community regional assistance" (ibid.). Since that time, the management of the Funds has remained largely in the hands of the Commission, with minor adjustments in 1993 and again in 1999.

the common agricultural policy, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), assistance from which relates specifically to the regions whose development is lagging behind, and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG)." These funds often are pooled together – for example, in projects that address structural and social issues simultaneously – and hence one can speak of them collectively as "Structural Funds." Note that in addition to the Structural Funds, the EU has the Cohesion Fund, a fund distributed exclusively to those countries (currently, the "four poor," i.e., Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain) whose average GDP is below 90% of the EU average. European Commission (2001f). *Europa: The European Union online*. [Online.] Available: <http://www.europa.eu.int> [2001, April 16].

¹⁹ I say that the Structural Funds, and not simply the Social Fund, form the bulk of EU social policy spending because in many cases, Social Fund monies are combined with Development Fund monies in social projects.

Analysts generally interpret the Structural Funds as a “side payment” to poorer member states in exchange for their compliance with monetary and trade regulations that arguably favor all EU member states (Marks, 1993; Pollack, 1995). Not unexpectedly, neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism interpret differently the management and implementation of the Structural Funds, including the 1988 increase in Commission oversight of the Funds. The neo-functional interpretation of the 1988 reorganization of the Structural Funds is that increased Commission oversight represents an increase in Commission power relative to EU member states. Member states lose sovereignty despite their interests in maintaining it (Gary Marks, 1993). The intergovernmental interpretation is that the 1988 reorganization of the Structural Funds marked the reassertion of state power over a realm controlled for a short time by the Commission (Mark Pollack, 1995). The Commission’s new powers of oversight therefore are not a mark of its independence and growing power vis-à-vis EU member states, but rather a mark of the larger states’ (particularly France, Germany, and Britain) concern for the funds they contribute. In intergovernmental terms, “the wealthier member states were willing to submit to Commission oversight primarily to ensure that the much larger sums committed to the ‘poor four’ member states²⁰ were well spent” (op. cit. 373).

Certainly it is true that by 1998, the Commission managed 35% of all Funds activity. In addition, decisions made by EU institutions certainly have been controversial in different member states, and the distinction between central and

²⁰ The “four poor” member states are Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain, whose regions receive the bulk of the financing distributed Structural Funds.

national governments has indeed been blurred over the years (Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), 1993). But the fact is the Commission's increased management of the Structural Funds represents increased collaboration, not competition, between the Commission and EU member states. As a Secretary General at the Commission put it, member states still implement policy; the Commission has a much larger role in managing policy (Carlo Trojan, 1998).

Thus, I argue that the most important aspect of the Structural Funds is not increased Commission management: it is that the Funds are distributed in the name of economic growth, and that their programs and projects prioritize market exchange relations above other social relations. As the Commission notes, the advent of the four Structural Funds marked "The introduction of a genuine structural policy to lessen the gaps in development and living standards" (European Commission, 2001f). In fact, economic cohesion is one of the three "pillars" of the Community, alongside the single market and European economic union (*ibid.*). The fact that EU social policy is distributed within this context is crucial, for it shapes the principles and guidelines by which social policy finances are distributed, and by which state, regional, and local actors implement and enact EU social policy in their various nations, regions, and municipalities. In short, we need to look at the societal repercussions of EU social policy, rather than its impact on state decision-making power. By focusing on and over-emphasizing the struggle for power between EU member states and European-level institutions, neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism fail to address this important point.

My position reflects an argument made by Marks (1992), in an analysis of the Structural Funds. This analysis presumes that integration, including growth of the Structural Funds, has unpredictable outcomes for all member states, and most important, it “poses the question whether the risks of the policy fall more on some societies than others” (op. cit. 204). In other words, Marks recognizes the potential for differential effects of integration *for societies*, which are not necessarily mediated by side payments to states. Additionally, Marks raises the possibility that EU membership has a North-South dimension to it. Marks says that for the three southern member states, membership represents not only a “confirmation of new-found democratic status,” but also a danger:

...governments in these societies are particularly vulnerable to economic dislocation, especially when it can be blamed on prior political choices. The possibility of economic dislocation arising from fundamental changes in the competitive environment is a challenge for even the most stable democracy; for a newly established democratic regime it can be daunting. (Marks, 1992: 204)

In short, Marks argues that it is not self-evident why smaller, poorer member states would want the policies of larger, wealthier member states.²¹

The important aspect of this argument is not so much that *states* in different geographical regions will face different challenges, but that the *societies* in those states face different challenges, as a result of Structural Fund spending. This is a necessary insight that we must examine further. In the following chapter, I illustrate how a

²¹ The Danish “nej” (no) in its 1992 referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, and its organized and relatively prominent movement against EC/EU membership illustrates that in fact, the logic of integration is not self-evident to all member states, including this extremely small state. This leaves aside the argument that despite its size, Denmark can “afford” to resist membership because of its relatively high GNP and social spending. I explore that possibility further in following chapters.

North-South dynamic appears to be at work in EU social policy, especially EU social exclusion policy. But I argue that this is only part of the story of European integration. Indeed, I show in following chapters that while there is reason to attend to a North-South dynamic to EU social policy, the societies of wealthier states *as well as* the societies of poorer states face challenges from EU social policy, because it interprets (and causes state, regional, and local governments to interpret) social needs as needs that can be met through the establishment of market exchange relations between discrete economic actors, in the name of economic growth. I explain the specific ways in which EU social policy poses this challenge to European societies in the following chapters.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have argued that neo-functionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism lend insight into the functional dynamics, but not the ideological or societal dynamics, of European integration. Using the EU Structural Funds as an example, I have outlined what the Funds do (important information for later chapters), and how neo-functional and liberal intergovernmental approaches fail to address the Funds' regional dimension as well as the Funds' purpose in developing market relations above all other forms of social relation. This dynamic is important to understanding the nature of European integration, for as we shall see in the following chapters, EU social policy enlists sub-state and even municipal actors, including government authorities but also NGOs, in the promotion of market exchange relationships. The policy thus empowers

both state and non-state actors to alter any social relationships and cultural practices of societies across the European Union. As such, the primary question in European integration studies is not how EU institutions challenge the sovereignty of member states, as neo-functional and liberal intergovernmental scholars argue. Rather, the primary question in European integration studies is how EU societies face challenges to their extant social practices as these actors are enlisted in the project of development as economic growth. This question has a geographical dimension to it, as well, because as we see in the following chapters, there are significant differences in social practices and socio-political institutions across EU member states, and thus the EU project of development as economic growth poses different challenges to those societies accordingly.

Because of these issues, I propose adopting a critical perspective that illuminates the ideological nature of European integration and enables us to access not only the strength, but also the character of EU social policy's influence on state, regional, and local actors, and ultimately on EU citizens and residents. In the following three chapters, I develop this perspective through analysis of three specific EU social policies, respectively, social exclusion, gender equality, and employment. As we shall see, each EU policy maintains a priority on social relationships of market exchange – a dynamic whose implications I explore in an intensive application of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late-capitalist political culture, in Chapter 5.

Chapter 2

Social Cohesion through Economic Growth:

The New European Social Model

Introduction

In the last chapter, I argued that the EU Structural Funds and social policy more generally represent a means by which the EU, and by extension member states, can shape not only the political functions, but also the ideological dynamics and social practices of European societies. I argued that neo-functionalism and (liberal) intergovernmentalism were insufficient to exploring this possibility. While neo-functional arguments highlight the importance of non-state actors in designing and implementing EU social policy, they do not explore the political persuasions of the non-state actors whose importance they argue so strongly. And while liberal intergovernmental approaches emphasize the importance of relative state power in shaping EU integration, they too fail to explore how increased state policy cooperation, as exemplified by the EU Structural Funds, may affect state and sub-state actors' interpretations of social issues, and in turn how this may affect European societies. Finally, I noted that there is the possibility for a North-South dimension to European integration, in the sense that integration as exemplified by the Structural Funds may have a stronger effect on societies in southern EU member states than on societies to the North.

In this chapter, I explore the implications for different European societies, including northern versus southern societies, of European integration as embodied in EU social exclusion policy. Social exclusion is the processes and practices that lead to

the exclusion of certain groups and/or individuals from the institutions, processes, and practices that are considered central to living a full and active life in a specific social setting, particularly a politically defined setting such as an urban area, a province, or a nation. Social exclusion *policy* is policy designed to combat social exclusion.

There are different ways of combating social exclusion. One angle is to alter the exclusionary processes or practices that are perceived to lead to the marginalization of groups or individuals within a society. Another, less radical tack, is that taken by the EU. EU social exclusion policy links the goal of Community and state social cohesion to the process of economic growth, without exploring non-market means of creating cohesion. Indeed, EU social exclusion policy represents an ingenious political move, wherein the concept of social cohesion or membership in the Community puts pressure on member states to provide more social protection even as they implement economic policies geared toward market efficiency and economic competitiveness. In response, EU member states draw on EU Structural Funds and other policy instruments in projects that pursue these two potentially conflicting goals. Further, through EU policy instruments, member states enlist EU citizens in the project of economic growth – for example, by starting new businesses or joining the active labor force – in the name of creating social cohesion.

What is more, even though evidence suggests that social exclusion may not be a problem in some southern EU member states (Martin Rhodes, 1997; Annie Vrychea & Charalambos Golemis, 1998), the EU does not draw on southern models of inclusiveness in developing social exclusion policy. Instead, EU policy favors the

values, norms, and social practices of economically more developed EU member states, which happen to fall in northern regions of the EU. Thus, by attempting to create social cohesion through economic growth, European integration through social exclusion policy involves a unidirectional policy learning process, from wealthier to poorer member states, and generally from North to South. Finally, I argue that the EU's reliance on employment and market exchange relations as the primary means of creating social cohesion entails that in some cases, EU policy fails to address any exclusion itself. Indeed, as we shall see, EU social exclusion policy ironically threatens to leave behind – that is, exclude – groups that are already at risk of marginalization, in the march toward economic growth through exchange between discrete economic actors.

Nonetheless, this chapter shows that citizens, residents, policy-makers, and those who enact EU social exclusion policy do possess some means of resistance of this process. Through an examination of several EU-funded social exclusion projects, I show that these actors may take advantage of the networks of expert communication created by EU policy, using them as an avenue of communication and a means to “work” bureaucratic systems toward potentially more inclusive ends. Evidence suggests that the EU is unable to follow closely the many projects and programs under its direction, and thus project leaders in different member states appear to have considerable leeway to “bend”²² the EU policy agenda.

²² For more on agenda bending, see my discussion of the Eurofem project, below. See also Cronberg, Tarja. (1998). *Visions and Challenges of Regional Policy*. In Horelli, Liisa, ed. (1998). *Proceedings of the Eurofem International Conference on Local and Regional Sustainable Human*

This tactic of resistance may never move beyond individual projects, however, because of the difficulties project leaders have in maintaining more than a sporadic professional, much less political, relation with other project leaders throughout the EU. While NGOs have lobbied EU institutions in Brussels for some years, the difficulties of organization and establishing a political agenda (including an agenda that does not fit within larger EU goals) mean that if any pattern emerges of resistance to the EU vision of social cohesion, it likely will remain impressionistic at best, at least for the near future.

As such, my argument contributes a new concern to the study of social exclusion, as well as to the study of European integration. By bringing in the subject of social exclusion, I introduce a topic to EU studies and international relations scholarship that is most often addressed in sociological scholarship. But because most social exclusion analysts come at the issue from a sociological rather than political perspective, they therefore concentrate on policy effectiveness in creating cohesion. By contrast, I treat social exclusion policy as one arrow in the EU's quiver of development through economic growth. From this perspective, we can see better how interstate politics and supranational policies, as well as NGO political activism, contribute to and delimit the ultimate goal of social cohesion.

The chapter is organized as follows: First, I review the European origins of the concept *social exclusion*, as well as its development through policy in Europe. I show how the concept is multidimensional and contested, and how it relates to a

contemporary goal of EU policy, namely *social cohesion* or *social solidarity*. Then I show how the goal of social solidarity has been linked closely to the goal of economic growth in the EU. I show that as a result of the linkage between economic growth and social solidarity, much policy combating social exclusion in Europe emphasizes economic growth, rather than social integration or cohesion *per se*.

In particular, I review a recent EU-sponsored Finnish project examining social exclusion policy and exploring policy solutions. I show that the project leaders rely on northern European models of cohesion, in part because they are considered more women-friendly, but also, I suggest, because southern models do not involve economic growth, and because they hint at far-right policies with which many European societies are understandably uneasy. I then argue that despite these problems with southern models, closer attention needs to be paid to southern models of cohesion, particularly those involving family participation. This is clear because the member state suffering the highest unemployment, Spain, has fewer problems with social exclusion than almost any of its fellow member states. Even as trends indicate a reduction in the size of families across Europe, including southern Europe (except Greece), southern households may serve as a useful source for “good practices” of social solidarity and cohesion (European Commission, 1995).

The EU’s linkage of social cohesion with economic growth means that the more a member state’s social exclusion policy depends on EU funding, the more likely it will reflect a social cohesion model that links cohesion with economic growth. At the same time, integration as enacted through EU social exclusion policy will pressure even the

wealthier member states to alter their models of social cohesion. While there is some possibility that alternative notions of community can be promoted through NGO proactivity within (and even disruption of) EU-sponsored policy, a plan for economic development is essential to remaining “included” in Europe – and that all member states – poorer and wealthier, Northern and Southern – will find their societies reshaped accordingly.

Defining Social Exclusion: French Republican to Neo-Liberal Conceptions

The concept *social exclusion* generally is considered to have emerged in 1960s French political discourse about the poor (Christine Cousins, 1997: 128). The concept was adopted by the French Left as a means of moving “away from political expressions of class conflict towards the struggles of mass urban and social movements” (Hilary Silver, 1994: 532), and was further developed through 1990s welfare debates in France, which drew on the French Republican rhetorical tradition (op. cit. 533). This tradition “rejected both liberal individualism and political representation...as sufficient bases for defining social integration,” and rejected the British term *poverty* for “its association with Christian charity, the *ancien régime*, and utilitarian liberalism” (op. cit. 537). While French Socialists responded to this problem with the term *poverty* by incorporating poverty “into the broader category of ‘inequality,’” and making it a labor issue, “Republicans...rejected both liberal individualism and socialism in favour of the distinctively ‘social’ idea of ‘solidarity’, which legitimized the Third Republic” (op. cit. 537).

But French Republican views of social solidarity are not the only views that inform contemporary definitions of social exclusion. Indeed, Silver (1994) highlights four²³ contemporary paradigms of social exclusion and social solidarity – only one of which draws directly from the French Republican tradition.²⁴ And the concept has informed German and Dutch notions of citizenship (Michael Samers, 1998), as well as debates about unemployment and citizenship in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, and Portugal (Silver, 1994: 535). The plight of ethnic minorities and immigrants is also a key theme of most social exclusion policy (Samers, 1998). Thus, policies combating social exclusion address a multitude of social phenomena. Consider the myriad things from which people may be excluded, according to social exclusion literature:

...a livelihood; secure, permanent employment; earnings; property; credit, or land; housing; the minimal or prevailing consumption level; education, skills, and cultural capital; the benefits provided by the welfare state; citizenship and equality before the law; participation in the democratic process...respect, personal fulfillment, understanding. (Silver, 1994: 541)

²³ Although Silver's article is entitled "Social exclusion and social solidarity: three paradigms," it actually outlines four. The fourth paradigm Silver identifies is "organicism". Silver does not examine the economic models and approaches that express this view of social relations, which is probably why it is left out of the title. Nonetheless, she does examine it at some length, and it reflects some of the views of community exhibited in southern EU member states. H. Silver. (1994). Social exclusion and social solidarity, pp. 546-548.

²⁴ The four paradigms are the "monopoly" paradigm (in which the coincidence of group distinctions with inequality is the core *problématique*) the "specialization" paradigm (in which exclusion results from an inadequate separation of social and economic spheres); the "solidarity" paradigm (which attempts to steer a "third course" between the other two paradigms by prioritizing the establishment and reaffirmation of cultural and social bonds through microeconomic and micro-social policies); and the "organicist" paradigm, which I outline at length below. H. Silver. (1994). Social exclusion and social solidarity, p. 543.

Clearly, the concept is broad, multidimensional, “essentially contested”²⁵ and even “chaotic” (Samers, 1998: 123). Social exclusion today evokes a complex image of marginalized – often unemployed – groups and/or individuals residing within a state structure that is more or less integrative and is central to creating a feeling of solidarity and membership. As such, social exclusion policy and policy discourse relate closely to notions of employment and poverty.

Social exclusion is not synonymous with poverty or unemployment. One way to distinguish social exclusion discourse from *poverty* or *unemployment* discourse is that the first highlights “the lack of communication between individuals and groups...which prevent them from negotiating on mutual recognition and a sense of belonging” (ibid.). The theme of grass-roots activity also runs through social exclusion discourse: contemporary “social-exclusion focused strategies claim to combine the strengths and avoid the weaknesses of the failed older approaches to tackling poverty” by supporting “grass-roots, bottom-up initiatives” linking local groups with private enterprise, local government, and state agencies (Brendan Bartley, 1998: 152). And policies to combat social exclusion often involve measures to develop decaying urban areas or *quartiers en crise* (Ali Madanipour, 1998).

Thus, the popularity of the social exclusion concept in Europe is understandable: it evokes images of community that resonate with the European integration project; it appears to address immigration and ethnic minority concerns of

²⁵ Silver, 1994, quoting Gallie, 1956. “Essentially contested” means that it is “appraisive, complex, open in meaning, and explicable in terms of [its] parts, so that selecting from among the mutually exclusive meanings of exclusion necessarily entails the adoption of particular values and world views.” H. Silver. (1994). *Social exclusion and social solidarity*, p. 540.

state and regional policy-makers across Europe²⁶; and it tends to emphasize localized policy strategies, thereby complementing both heightening the status of local and regional authorities in Europe and the political “devolution” occurring in some EU member states (e.g., the establishment of Scottish home rule in 1999, or of autonomous regions in the 1978 Spanish constitution).²⁷

Most important, however, is that the concept social exclusion links questions of societal membership with economic development, in particular by emphasizing inclusion *through legitimate productive activity*, especially paid employment. Indeed, I argue that the term “social exclusion” is popular in Europe not only because it is less stigmatizing than the term “poverty” or more comprehensive than unemployment policies. Rather, social exclusion’s popularity in Europe rests on its ability to link state responsibilities for providing social protection with individual or group responsibilities to contribute to the economic growth of the state. In short, social exclusion policy in the European Union enables states to enlist the services of citizens and even non-citizens in the European project, as it provides them a role in European society. As we see in the next section, EU member states are figuring this out.

²⁶ The success of addressing ethnic minority and immigration concerns through social exclusion policy is questionable, however, in part because it de-politicizes or as Fraser (1989) says “re-privatizes) these concerns. See Chapter 4. See also Samers, Michael. (1998). Immigration, ‘Ethnic Minorities’, and ‘Social Exclusion’ in the European Union: a Critical Perspective. *Geoforum*, 29, 2 (123-144).

²⁷ In fact, the close association of social exclusion with decaying inner cities has rendered the EU Action Programme on Social Exclusion subject to the principle of *subsidiarity*. J. Allen, G. Cars, and A. Madanipour. (1998). Introduction. In A. Madanipour, G. Cars & J. Allen. (1998). *Social Exclusion in European Cities: Processes, Experiences and Responses*, p. 13.

The EU and Social Exclusion: Linking Cohesion to Economic Development

The EU has adopted the discourse of *social exclusion*. The renaming of the EC's *Poverty I*, *Poverty II* and *Poverty III Action Programmes* as the *Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion and to Promote Social Solidarity* indicates that at least in name, the EU intends to display a commitment to the new concept. The switch from a discourse of poverty to social exclusion discourse is attributed to various influences, including Commissioner Jacques Delors's introduction of the concept during negotiations with the Social Partners (i.e., trade unions and business representatives) (Judith Allen, Göran Cars, & Ali Madanipour, 1998: 13). The term's introduction is also attributed to member states' reservations about the word "poverty" as applied to their respective countries. It was argued that each of them had, after all, established a guaranteed minimum income, and *social exclusion* seemed a less stigmatizing term (Samers, 1998: 125, quoting Berghman, 1995: 16).

At least one sociologist (Silver, 1994) argues that the EU demonstrates a consistent view of the causes of social exclusion and the legitimate means to create social cohesion. Silver argues that the EU has adopted consistently the "monopoly" paradigm of social inclusion, whose core *problématique* is the coincidence of group distinctions with inequality in the market and in other social processes. This paradigm "views the social order as coercive, imposed through a set of hierarchical power relations," and it claims exclusion arises from "the interplay of class, status and political power," thus serving the interests of the included (op. cit. 543). It contrasts with the "specialization" paradigm (in which exclusion results from an inadequate

separation of social and economic spheres); the “solidarity” paradigm (which attempts to steer a “third course” between the other two paradigms by prioritizing the establishment and reaffirmation of cultural and social bonds through microeconomic and micro-social policies); and the “organicist” paradigm (which seeks to “construct a social order based on groups”) (op. cit. 543-546).

Silver argues that the EU promotes the “monopoly” paradigm of social exclusion in several ways: One, it supports eradication of some social protection schemes on the grounds that these have “tended to protect people already in work” (op. cit. 564). Two, it is vigilant of “the contribution of regulatory barriers to sectoral segmentation and, thus, economic exploitation and exclusion” (ibid.). Three, it supports the belief that “the unequal power underlying group monopolies can be mitigated...by inclusive citizenship” (op. cit. 564-566). Silver also argues that while earlier EU policy reflected more closely the “solidarity paradigm,” its increasing reliance on social rights discourse, including references to T.H. Marshall’s three-pronged conception of citizenship, places EU policy squarely in the “monopoly” camp (ibid.).

Silver’s sources for this interpretation include a 1993 Commission *White Paper: Growth, competitiveness, employment*; a 1992 Commission white paper on solidarity, and a 1991 Commission report on national policies to combat social exclusion, as well as examination of EC economic policies. A brief review of EU poverty and social exclusion policy, and more intensive research into EU social policy, largely supports Silver’s argument. EU policy-makers clearly have remained preoccupied with the

belief that poverty or exclusion may result from “differential access to high-wage countries, high-wage industries, or firms and jobs with internal labour markets” (Silver, 1994: 565). Moreover, the prevailing concern among about “social tourism” or “social dumping” among EU member states certainly supports this view. (See for example Lange, 1992).

This analysis is interesting for several reasons. First, it suggests that European integration represents a mix of both liberal and social-democratic economic policy. This contrasts with conventional views of European integration as essentially a neo-liberal project, or at least a project based on *laissez-faire* economic models. It does not, however, undermine my argument, which is that EU policy prioritizes market exchange relations as the essential relations for the European project of development defined as economic growth. Second, Silver’s analysis is interesting because it does not emphasize any difference between state- and EU-level market interventions. Silver’s approach distinguishes regulations not by whether they are enacted by state or non-state actors, but rather according to the view of cohesion they support. This approach supports my argument that the Commission works as an agent of the state, and that observers should look beyond the state-EU distinction in order to understand European integration.

In terms of EU *social* policy, the Commission frames social exclusion in two ways: on the one hand, it is a problem specific to member states, and as such, they are free to address the issue as they see fit to ensuring *state* rather than Community solidarity. For example, the Commission explains the purpose of the Structural Funds

in terms of their contribution to the cohesion of member states *as separate entities*:

“Mainstream structural funding is designed essentially to support Member State policies in the drive towards economic and social cohesion” *within state borders* (European Commission, 1998c: 22). On the other hand, the Commission treats social exclusion as a problem concerning the entire European Community – particularly as it relates to the *economic development of all member states*. For example, the Commission explains the 1992 doubling of the Structural Funds as a move for Community, not state, solidarity: “while the notion of Community solidarity in itself was not new” in 1992, “the magnitude of this task had increased, of course, with the admission...of new Member States with severe problems of regional underdevelopment: Greece, Spain and Portugal” (ibid.).

Other observers believe that social exclusion is a pan-European concern. For example, Allen *et al.* (1998) highlight what they term “an important shift in perspective at the European level from a view which sees the problem of cohesion as one of relationships among the member states to one which sees the population of the Union as a whole and among whom social exclusion must be addressed wherever it occurs” (op. cit. 13). EU policy represents a “global, Union-wide” approach that justifies “implementation at ‘local’ level on the grounds that the groups who are affected by social exclusion are spatially concentrated within urban areas” (ibid.). However, Allen *et al.* fail to mention the link between economic development and social cohesion, and thus fail to emphasize a critical aspect of European integration.

The link between social cohesion and economic development in EU social exclusion policy, as well as other EU policy, is crucial for it applies political pressure on all member states to ensure the economic development and growth of all member states, as this reflects well on the entire Union. Hence states face pressures to exhibit positive indicators of development *qua* economic growth, and to work toward any model of social cohesion that gives those results. Given the increase in state policy reach through EU social policy (outlined in Chapter 1), we know that political pressure is placed on increasingly local areas through EU social policy. We know that these localities face a particular kind of pressure, namely to exhibit efforts toward economic development, even if certain practices that encourage social cohesion are eradicated.

Thus, while Allen *et al.* argue, "The main open question...is whether the Union's policy framework is robust enough to be effective when implementation is so devolved" (Allen et al., 1998: 13-14), I argue to the contrary: the main question is whether EU policy privileges certain notions of social cohesion over others. Silver's analysis certainly suggests that it does.²⁸ We need to look closely at the implications of this situation for the people who experience European integration on a daily basis.

²⁸ Silver's analysis also suggests that the Commission acts with considerable autonomy, whereas my argument implies that it has less autonomy, but rather works in collaboration with state authorities. EU member states necessarily have become concerned with the economic growth of poorer member states such that any model of cohesion (including but not limited to "monopoly" models of cohesion) that supports economic growth will be acceptable to member-state governments, and that within those parameters, the Commission does have autonomy. H. Silver. (1994). Social exclusion and social solidarity.

Enacting EU Social Exclusion Policy: "Exchange" of Practice or Norm Imposition?

The EU Commission has designed its social exclusion policy to take advantage of the immense diversity of actors to which it has access across the Community. For instance, its *Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion and to Promote Social Solidarity* is based on the following principles: "partnership" (amongst national, regional, and local authorities, NGOs, other organizations, and excluded groups and individuals); "multi-dimensionality" (policy must address exclusion across institutions and sectors of society, for example employment, housing, and education); and "participation" (of the excluded groups themselves) (John Andersen & Jørgen Elm Larsen, 1993: 13). More recent EU activity in social exclusion has added the principle of "transnationality," i.e., projects supported through EU funds must have a cross-national approach, through partnership with actors in other member states²⁹ (European Commission, 2001a).

The involvement of such a diverse group of actors in social exclusion policy presumably leads to a diverse range of policy solutions. Indeed, the Commission and the Council bank on the proliferation of a wide range of views of social cohesion. For example, they have used this assumption to guide the new agreement to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) on social inclusion. (The NAPs on social inclusion are structured similarly to the NAPs on employment, mentioned in the Introduction and

²⁹ For example, the most recent call for proposals to combat social exclusion "seeks proposals for various kinds of action to facilitate transnational cooperation among the players involved in combating social exclusion, in particular Member States' administrations, local and regional authorities, the agencies in charge of combating social exclusion, the two sides of industry, organisations providing social services, non-governmental organisations, universities and research institutes, national statistical offices, the media and actual or potential victims of exclusion." European Commission. (2001a). Call for proposals VP/2001/014 for preparatory actions to combat and prevent social exclusion (under budget line B3-4105). Online. Available: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/2001_014/vp2001_014_en.pdf [2001, May 29].

analyzed in Chapter 4.) And among the kinds of projects supported by the 2001 social exclusion *programme* are those aimed at “conducting and disseminating studies making for a better understanding of social exclusion” and those projects “fostering innovative approaches in policies combating exclusion through exchanging good practice” (ibid.).³⁰

To some extent, the EU’s intentions to include a diverse range of actors holds true. For example, a Danish municipality (Odense) has installed offices in Brussels whose primary purpose is to coordinate the application procedure and implementation of EU-funded projects. The director of this office reports that the office has coordinated several projects whose *de jure* coordinator is a southern NGO, but *de facto* is coordinated by the Odense office in Brussels. Asked why he does this, he says for both strategic and personal reasons. His perception is that these sorts of projects get funded more often, and that “All the projects I have endeavored to do have had a North-South dimension. You can do northern projects, but it isn’t interesting, from a European perspective, I don’t see the point” (Peter Saugman, personal interview, March 11, 1999). This is a powerful means of accentuating the EU’s principle of transnationality.

But the projects sponsored by EU social exclusion policy are limited by the criteria on which projects are approved. Through the process of applying for and receiving EU funding, projects are subject to review by the Commission. We have seen in Chapter 1 that the Commission acts as manager of the Structural Funds, and

³⁰ In addition, the call for proposals includes one other type of action, “action to assist the most vulnerable,” among the three kinds of action it will support with funding. European Commission. (2001). Call for proposals VP/2001/014.

potentially as monitor for net contributor member states of poorer member states' projects. Finally, the principle of "proportionality" requires that a specified portion of project funds come from other national, regional, or local sources. Thus projects enacted through EU funding receive a high level of oversight that likely is unmatched by projects that receive only national, regional, or local funding. The principles on which this oversight is based are therefore important determinants of the kind of policy actions the EU supports.

Moreover, the procedures at the Odense office suggest there is an informal process of filtering involved, as well. For instance, Saugman reports that he has decided to organize a project application for an EU initiative on the rehabilitation of inner cities. He says he wishes to do this because "in Odense, there is an area that is industrial, I just went to Liverpool a while ago, and saw the ruins of that area, and you know, we don't want that to happen in Odense. Also, we have lots of immigrants in one area of Odense" (personal interview, March 11, 1999). Asked if he meant that Odense has had problems with persecution of the immigrants, Saugman said, "No, it's the youth that are the problem, they break into the homes of the old people who live there and steal things" (ibid.). More information was not available about this project, including whether it ultimately was organized or received EU funding; the point is that there is filtering of projects and potentially to the solutions entertained by them. Saugman saw this particular problem of inner city decay in its complexity, and understood the solution in a certain way. This perception, combined with Saugman's expertise in making and maintaining contacts in both Brussels and Odense (he says he

makes trips to Odense two to four times per month), make for a powerful filter for EU projects.

There is some indication that this filter extends to a wide range of municipalities and regional administrations, which have organized themselves into the Committee of the Regions (COR). Like the social partners (business and labor representatives in Brussels), the COR has review privileges for proposed EU legislation. Thus, they are an “organized” European interest (Fraser, 1989b). The activity of the Committee of Regions indicates that they, too, are organized around the main principles of the European Union. Consider the 1998 project “Trashumancia” (loosely translated, “transhumanity”). Organized by Spanish, Italian, and Romanian regional authorities around a culture that is said to span six Mediterranean cultures – located in parts of Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece, and Romania – the project aims to “bring to light the [common] ancestors” of these regions and “recuperate a culture ‘that is dying on us,’ and that is ‘disappearing rapidly in all of Mediterranean Europe’”³¹ (Azcona, A., 1998: section 2).

But the effects of the project follow the line of the overall EU project of development defined as economic growth. For example, while the project aims to maintain transhumanity’s cultural heritage, it also “intends, among other objectives, to reclaim the conservation of [the culture of] transhumanity and to be able to generate

³¹ “Dar a conocer estos precedents y recuperar una cultura ‘que se nos está muriendo’ y que está desapareciendo rápidamente en toda la Europa mediterránea.” A. Azcona. (1998, January 18). Pastores europeos: El proyecto sobre trashumancia presentado en Bruselas continuará con novedades. [European shepherds: The project on transhumanity presented in Brussels will continue with new events.] *La Rioja*. In Committee of the Regions. (1999). *Press book, ed. 23, January/February 1999*. Brussels: COR.

tourist products through ethnographic resources”³² (ibid.). Relations of production and consumption are seen as a means of preserving culture. This view is further reinforced by the fact that the project leader links the project’s cultural aims to the project of economic development: the project explores ways to “interlace this entire theme of conservation...as a fact of [or with] rural development”³³ (ibid.). Thus, EU funding either reinforces or instates processes by which social projects are effected that further the goal of prioritizing market exchange relations over other social relations.

The proactivity of municipal and regional governments and NGOs does indeed contribute to geographical diversity in EU-funded projects, and their efforts are reinforced by the EU’s principle of transnationality. But it is clear that there is little room for ideological diversity, and indeed EU regulations themselves place limits on the kinds of solutions entertained in EU-funded projects. As we have noted, all member states have agreed to the pillar of economic cohesion in the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, and have agreed to the project of development defined as economic growth in the Structural Fund reforms and the SEA. The 1992 reform of the Structural Funds, and the addition of Article 130 to the Single European Act demonstrate the intensity of the political pressure felt by all member states to encourage the economic development of the poorer member states, and to address any social problem that might reflect

³² “...pretende, entre otros objetivos, reivindicar la conservación de la trashumancia y poder generar productos turísticos a partir de recursos etnográficos.” A. Azcona. (1998, January 18). Pastores europeos: El proyecto sobre trashumancia presentado en Bruselas continuará con novedades. [European shepherds: The project on transhumanity presented in Brussels will continue with new events.] *La Rioja*. In Committee of the Regions. (1999). *Press book*.

³³ “... ‘enlazar todo este tema de conservación de patrimonio como un hecho de desarrollo rural.’ A. Azcona. (1998, January 18). Pastores europeos: El proyecto sobre trashumancia presentado en Bruselas continuará con novedades. [European shepherds: The project on transhumanity presented in Brussels will continue with new events.] *La Rioja*. In Committee of the Regions. (1999). *Press book*.

poorly on the European project. I have discussed the Structural Funds reform in Chapter 1. Article 130 of the SEA, Section A “obliged the Community to ensure the reduction of disparities between regions and to *improve the position of the least-developed regions*” (emphasis added, European Commission, 1998: 16). And Section C charged the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), a sub-fund of the Structural Funds, to “redress regional imbalances in the Community by aiding the least-developed regions and the conversion of declining industrial regions” (ibid.). Just like the Trashumancia project, Article 130 and the Structural Fund reforms link the economic development of member states to the solidarity or cohesion of the entire European Community.

Thus, while the Commission certainly has designed its programs to encourage a free exchange of “best practices,” the institutional and discursive context in which this approach operates biases the outcome toward those practices that involve economic growth. And while it is certainly true that social exclusion has been “clearly located as subject to the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality, and, thus, devolved to the member states” (Allen *et al.*, 1998: 13), I am not so sure that “this devolution...has led to terminological diversity as the idea becomes rooted in different national contexts” (op. cit. 13-14). Subsidiarity does not imply the protection of societies from the logic of the market – it only lays the burden of proof on those who call for more centralized or more uniform policy. Policy can lack functional uniformity yet remain ideologically consistent in its prioritization of market exchange relations. Indeed, I argue that EU policy encourages policy-makers to consider a narrower range

of policy options, with the understanding that their decisions are made within the context of European economic growth.

Moreover, because EU policy discourse, as well as scholarly discourse, links social cohesion to economic growth, any model of social cohesion that does not include a project of regional economic growth appears archaic, even dangerous. This problem seems in fact to stem from the general study of social exclusion. For example, Silver's discussion of the "organicist" paradigm implies that this model of inclusion is archaic, in part because it does not obviously promote an economic policy that would seem viable in late-capitalist society. According to Silver, actors working within the organicist paradigm seek to construct a social order based on groups (1994: 546). One example is "truly conservative underclass theories...[which] assume that preserving the moral order is a state responsibility and that policy should coerce people into appropriate behaviour" (op. cit. 554). Another, more threatening example, considering current problems in Europe with nationalism, is the organicist arguments that have emerged in places where "traditional conservative, pre-industrial, and corporatist notions of integration degenerated into justifications of authoritarianism and fascism" (op. cit. 546).

The Trashumancia project leader seems aware of this problem, and interestingly, like EU policy itself, his solution is to link cultural preservation to economic development. Working hard to ensure that the project not appear a throwback to outdated and undesirable cultural practices, the project leader argues that while it is everyone's obligation to conserve the culture of Trashumancia "because

it betokens our European identity" ("*al ser nuestras señas de identidad europea*"), it is also everyone's obligation "to see the possibility that we may make a profit of it, in some form" ("*ver la posibilidad de que esto lo podamos rentabilizar de alguna manera*") (Azcona, 1998). Finally, the article on the project mentions that the project's new (as of 1998) partners included the *Camara* of Trade and Commerce of Cluj, Romania, as well as the *Retam* Association of Tourist Development, also in Romania (ibid.). It is telling that trade and tourism are the departments charged with preserving age-old cultures, and I argue this is another example of the prioritization of market exchange relations through EU social policy.

While Trashumancia is not expressly dedicated to social exclusion, it serves as a telling example of the political persuasion of projects funded by EU policy and directed by regional authorities. Even a project that seems painfully aware of the loss of cultural traditions bows to the idea of economic development. And Silver's description of the organicist paradigm itself demonstrates how not only social exclusion policy, but also social exclusion scholarship is located in this nexus between movements for cultural conservation and government initiatives for economic growth. Silver's discussion of the organicist paradigm fails to include any contemporary examples, except in cases of extreme conservatism. And while Silver acknowledges that the combination of "organicism and Catholicism in a context of entrenched privilege may actually be radical," she discusses organic models primarily as exceptions to the rule. Indeed, her more-limited discussion of this paradigm is somewhat mysterious, given that the paradigm occurs most often in places where

“democracy came late,” including “Germany, Italy, the Iberian Peninsula, and many less developed countries” (ibid.). This is a large group of countries, and possibly includes a larger population than that encompassed by the other three paradigms combined.

In short, social exclusion is a phenomenon of late capitalism; thus, solutions to it are bound to require either more economic growth, or the tweaking of current economic and social policies. They are much less like to encourage the practices of an apparently bygone era. Added to this problem are the constraints faced by European leaders, including regional authorities (such as the Trashumancia project leader, who was appointed by the government of the municipality of Rioja). They are faced with the difficult task of preserving cultural traditions that are not linked to economic development, within a political and institutional context that is expressly devoted to economic growth. Because of these dynamics, I argue that southern European member states’ social cohesion likely will not be recognized as a solution to other EU member states’ problems. I discuss this issue below.

First, however, I show how these dynamics influence the actions of non-governmental project organizers, as well. Leaders of EU-funded projects experience pressure to act as representatives of states that in turn are part of a larger, pan-European economic and social development project. Nonetheless, project leaders may use the EU project system to resist these dynamics. Any resistance to an imposition of market exchange-mediated social cohesion largely will depend on the autonomy of project organizers. As we shall see in the case study below, project leaders recognize

this possibility for resistance, though it is not guaranteed that they recognize its usefulness for resisting EU views of social cohesion.

EU-Funded NGOs: Policy Saboteurs?

Through EU programs, an exchange of practices can occur in many ways, and across many different groups. For example, the Commission officials charged with administering certain EU-funded Action Programmes, such as the *Action Programme on Social Exclusion and to Promote Social Solidarity*, may host annual project-leader meetings.³⁴ Another means through which the EU encourages the exchange of best practices is by financing projects that examine the practices of other organizations across Europe and then report their findings through some public means (e.g., publishing a Web site, hosting a public forum in a specific European city, or publishing a book or other form of literature).

One project sponsored through EU Structural Funds, the Eurofem project, adopted the latter method of exchanging practices. This project is interesting in terms of social exclusion because it includes an account of regional policy-making from a Finnish feminist social analyst, Tarja Cronberg.³⁵ At the time she submitted her account of the practices of her region, Cronberg was Chief Executive of the Regional

³⁴ The project leaders' meeting I attended in Brussels in January 1999 (for a different Action Program, the *Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities Between Women and Men*) was conducted over two days and was intended as a forum through which different project leaders could relate their experiences to each other, talk with Commission officials in person about their projects, and generally "network" with other organizations across Europe.

³⁵ See Cronberg, Tarja. (1998). *Visions and Challenges of Regional Policy*. In Horelli, Liisa, ed. (1998). *Proceedings of the Eurofem International Conference on Local and Regional Sustainable Human Development from the Gender Perspective* (49-52). Eurofem Gender and human settlements International Conference, June 10-12, 1998. Hämeenlinna, Finland: Eurofem.

Council of North Karelia, Finland. The region is rural, “both a large and a small region” – geographically, it covers about the same territory as Holland, but demographically, it includes only 175,000 inhabitants (Cronberg, 1998: 49). It is also extremely remote to most of the EU, located at the easternmost region of the European Union, next to Russia (ibid.). As such, it faces some interesting concerns of inclusion and exclusion. As Cronberg says, dramatic changes took place in the region’s geopolitical location as the Soviet Union collapsed. “Borders were opened and communication could take place, although the regions of the other side were different from before” (ibid.). At the same time,

Due to membership of the European Union agriculture is being reduced and farmers have left or are leaving their estates...The European Union’s regional policy and the structural funds have provided, since 1995, support for regional development projects in order [sic] to create new employment structures. The question is, the time factor. New working places are only being created [sic] slowly whilst the old structures are collapsing extremely fast. In this situation, we really need revisions in regional policy, particularly revisions which create new employment for women. Challenges abound [sic]. (ibid.)

Thus according to Cronberg, North Karelia’s (via Finnish) membership in the Community entails economic growth, but at the cost of traditional economic structures and practices. The region’s peripheral location means that it is at risk of both dislocation and disintegration in itself, as well as exclusion from the European project generally. The EU clearly recognizes this: this region, along with approximately seven³⁶ other Finnish regions, qualifies for Objective 6 funding under the Structural

³⁶ The sub-state regions identified for different levels of funding, or different “Objectives,” occasionally do not coincide with official state regional borders (such as counties or principalities). This appears to be the case in Finland, where at least one Objective 6 region occupies two official Finnish state

Funds. Total funding to these regions through the 1994-1999 Structural Funds equaled 459.9 million ECU (European Currency Units) (European Commission, 1998: 90-92).

Cronberg and the Commission differ little in their interpretation of the problems faced by North Karelia. The Commission notes that "On the whole, the economy is dependent on declining forestry, agriculture and public sectors and an unbalanced industrial sector" (op. cit. 92). In addition, the Commission notes that in this region, career opportunities are "very limited" and many people move away to find work, and that unemployment is the highest in Finland (24%), causing yet more people, particularly young people, to migrate (ibid.). The Commission has therefore established the priorities of stimulating new economic activity by "strengthening entrepreneurship and improving company competitiveness," and "developing human resources and know how through research, technology and training in key sectors" (ibid.). The latter goal includes vocational integration of people threatened with long-term unemployment and of young people, and integration of persons at risk of exclusion from the labor market. This last group includes "the unemployed socially disadvantaged under 55 years of age," such as people with physical or mental disabilities.

The solutions mentioned by the Commission include "devising pathways to employment which combine various measures such as guidance and counseling, rehabilitation, training and subsidized employment" that are "customized to the person's own individual requirements" by the "participants, the Employment Office

and relevant groups or organisations” (op. cit. 95). The suggested solutions therefore reflect three central elements of EU social exclusion policy: economic growth, effected through state (and non-state) activity, and emphasizing individual life experiences.

Cronberg’s critique of EU activity in North Karelia largely centers on its masculinist nature. This is not surprising, given that Cronberg’s presentation forms part of an NGO forum on women and sustainable human development. What is interesting is the lack of discussion about northern-to-southern dynamics. Cronberg’s presentation is financed in part through EU funding: the forum was part of a project financed through a Community Initiative on equal opportunities. It is clear that the scholars/activists who organized this forum were aware of ways in which EU funding was a double-edged sword: they are critical of aspects of the European project for being masculinist or “male,” as Cronberg puts it (1998: 49). Thus, they understand the context in which they receive funds – on at least one important level.

Yet I would suggest that this project (which did in fact examine projects in other regions of Europe) may be complicit in the North-South policy learning dynamic whose possible origins I examined in Chapter 1. I argue this for several reasons. One reason is that the directors of the project identify *The New Everyday Life*, a “Scandinavian women’s concept born in the late 1980s,” as a guiding principle or vision of their work (Liisa Horelli, Christine Booth, & Rose Gilroy, 1998: 13). They say that the concept “is a vision of a more harmonious society in which people are at the center of all concerns rather than the pursuit of the quick economic fix,” and “a model of action for reorganizing the basic tasks of daily life in a neighbourhoods in a more

integrated way" (ibid.). While this perspective raises the question, "how can we build an infrastructure for everyday life?" the project leaders fail to present southern European practices as possible answers (op. cit. 14).³⁷

Another reason for charging the vision of integration with southern "blindness" is that a speaker at the forum (Wendy Harcourt) who usually is sensitive to North-South dimensions to policy, particularly sustainable development policy (see for example Harcourt, 1994), downplayed the potential for this dynamic in her address at the project's forum. To be sure, Harcourt does make the compelling statement that "...today it makes little sense to talk about a geopolitical division North and South – but rather about the economic South found throughout the world, the vast majority of those living in poverty being women" (1998: 13). Whether this point was heard at the forum is not clear; certainly it is a compelling and interesting concept, which as we shall see holds particular relevance to EU employment policy (see Chapter 4). In any event, it is problematic that no presenters at the conference were southern, nor were references made to any southern model of social integration throughout the forum, because this highlights the problems of entertaining a true plurality of models of social relations in EU social policy.

These issues aside, however, this project does present some interesting ways in which a broader range of solutions may be addressed – even under the auspices of EU policy. One of the practices identified by the project as a "best practice" is re-

³⁷ They answer this question by presenting two examples, a Scandinavian co-housing laundry practice that requires community agreement, and a U.S. laundry restructuring through market entrepreneurship. They argue that either solution works, it depends on the culture. L. Horelli, C. Booth, and R. Gilroy. (1998). *The Eurofem Toolkit for Mobilizing Women into Local and Regional Development*, p. 14. Hämeenlinna, Finland: Eurofem.

conceptualizing or “bending” agendas (Horelli *et al.*, 1998: 1). Thus, there is evidence to suggest that the participants or recipients of EU funding are aware of the dual and sometimes conflicting purpose of economic growth and social cohesion, but also of avenues to resist such an imposition on their ways of life. It is questionable whether these means of resistance will be exploited by NGOs that are increasingly become part of an established network along with of state policy-makers and an increasingly bureaucratic Commission; whether they will be exploited in favor of southern models of inclusion is unlikely. In the next section, I explain why this is the case.

The Southern Model of Solidarity: “Backward” or Endangered?

Scholars of social exclusion and welfare policy generally agree that southern European states lack the processes and institutions necessary for “real” social policy solutions. For example, Martin Rhodes (1998) quotes Ferrara (1996) in arguing that that southern states suffer from a “syndrome”:

...the ‘socio-political etiquette’ which inspires the functioning of all of the southern European welfare states is so different from that of the other corporatist and Catholic countries to their north, that it effectively creates a distinctive type of welfare system...which, regardless of a process of ‘catch-up’ in terms of social spending, is highly resistant to institutional convergence.... [Even] when and where development has occurred it has been seriously distorted in favour of certain privileged groups, creating a specifically southern welfare ‘syndrome’ (5).

Rhodes argues that while “there are actually ‘unparalleled peaks of generosity’ for certain categories of the population (particularly the ‘core’ work force),” the institutional resistance to change makes the system problematic (*ibid.*).

Valeria Fargion (1997) agrees that at least some regions of Italy and Spain are “backward” in respect to social policy: “the dynamics of centre-periphery relations in the area of social policy have exacerbated the contradictions between prosperous and more backward areas in Spain as well as Italy” (1997: 152). And Annie Vrychea and Charalambos Golemis (1998) consider the small Greek city of Maniatika and its surrounding region (Piraeus) “degraded” due to its spatial (geographical) segregation from the regional hub, and to its patriarchal/male-dominated households, which “forc[e] women outside the neighbourhood,” and oust the youth from the community, engendering future isolation (op. cit. 168-169).

Yet these scholars dismiss too easily the social practices of southern states. For example, despite their assessment of the Greek area of Maniatika-Aghia Sophia as “degraded,” Vrychea and Charalambos offer little evidence to support this view, and even state that the region enjoys “a closely knit social group whose members support each other in all fields of social and economic life” (1998: 159-162). Certainly, these regions and member states suffer from some serious problems of governance, including extreme variance in the levels of state healthcare, day care, and other social structures (Rhodes, 1997). However, they do not appear to suffer from social exclusion as it is known in other member states. For instance, Miguel Laparra and Manuel Aguilar (1997) argue, “Spanish society exhibits a somewhat paradoxical combination of high social precariousness and relatively limited exclusion” (87). Indeed, while Spain suffers from the highest unemployment in Europe, “social exclusion is still, to a great

extent, a remnant of the past rather than a result of recent trends in employment”

(ibid.).

Laparra and Aguilar argue that the factors contributing to Spain’s “integrated precariousness” model include *family solidarity*, which involves not only assistance from relatives, but often the cohabitation in a single household of breadwinners (often male), part-time employed or unemployed (with benefits), the very young, and the elderly (often with pensions) (op. cit. 88-89). This model also includes the *expansion of the means-tested sector* in the Spanish social protection system, which has grown much faster than the Spanish welfare state generally (op. cit. 89). Finally, it includes a *social housing model based on ownership* that has been rebuilt in the 1980s and that “has limited the processes of spatial segregation of the poorest groups of the population” (op. cit. 89-90).

Indeed, the suggested solutions of social exclusion experts prioritize market exchange relations at the expense of cohesive non-market relations. Take Vrychea and Golemis’s (1998) analysis. They note that one of the reasons the Greek city of Maniatika is isolated is a “local social structure [that] has generated strong informal networks which compensates for the lack of provision of services by the Greek state” (1998: 171). There are problems, however, including the daily exodus of women from Maniatika to their jobs in Piraeus. They then recommend that in response to this problem, officials should establish “a Business Advisory Centre, which would help local women to start small businesses in the area, so that they could become financially independent without having to leave the neighbourhood” (1998: 169). The Centre

would also “train women who are currently working and encourage them to be more efficient in the labour market” (ibid.).

I am deeply sympathetic to raising such logistical concerns and their impact on a city’s relationship to other cities, and to society more generally. But the important point here is that the act of discussing women’s daily situation in the context of social exclusion prioritizes inclusion and the productive capacity of women, rather than interpreting women’s needs differently (e.g., they need better transportation to their jobs in the larger city), or meeting their needs through other means (e.g., providing incentives for husbands to treat women differently in the home).

The issue is obviously complex. Another example complicates it further: Spain exhibits a highly unusual (and according to EU social exclusion policy, highly unlikely) situation, combining the highest unemployment rate in Europe with relatively little social exclusion. Yet despite the cohesiveness which people in Maniatika exhibit, and despite Spain’s high level of inclusiveness, there no apparent champion of southern practices among the policy-makers and scholars working under the auspices of the European Union. This is an especially interesting observation given the EU’s increased efforts at networking all actors to promote the exchange of best practices.

One possible reason for the lack of southern examples of best practice is that only southern Europeans possess the familial resources that prevent the most extreme forms of social exclusion (Laparra & Aguilar, 1997). Indeed, the last cross-EU census indicates that the size of households is typically larger in southern European states than in other EU member states (European Commission, 1995: 71). Because the size of

households is falling across Europe (except in Greece) (op. cit. 72-73), the family may prove less able to prevent social exclusion.

Yet another reason for the lack of proponents of the southern model, is that it recalls images of past right-wing governments, including Francisco Franco's reign in Spain. Indeed, aspects of the model reflect the organicist paradigm of social exclusion, which "seek[s] to construct a social order based on groups" (Silver, 1994: 546); as such, it may resonate with the agenda of far-right nationalists. Contemporary concerns about the rise of nationalist sentiment in Europe therefore certainly work against the organicist paradigm. Spain's continuing struggle with Basque separatism would render its leaders and its general public particularly wary of organicist thought.

Finally, Maniatika's local cohesiveness, and Spain's "integrated precariousness" do come at a cost. First, family solidarity through intra-family redistribution "means sacrifices in terms of money, of work (paid or unpaid) and of personal opportunities that bring about conflicts and tensions that may erode family structures. Thus, this form of integrated precariousness may be experienced as a very uneasy situation of insecurity and frustration, even if it does not turn into one of poverty or exclusion" (Laparra & Aguilar, 1997: 92). Related to this, southern models of integration can be detrimental to women's status – and perhaps to the breadth of their life choices. Women perform most of the caring work within the family, but this is increasingly being challenged by feminists and the left in southern EU member states, at the EU level, and elsewhere. (I discuss the issue of women, gender equality, social exclusion, and EU policy in the following chapter.)

For these reasons, southern practices may appear less palatable to policy experts, and it is understandable why northern societies such as that of North Karelia, Finland do not mimic their southern counterparts. Indeed, southern practices are not always popular as policy models even in southern states. As one scholar notes, “Family or family policies are...not very popular issues in Spain. They still remind many people, especially feminists and the left, of times when a very traditional conception of the family was imposed, though with not much success, during the last years of General Franco’s dictatorship (late 1960s and early 1970s)” (Constanza Tobío, 1994: 41). A similar reason is given for Spanish “femocrats” (state feminists’) lack of attention to childcare (Celia Valiente, 1997).

But the most obvious reason for the neglect of southern perspectives in EU social exclusion policy projects is that the southern model – in particular, Spain’s integrated precariousness model – does not rely on processes or institutions of economic growth. In fact, these models have evolved *despite* economic growth (Laparra & Aguilar, 1997), and should be interpreted as non-state measures to cope with the kinds of monetary and institutional resources available to higher-growth or more “mature” late-capitalist economies.

EU policy therefore has even fewer reasons to support southern models, and every reason to support studies of social exclusion. Because EU institutions and EU member states have adopted the view that social cohesion is tantamount to economic growth or economic growth, the situation of southern societies is not just “paradoxical” – it is undesirable. While several good reasons exist why southern

practices do not exemplify best practice. Nonetheless, I argue that more attention needs to be paid to southern practices. Insofar as they do reflect the “organicist” paradigm, may be highly effective political means of creating inclusion. As Silver says, “organicism and Catholicism in a context of entrenched privilege may actually be radical” (Silver, 1994: 546).

Moreover, it is clear from our review of intergovernmental and neo-functional analyses of EU social policy that we should be alerted to the possibility that EU social exclusion policy allows states to engage in “cheap talk” (Lange, 1992) whilst member-state governments develop the macroeconomic policies that are necessary to compete in global economic markets but that may also produce the exclusion the policies purportedly alleviate. Indeed, there is reason to be concerned that the actual implementation and enactment of social exclusion policies merely distracts local authorities from these larger economic processes. This is the position of some structuralist and critical theorists (Brendan Bartley, 1998; Samers, 1998). Similarly, at least one institutionalist argument acknowledges that problems of exclusion are not always solved by government, but rather “are generated by the way government agencies and initiatives operate, changing or ignoring the life conditions and social relationships of people living in neighborhoods of concentrated disadvantage” (Patsy Healey, 1998: 71).

In fact, other social models are less than obviously preferable. France’s model, for instance, is problematic because it “is discursively ambivalent, oscillating between a language of assimilation or integration, and a language of multiculturalism” (Samers,

1998: 132). In addition, current French integration policies “are ad hoc and responsive, despite deeply entrenched rhetoric,” and from the perspective of ethnic minorities and immigrants, are particularly problematic because this rhetoric combines with “the denial of ethnic minorities,” producing a less than convincing solution for those groups (ibid.). As Samers says, the combination “seems to work more at the level of the lofty speeches of the elite politicians than it does in the urban suburbs” (ibid.). Meanwhile, “German integration policies have been based upon the historical foundation of *volk* (‘one nation, one culture’),” and therefore improve little on the “organicist” paradigm: two effects of German social policies are social citizenship and specific racisms (op. cit. 133).

Thus, it is not clear why southern models of inclusion should be rejected in favor of other forms. Samers sees European states’ visions of inclusion and exclusion as “divergent” except in terms of their effects on racism: while “the divergent European ‘policies of integration’ do not explain political participation, they certainly serve to (re)-produce ideologies of exclusion based on formerly exclusionary nationalist/racist ideologies” (134). However, Samers does not factor in the European Union dimension. I argue that while separate member-state policies of inclusion may reproduce problems of racism, EU policy is lengthening the reach of member state policy into regional, local, and non-state actors, and is supporting a convergence of notions of cohesion amongst all these actors, around the project of economic growth. And regional and municipal actors themselves are forming interests around EU policy. The result of these dynamics is that these actors will link projects of social cohesion or

cultural preservation to processes of economic growth. As a result, while EU policy does include a broader remit of actors involved in combating social exclusion, it also encourages policy learning from North to South, and excludes southern models of social inclusion. Finally, regardless of geographical location, EU policy either reinforces or institutes the prioritization of market exchange-mediated social relationships, and may in fact contribute to the process of social exclusion – a sort of post-industrial cultural imperialism that actors are hard-pressed to resist – by excluding certain cultures in favor of others.

Conclusion

This chapter reaches a paradoxical conclusion, from the perspective of social exclusion. Insofar as EU member states and the Commission are able, they ensure that visions of social cohesion are linked to the project of economic growth. Their abilities to do so, in addition to problems with NGO and public perceptions of southern practices, therefore ensures that southern models of cohesion will not be entertained in any exchange of practices. The extent to which these actors are willing to bend the EU's economic growth agenda will also determine whether Nordic states protect their models of social cohesion. If actors do not bend the EU agenda, policy learning, perhaps simply in the form of norm emulation,³⁸ will be unidirectional, from North to South. What is more,

³⁸ Ann Florini (1996) elaborates a theory of norm emulation. In her discussion, Florini says emulation does not equal learning: if it were the latter, then we would not see policy convergence; states would learn how to deal with issues in a way that met what they thought were their interests. "In the evolutionary model, since behavior is emulated, the sheer number of contacts increases the number of opportunities for horizontal reproduction. In an increasingly interdependent world, policy convergence should increase sharply in a wide range of issue areas" because environments are becoming more

the linkage of economic growth with social cohesion will pressure all EU member states – northern as well as southern – to provide (and in southern states' cases, increase) social protection even as they work toward market efficiency and competitiveness. As a result, they will enlist citizens and non-citizens in the project of economic growth – perhaps to the detriment of their models of social cohesion, especially though not exclusively in the case of southern states.

To the extent that southern models depend on a communal family household requiring the unpaid work of women, and to the extent that Nordic models rely on a paternalist³⁹ state, European integration may be a good thing for women. I examine this possibility in the next chapter.

complex and uncertain. Learning is less effective, and emulation appears advantageous (380). A. Florini. (1996). The Evolution of International Norms. *International Studies Quarterly*, 40 (363-389).

³⁹ Some analysts have suggested that Nordic welfare states – and states more generally, including their role as employers – put women in a situation of dependency relative to the state, and hence the state appears paternalist. For a discussion of one way in which (even) Nordic states repeat or reinforce patriarchal gender dynamics, see for example Borchorst, Anette. (1994). The Scandinavian welfare states – patriarchal, gender neutral or woman-friendly? *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, 31 (1) 45-67.

Chapter 3

EU Gender Equality Policy:

Enlisting Feminists in the Project of Economic Growth

Introduction

In the last chapter, I concluded that efforts by EU member states to create European social cohesion necessarily will be limited by the project of economic growth. This is due to the restrictions placed on southern member states' spending of EU Structural Funds, but more importantly to the political pressure placed on all member states that results from EU social exclusion discourse, EU treaties, and EU membership generally. In addition, I explained that negative perceptions of southern social practices (including perceptions held by southern European societies themselves) further indicate that any model of southern inclusiveness, such as Spain's "integrated precariousness," would not be entertained as a legitimate option for European social cohesion. This will result despite EU efforts to create a free exchange of best practices among all EU member states. Further, I indicated that a new model of social cohesion would emerge in Europe, in which citizens are enlisted as part of the state project of economic growth, and in which membership in a society is based in large part on citizens and non-citizens' ability to fulfill that role. Thus, societies that rely on non-state institutions (such as the family) to provide cohesion will face changes to their practices, as will societies that rely on the state, though to a lesser extent.

I indicated that the only apparent measure to counteract the models promoted by EU policy is for NGOs and other actors to "bend" the EU policy agenda, as suggested by a (northern) European women's NGO. The extent to which these actors

are willing to bend the EU's economic growth agenda will largely determine whether southern (and to a lesser extent, Nordic) states protect their models of social cohesion. If actors do not bend the EU agenda, policy learning, or simply norm emulation,⁴⁰ will be unidirectional, from North to South. Finally, I argued that through European integration, all EU member states find themselves pressured to provide (and in southern states' cases, increase) social protection even as they work toward market efficiency and competitiveness. As a result, they will enlist citizens and non-citizens in the project of economic growth – perhaps to the detriment of their models of social cohesion, especially in the case of southern states.

Of course, from the perspectives of women in southern Europe, both a North-to-South policy learning process, and the project of economic growth may be good news. As we noted in the last chapter, the southern model of social cohesion depends largely on a communal family household that is cemented primarily through the (unpaid) work of women, even prompting observers to say its “social and personal costs...have fallen chiefly on women and the young” (Laparra & Aguilar, 1997: 92). Insofar as European integration transforms this dynamic, women may welcome EU policies and even the “imposition” of models of social cohesion based on economic growth.

⁴⁰ Ann Florini (1996) elaborates a theory of norm emulation. In her discussion, Florini says emulation does not equal learning: if it were the latter, then we would not see policy convergence; states would learn how to deal with issues in a way that met what they thought were their interests. “In the evolutionary model, since behavior is emulated, the sheer number of contacts increases the number of opportunities for horizontal reproduction. In an increasingly interdependent world, policy convergence should increase sharply in a wide range of issue areas” because environments are becoming more complex and uncertain. Learning is less effective, and emulation appears advantageous (380). A. Florini. (1996). The Evolution of International Norms. *International Studies Quarterly*, 40 (363-389).

In this chapter, I complicate this conclusion. EU gender equality policy may prove advantageous to women insofar as it establishes such issues as childcare, maternity and paternity leave, equal treatment, and equal pay as political issues. But I argue that in terms of women's experiences, life patterns, and the institutions shaping women's lives, EU gender equality policy must be analyzed in the context in which it has been created, namely the larger project of economic growth outlined in the previous chapter. From this perspective, European gender equality policy threatens both southern and Nordic gender practices, and not necessarily to the benefit of women. In fact as we shall see, the EU's model of economic growth may require Nordic states to dismantle some social protections, even as EU policy holds them as prototypes from which southern states can learn, and even as it is highly unlikely European integration will encourage southern state development along Nordic lines. While EU gender equality policy has been extremely innovative and at times potentially "transformative,"⁴¹ it promotes a view of women that may run at cross-purposes to the goals of the women's NGOs, feminist bureaucrats, and other participants in the policy. Unless these NGOs, political activists, equal opportunities authorities and other actors "bend" the EU agenda, policy on women in Europe stands to interpret women as discrete economic actors, and to encourage women's productive, consumptive, and re-productive activity through market means, rather than with the aid of state policy or non-regulated social relationships such as networks or families. This will happen even as states become increasingly unable, either politically or

⁴¹ This characteristic of mainstreaming policies is described in detail by Teresa Rees (1998). See T. Rees (1998). *Mainstreaming equality in the European Union: Education, training and labour market policies*. London: Routledge.

fiscally, to support the services provided by northern models. European women may well prefer the extant social practices in both northern and southern EU member states to the vision proposed by the European Union.

I support this argument first by outlining the basic framework of EU gender equality policy, including not only formal EU equality legislation (the so-called Equality Directives), but also such instruments as the NOW (New Opportunities for Women) Community Initiative (which was folded into the EQUAL initiative in 2000) and the five *Action Programmes on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men*. I discuss briefly the Equality Directives but spend more time with the Community Initiatives. I take this approach because these actions are under-represented in scholarly analysis of European gender policy, and yet represent a powerful means of influencing gender dynamics in EU member states. Indeed, at least one member state has used the principles outlined in EU *Action Programmes on Equal Opportunities* to guide its own gender equality endeavors, as we shall see.

After outlining the EU's basic gender policy framework, I examine closely the principles on which EU activity, particularly its Community Initiatives, is based. These principles include some that are familiar to us, as they appear also in EU social exclusion policy. Transnationality and the exchange of best practices are two examples. In addition, I examine closely the principle and strategy of mainstreaming. The EU recently has emphasized this principle and tactic heavily, not only in its later *Action Programmes on Equal Opportunities*, but also in other policy areas. I show that the mainstreaming principle/tactic may mitigate a North-to-South policy learning process,

particularly in combination with other EU policy principles. Nonetheless I show how mainstreaming will help contribute to an increasingly individualized notion of women's citizenship and women's life experiences, and how member states can capitalize on this in order to enlist the economic efforts of women. Further, I show how women's groups independent of the EU contribute to this dynamic. Finally, I explore how this conception of women will clash with but not necessarily improve women's life patterns across Europe, in northern states, but also particularly in southern states.

An Overview of EU Gender Equality Policy: The Equality Directives

EU gender equality policy has received significant scholarly attention over the past two decades (see for example Maria Dolors García-Ramon & Janice Monk, 1996; Catherine Hoskyns, 1992, 1996; Sonia Mazey, 1988, 1995; Ilona Ostner & Jane Lewis, 1995; D. Perrons, 1994). Most attention has centered on the so-called EU Equality Directives. Directives are binding legislation⁴² approved either through qualified majority or unanimously⁴³ by the Council of the European Union, the executive arm of the EU.

⁴² In the framework of the Treaty establishing the European Community, the Council of the European Union, which consists of representatives from each member state, passes several types of legislation, which vary according to their strictness and modes of implementation. These acts include Regulations, Directives, Decisions, Recommendations, or Opinions. Regulations and Directives are binding, but Directives are not as strict as Regulations because their application and enforcement are adapted to the various institutional and cultural structures of the different member states. Decisions, Regulations, and Opinions are generally considered less effective legislative measures, because member states are not required to enforce them. "The Council may also adopt conclusions of a political nature or other types of act such as declarations or resolutions." European Commission. (2001a). The Council of the European Union. *Europa: The European Union Online*. Retrieved May 29, 2001 from EUROPA database, on the World Wide Web: http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/soc-incl/2001_014/vp2001_014_en.pdf.

⁴³ The Council's voting rules for social issues have been changed to qualified majority (*qmv*), rather than unanimity voting. *Qmv* is a weighted voting system in which about 2/3 of the total number of

Member states are required to implement Directives immediately as they are passed and according to the institutional and cultural circumstances within the regions and states where they apply. The EU Equality Directives address the following issues:

- Equal Pay (the first Equality Directive, passed 1975)
- Equal Access to Employment, Vocational Training, and Working Conditions (1976)
- Equal Treatment in Statutory Social Security Schemes (1979)
- Equal Treatment in Occupational Social Security Schemes (1986; revised 1997)
- Equal Treatment for Self-Employed and Assisting Spouses (1986)

In addition to the Equality Directives, more recently the Council has passed other Directives concerning women's status and life patterns:

- Protection of Pregnant Workers (1992)
- Parental Leave (1996)
- Shift of Burden of Proof in Sex Discrimination Cases (1997)
- Part-time Work (1997)

In some cases, this legislation has been used to expand member-state policy on women. An EU-sponsored research project has labeled this "upwards harmonization," and lists examples of such development in several EU member states. In Ireland, implementation of EU Directives has led to legislative and social changes including "a considerable increase in the numbers of women in paid employment (from 28% in 1977

votes (i.e., 62 votes) is needed to pass an item. In European integration studies, *qmv* status is important because it indicates areas in which the EU behaves more like a federation than an intergovernmental organization.

to 34% in 1993), and particularly in the number of married women in the labour force” (European Commission, 1994: 23). The research group attributes the 1976 Directive with altering a French law prohibiting night work by women (op. cit.: 25). And the group attributes the European Union as a whole with the “upward” transformation of gender legislation and gender roles in Spain, where “From the women’s perspective, European integration is frequently seen as a decisive advantage,” and where “It was clearly understood that the process of modernization of the Spanish economy and its need to meet European Union requirements also meant adapting the labour market to the gender requirements of the European Union” (op. cit.:26-27). British equal pay and sex discrimination acts were strengthened by EU Directives (ibid.). And finally, “Denmark...has had to introduce legislation in order to comply with the European Union Directives,” because “European Union law provides stronger protection against discrimination as a fundamental right and shows much less respect for collective agreements than is usual in the Nordic tradition” (op. cit.: 29).

This research-group analysis suggests that EU policy not only has increased state policy reach, but also has created a more individualized notion of women in society. The analysis suggests also that formal EU legislation not only has tested formal state legislation, but also has challenged long-held traditions and institutional structures in a variety of member states. Of course, member states have been creative in their implementation of EU Directives. For example, Denmark’s 1978 implementation of the Equal Pay Directive involved a process in which the state focused on the exceptions to the Directive, such as women in certain positions in the

army. Then, because the implementation of the Directive occurred during a time of increasing unemployment in Denmark, it was used to justify and develop Danish training and education policy for women, because women were among those who were harder hit by unemployment; their jobs were the first ones eliminated (Lotte Valbjørn, personal interview, 19 May 1999). The Danish state was therefore creative in its use of EU law; certainly other member states worked in a similar manner.

Yet I argue that the interplay of EU and member-state legislation tends primarily to view women, less as participants in a larger collective, and more as discrete economic producers and consumers. Both the Danish and Spanish examples in particular suggest as much. (EU law “shows much less respect for collective agreements than is usual in the Nordic tradition;” and Spain’s EU membership entailed “adapting the labour market to the gender requirements of the European Union” {European Commission, 1994: 29}.) Thus my approach differs from that of other EU gender policy analysts, who have found fault with formal EU legislation because it “generally has to be cast as employment-related, limiting it to individuals in the world of paid work” (Ilona Ostner & Jane Lewis, 1995: 161); who have questioned the policy’s effectiveness, due to its lack of enforcement (Sonia Mazey, 1988, 1995; Janneke Plantenga, 1997); and who critique the entire European integration project for overlooking women and privileging the concerns of labor unions, employers, governments, and other elites (see for example Vaiou, 1996).

In contrast to these approaches, I propose that we need to address how European integration, including EU gender equality policy, creates new policy

networks, new social roles for women, and new means of altering women's lives toward an increasingly discrete, economically productive and consumerist model of woman. Given the increasing emphasis on local and regional policy, the EU and its member states possess new means of shaping women's lives. Indeed, it is clear the EU has put great effort into the creation and increasingly the management⁴⁴ of non-legislative gender-equality and other social policies, sometimes known as "soft law."

As one EU representative explains,

Best practices, peer pressure, and mediation are now regular acts of the Commission. In addition, the Commission is dealing with both macro- and micro-economic policy of Member States...People do not realize the extent of integration; soft law is at least as important as regulation in the EU...[and] is an example of how far integration has come. (Trojan, 1998)

My approach therefore suggests that the EU Equality and other Directives have been successful, insofar as they have laid the groundwork for a larger European project of economic growth – though not necessarily in terms of creating gender equality in the member states. Rather, the principles on which EU policy, particularly non-legislative policy, has been based have enabled the EU and its member states to establish a new model for women, namely woman as discrete economic actor. In feminist terms, EU policy aims to take women out of the private sphere and into the

⁴⁴ In fact, the Commission currently manages 35% of Structural Funds programs – a development that at least one Commission representative finds troubling, because "the Commission was created to initiate policy, not manage it." Trojan, Carlo. (1998). *Insider's View of the Commission*. Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) Executive Seminar Series presentation, Brussels, Belgium. September 29, 1998.

public – in this case, the market⁴⁵. We need to consider the non-legislative actions taken by the EU to promote gender equality.

An Overview of EU Gender Equality Policy: Non-Legislative Aspects

The EU's non-legislative gender equality policy includes programs explicitly targeting women, in addition to principles that have been incorporated into non-gender-specific policy. Within the former group lies the Community Initiative NOW (New Opportunities for Women), which trained women for re-entry or promotion in employment. Like other EU Human Resources Initiatives (such as EUROFORM and HORIZON), NOW has been incorporated into a new Community Initiative for 2001-2005, EQUAL. Soft EU gender equality policy also includes the five *Action Programmes on Equal Opportunities*, first instituted in 1981 and renewed every four-year planning period since. NOW and the *Action Programmes* have been financed through the Structural Funds, which currently fund EQUAL. All these initiatives have relied on a project approach wherein the Commission releases calls for tender for multi-annual projects from governmental authorities, NGOs, and other organizations; provides supplemental financing (usually around 40%) for projects; and provides administrative assistance, policy expertise, and assistance with communication between project

⁴⁵ Some theorists, such as Hannah Arendt and like-minded theorists, view the public as entirely different from the market.

partners, who in the case of *Action Programme* and EQUAL projects usually are located in different countries.⁴⁶

In addition to initiatives that target women explicitly, other EU policy such as the Guidelines for Employment Policy works toward gender equality because it includes financing and instruction on instituting processes and programs that lead to women's increased participation in political and economic endeavors. I discuss EU Employment policy in the next chapter.

In terms of financing resources, these initiatives are quite small relative to member-state social policies, even those of southern states (which may explain the lack of scholarly attention they receive). For example, total EU spending on NOW programs and projects from 1989-1993 amounted to 156 million European Currency Units (ECU); meanwhile in 1991, Spain's social protection spending equaled 6.4 trillion ECU.⁴⁷ And during this time period, NOW spending accounted for about 1% of the European Social Fund, which itself represented only 17% of all Structural Fund spending (European Commission, 1998: 22). In this context, these initiatives look like small potatoes.

Yet I contend that despite their narrow budgets, these initiatives hold significant importance for EU member states. First, we must keep in mind that gender equality typically represents just a small portion of states' total social protection

⁴⁶ The Fourth Action Programme (1996-2000) provided funding for project partners located in EU member states, EFTA (European Free Trade Association) member states, and occasionally Central and Eastern European member states (the so-called CEECs).

⁴⁷ This figure was reached using Laparra and Aguilar's (1997) data, multiplying social protection per capita expenditure (which in 1991 totaled 1,600.5 ECU) by the number of means-tested benefits (which in 1991 totaled 4,039,260). Laparra, Miguel and Aguilar, Manuel. (1997). *Social Exclusion and Minimum Income Programmes in Spain*. In M. Rhodes, ed. (1997). *Southern European Welfare States: Between Crisis and Reform* (page 90).

expenditure. Relative to state spending, EU initiatives can provide a sizable contribution to total state gender equality spending. Second, states receive funding through these initiatives on a supplemental basis only – a condition of many Structural Funds-financed initiatives. These initiatives therefore act as an incentive for municipalities, regional authorities, or NGOs to propose projects that otherwise would remain dormant. Third, a primary purpose of these initiatives is to inspire policy innovation – for example, NOW’s purpose is “to promote the Community dimension through innovatory transnational projects testing new approaches which could influence mainstream practice” – and hence projects sponsored by these non-legislative measures can lay the groundwork for future policy endeavors at all levels of governance (*ibid.*). Finally, expenditure levels are not the only indicators of policy significance in the case of the European Union; one must look at the principles on which the policy is based, for they can directly shape member-state policy.

What are the principles underlying these gender equality initiatives? The Third *Medium-term Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1991-1995)* (hereafter 3rd AP), generally regarded as initiating a new era in EU gender equality policy⁴⁸ had as its fundamental objective the promotion of “full participation by women in the labour market in every respect and to increase the value of their contribution” (Commission of the European Communities, 1991: 2). Accordingly, the

⁴⁸ At least two observers noted the expertise and innovative nature of the 3rd *Action Programme on Equal Opportunities*, and regretted its end. D. Britton (1999). Telephone interview, 13 May 1999; L. Valbjørn. (1999). Personal interview, Copenhagen, May 19, 1999. The 3rd AP did introduce the concept of *mainstreaming*, probably the most innovative concept in the Programme thus far. But it must be noted that Lady Diana Britton’s comment was admittedly biased, as Britton was one of three experts who contributed to the Programme’s design.

following principles applied: *consolidation* of “Community achievements, maximize and capitalize on the experience achieved to-date;” *reinforcement* of “partnership and complementar[ity] between the measures carried out by the various partners concerned (Commission, Member States and the Social Partners);” and providing “for the integration of equality into general mainstream policy,” a.k.a. mainstreaming (op. cit. 3).

The *Fourth Medium-term Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1996-2000)* (hereafter 4th AP) placed mainstreaming firmly in the center of its activities, as the overarching principle of the entire *Programme*. It also placed a larger emphasis on cross-national partnerships by encouraging the exchange of best practices across these groups, and through the principle of transnationality. While core principles of the 4th AP varied somewhat from year to year,⁴⁹ a consistent theme is the improvement of women’s employment situation *as it relates to economic growth*. For example, some (1997-1998) goals goal of the 4th AP were to “mobilise all the actors in economic and social life” to promote equal opportunities; promoting equal opportunities “in a changing economy, especially in the fields of education, vocational training, and the labour market;” and promoting the reconciliation of “working and family life for women and men” (European Commission, 1997a; 1998c: ii.).

⁴⁹ This variation caused the EU Court of Auditors some concern. See Court of Auditors of the European Communities. (1998). Special Report No 22/98 concerning the management by the Commission of the implementation of measures to promote equal opportunities for women and men accompanied by the replies of the Commission. OJ C 393 16.12.98.

Certain practices instituted in the *Action Programmes* and maintained in current EU gender equality policy may mitigate the uniformity of the Commission's mission. For instance, the *Action Programmes* have included research projects conducted by scholars at universities throughout Europe; "expert groups" consisting of scholars, policy practitioners, activists, and other knowledgeable individuals and organizations; and transnational projects created through the partnership of NGOs, local, regional, and national institutions and authorities, and other actors. These activities may counteract a completely uniform policy message or policy outcome resulting from EU sponsorship.

Yet these minor factors cannot outweigh the clear goals of EU gender equality policy. Through EU policy, state gender equality activities have become more localized, tying local and regional authorities to the Commission and/or the state, and always aiming for women's equality as discrete economic actors in the labor market. And even when the EU addresses such key aspects of women's lives as childcare and household responsibilities, women are encouraged to prioritize work *in addition to* family. The principle of "reconciliation" exemplifies this strategy perfectly.⁵⁰ In feminist terms, EU policy aims to take women out of the private sphere and into the public (market) sphere. Through legislative *and* non-legislative EU gender equality policy, networks of communication and meaning are established and reinforced at increasingly localized levels, emphasizing women's role as discrete economic actors,

⁵⁰ Reconciliation was a primary or secondary objective of over half of the 70 or so projects sponsored by the 4th AP in 1997. See European Commission (1997a). *Directory of the projects 1997: Medium-term Community Action Programme on equal opportunities for women and men*. Brussels: European Commission, Directorate-General V Employment & social affairs.

increasing state policy reach (even as some states resist this development⁵¹) and deepening the relationship between women and state economic growth.

Furthermore, a North-South dimension is evident in EU equality policy just as it was evident in EU social exclusion policy. While the 4th AP's principle of transnationality and the use of an international Advisory Committee⁵² in both the 3rd and 4th APs indicate that policy learning may not always flow unidirectionally (i.e., from North to South), the overall goal of instituting women as individual economic actors in the public market will have different effects in different member states, depending on their particular treatments of gender equality or "gender orders" (Ostner & Lewis, 1995). Because states' gender orders vary to some degree according to state geographical location (and I am speaking here only about the North-South axis), there will be a North-South policy dynamic to EU gender equality policy. In the following section, I show that by and large, EU policy is considered more "progressive" in Southern member states, and less so in Northern member states. I will also show how the North-to-South policy learning dynamic is mitigated by the *transnationality* principle in EU gender equality policy, but only insofar as it encourages women's individual economic production and consumption regardless of geographical location.

⁵¹ For example, the UK is often cited as a recalcitrant member state regarding EU equal opportunities policy. See for example D. Perrons (1994). *Measuring equal opportunities in European Employment. Environment and Planning A*, 26, p. 1199.

⁵² The Advisory Committee was comprised of representatives from national equal opportunities or women's policy offices in every member state, plus Commission officials. In addition to the Advisory Committee, the 4th AP had "an advisory committee on [equal opportunities] (which has a different remit from that of the management committee) of 46 members and 23 observers," but whose purpose was unclear, even to the EU's Court of Auditors, which recommended "streamlining" this management structure, particularly given the relatively few number of projects (approximately 70) financed through the *Programme*. Court of Auditors of the European Communities. (1998). Special Report No 22/98, OJ C 393 16.12.98, p. 32.

EU Gender Equality Policy and the Member States: Policy Emulation for Women?

A recent account by a representative of Spain's *Instituto de la Mujer* (Women's Institute – hereafter IM) illustrates the extent of EU gender equality policy's reach, and the ways EU's non-legislative policy principles can shape women's lives in local and relatively (to Brussels) remote areas of Europe. This particular branch of the IM is located in Oviedo, Asturias, a region in northwest Spain. (Asturias is an Objective 1 region under the Structural Funds.) According to the representative, Angeles Queipo, Asturias is like any other Spanish region in the level of competence it has assumed on issues regarding women. Nonetheless, when the IM in Madrid proposes projects for which the Asturias branch qualifies, it will apply. Queipo says Asturias does this "even if it has to follow the directions of the national organization down to the business partners" in the project (Angeles Queipo, personal interview, 26 April 1999). While some regions in Spain such as Andalucía, Catalunya, or País Vasco often take a more independent stance *vis-à-vis* the national government than Asturias or other regions, Queipo reports that the level of regional autonomy varies little in the area of policy on women (*ibid.*).

Queipo explains further that Asturias's *III Plan para igualdad de oportunidades de las mujeres 1996-2000* (Third plan for equal opportunities for women), drew each of its five objectives directly from the EU's 4th AP. This occurred partly because as Asturias sat down to create its plan, Spain's national plan was not yet complete, and instead of turning to the national plan for guidance, Asturias had to turn to the EU's *Action Programme*. Yet Queipo reports that Asturias would have drawn from the 4th AP even

if the national plan had been complete, because it simply “gives more ideas” (ibid.). A representative of the IM’s Aragón regional office verified that all Spanish Autonomous Communities have Equal Opportunity Plans, and that all draw from the EU’s *Action Programmes*.⁵³ Indeed, Spanish policy as a whole relies heavily on the principles outlined at the European level, as an EU-funded report on women’s studies observes: “Equal opportunity policies in Spain have a direct relation with the European Union as they were developed within the overall framework of European Union Equal Opportunity Directives” (European Commission, 1994: 13).

Thus, the EU’s non-legislative equal opportunities policy also has had an effect in Spain, even on regional and local policy. By contrast, Denmark appears to experience almost no effect from EU policy on the operations, principles, or goals of local or regional (in this case *kommun-* and *amt*⁵⁴-level) equal opportunities policy, and to experience only slightly more impact at the national level. Copenhagen Kommun’s Equality Consultant Ulla Koch reports that while she is aware of EU *Action Programmes* and other gender equality policy, she and her Director have decided against proposing projects because “it’s a lot of work to get the money” and the “outcome wouldn’t justify the work put into it” (personal interview, 17 May 1999). Independent of EU funds, Copenhagen has put considerable effort into establishing parity in its

⁵³ “Suelen hacer referencia al cuarto programa” (They usually make reference to the Fourth [Action] Programme”). In addition, the Project coordinator noted that they draw from the platform of the 1995 World conference on women in Beijing. Finally, the information gathered by regional offices is exchanged with the national office at an annual meeting of the coordinators of the autonomous regions’ equal opportunities plans, held in Madrid. This meeting is organized by the national IM office, which shares information with the regional *responsables*. Rosa Sacacia (1999). Telephone interview, May 3, 1999.

⁵⁴ Denmark is divided into 16 *amter* (an *amt* is similar to a county) and 274 primary *kommuner* (municipalities). Copenhagen is both a single *amt* and a single *kommun*.

employment rates. Koch explained that Copenhagen's Action Plans for Equality between men and women (*handlingsplaner for ligestilling mellem mænd og kvinder*) were established due to the *kommun's* concern that while 70% of its employees are women, few of them hold leadership positions. Unlike Asturias's Third Equality Action Plan, Copenhagen's Second and Third Equality Action Plans (1994-1998; 1999-2002) share little in the way of principles or guidance with EU *Action Programmes*. For example, Copenhagen's Second Plan had as its primary goal "to work for a more equal gender distribution among leaders and staff at all levels, and to ensure that the leadership composition mirror the staff composition"⁵⁵ (Copenhagen's Equality Council, 1998: 1). The activities undertaken to meet this goal included a gender analysis of all *kommun* institutions, inclusion of "the equality issue" (*ligestillingsaspektet*) in all institutional recruitment processes, and a commitment by the *kommun* to seek permission of equality law to recruit men into women-dominated posts, just as it is allowed to recruit women into men-dominated positions. In addition, the *kommun* undertook to work with its education department in training girls in "typically male subjects" (*typiske mandefag*), and boys in "typically female subjects" (*typiske kvindefag*) (ibid.).

It appears in fact that Danish policy is influenced as much by the state's personnel management philosophy as it is by politics or ideology – and still there is no mention of the EU as a source of information or inspiration. As one Danish equal opportunities consultant explained, Danish *kommuner* address equal opportunities through Action Plans like the one described above because in the late 1970s and early

⁵⁵ Own translation. The text reads: "Det er maal at arbejde for en mere ligeli kønsfordeling blandt ledere og medarbejdere paa alle niveauer, og at arbejde for at ledersemensaetningen afspejler medarbejdersammensaetningen."

1980s, the public sector changed its focus from technological advances to human resources and employee management issues. It was decided that job flexibility was needed and was better achieved through human resources policies than through use of new technology. This involved new developments in women's working conditions and analysis of the changing organization of work. Thus, this change in management philosophy obliged public employers to set up equality programs, such as *kommun* Action Plans that are reviewed by the Danish Equal Status Council (DESC). (Lotte Valbjørn, personal interview, 19 May 1999).

However, I argue that the reason EU actions are not as influential in Denmark as in Spain is because the Danish state already is involved heavily in women's lives. In other words, the state already has extensive policy reach in Denmark; consequently, any effort on the EU's part to increase that reach will be less perceptible. Moreover, Danish policy appears already to have made a move toward positioning women as discrete economic actors. All Scandinavian states rely more on universal childcare benefits, which target *individuals* rather than households, and render married women more independent of their husbands/partners (Borchorst, 1994: 53). Once again, any EU action toward establishing women as individual market actors will be lessened. Yet at the same time, the EU is not encouraging a Nordic model. I discuss the ambiguous nature of this model for women in the following section, paying particular attention to the Danish model.

Danish and General Nordic Gender Policy & the EU

Scholars of Danish labor law have indicated that Denmark's EU membership will result in a more individualized notion of workers in Danish law. Ruth Nielsen (1995) argues that "EC law is inconsistent with basic features of the Danish labour law tradition, in that EC law provides stronger protection against discrimination as a fundamental individual (as opposed to collective) right and shows much less respect for collective agreements than is usual in the Danish tradition"⁵⁶ (p. 4). Adds Nielsen, there is a "trend towards increased statutory regulations of the relationship between the employer and employees, mainly as a result of Denmark's membership of the EC" (op. cit. 10).

Insofar as this is the case, some scholars argue that it represents good news for women in Denmark. For example Lauri Karvonen (1995) argues that the increase of women members in Scandinavian trade unions and the general decentralization of wage policy systems in these countries may be more responsive to women's demands (op. cit. 151). But the picture is complicated by the dominant role of the state in Scandinavian women's lives. The state is by far the largest employer of women in Scandinavian states: in 1991, 53% of the Danish female labor force, 44% of the Finnish, 53% of the Norwegian, and 57% of the Swedish female labor force were employed in the public sector (op. cit. 137). In addition, in each of these countries the state has

⁵⁶"In labour law in general, the Danish tradition is that the Constitution and international law have been of very little importance and there are very few statutes. Instead, collective agreements, case law and unwritten principles of law constitute the main national sources of law." Nielsen, Ruth. (1995). *Equality in Law Between Men and Women in the European Community: Denmark*. Luxembourg: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, p. 10.

concerned itself for some time (though to varying degrees) with women's work both inside and outside the household/private sphere (op. cit.).

Yet analysts generally do not note the potential conflict between the Nordic (welfare) state's apparent "woman-friendliness" and its ubiquitous presence in women's lives. For example, while Borchorst (1994) offers an ambiguous assessment of the Scandinavian welfare state, her analysis seems to argue for more – not less – state intervention, or for intervention of a different nature. For example, Borchorst critiques Nordic states on the grounds that "none of the countries have sought to change the division of work in the family" (op. cit. 57). Interestingly, Borchorst does not mention the state as the primary employer – and hence primary contributor to the motherhood conflict – in this analysis. Neither does she critique the state for its potential over-reliance on women as workers in a different analysis (Borchorst, 1995), which is somewhat surprising given her argument that "Policymakers do not recognize that gender relations are hierarchical and conflictual" and that the primary bargaining actors in Danish employment policy, the social partners,"⁵⁷ represent male interests; organizations of workers and employers have been extremely male dominated, and they have made assumptions from the perspective of male norms in collective bargaining" (op. cit. 65).

The argument that EU policy encourages an increasingly individualized notion of women contrasts somewhat with Silver's (1994) argument that EU economic policy

⁵⁷ The social partners are the consistent negotiating parties (rather than interest groups) in most Nordic policy-making processes. In Denmark they consist of Danish employers' associations, the federation of Danish trade unions, the federation of Danish civil servants, and salaried employees' organizations. Borchorst, Anette. (1994). The Scandinavian welfare states – patriarchal, gender neutral or woman-friendly? *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, 31,1.

relies on the “monopoly” paradigm of social solidarity. To recall, this paradigm “views the social order as coercive, imposed through a set of hierarchical power relations,” and claims exclusion arises from “the interplay of class, status and political power,” thus serving the interests of the included (op. cit. 543). My analysis of EU gender equality policy indicates that in fact, EU policy reflects not only the “monopoly” paradigm, but also the “specialization” paradigm, in which exclusion results from an inadequate separation of social and economic spheres (ibid.). This is clear in the following analysis of the core policy principle to EU gender equality policy, mainstreaming.

Gender “Mainstreaming”: “Transformative” Politics or Post-Industrial Imperialism?

The general process of mainstreaming is known in public policy circles as a tactic by which organized interests’ agendas become part of public policy: “Mainstreaming means the incorporation of NGO models into the official policy framework, involving the recognition of the model” (e.g., in form of a new institution), “and in many cases a (partial) subsidy for its implementation” (Frits Wils, 1996: 73). Gender mainstreaming itself may have emerged from the British concept of “gender proofing” – i.e., assessing policy along gender lines, and at least one source attributes gender mainstreaming’s origins either to Britain or the United States (Britton, telephone interview, 13 May 1999). The EU Commission traces the impetus behind mainstreaming to the platform

for action adopted at the 1995 fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing,⁵⁸ which “requests governments and other actors to mainstream a gender perspective into all policies and programmes, so that, before decisions an analysis is made of the effects on women and men respectively” (European Commission, 1998a: 3).

Yet mainstreaming has taken on a slightly different character in Europe, where the concept of equality supplements most (gender) mainstreaming efforts. Thus a 1997 project sponsored by the Nordic Council of Ministers aims to test the implementation of a “gender equality perspective in all areas of...policy,” and claims, “Responsibility for gender equality issues must lie with management” (Nordic Council of Ministers, 1997). In the EU, the Committee on Women’s Rights of the European Parliament has held at least one public hearing on “mainstreaming equal opportunities,” featuring comments from the EU Commissioner of Employment and Social Affairs and members of the European Parliament.⁵⁹ And the EU Commission says that in adopting mainstreaming “as a driving force” of the 4th AP, it “creates a framework for ‘mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality’” (European Commission, 1998b: iii⁶⁰).

⁵⁸ The importance of this conference was noted by several sources. E. Sclater. (1999). Personal interview, Brussels, January 12, 1999. C. Ortiz Corulla & M. Varona. (1999). Personal interview, Madrid, April 29, 1999. R. Sacacia (1999). Telephone interview, May 3, 1999.

⁵⁹ The author attended one such hearing, held in Brussels April 20, 1999.

⁶⁰ In this quotation, the Commission is quoting a Commission Communication (COM (6) 67 final of 21 February 1996) on “Incorporating equal opportunities for women and men into all Community policies and activities”. European Commission. (1998b). *Directory of the Projects 1998: Medium-term Community Action Programme on equal opportunities for women and men*. Brussels: European Commission.

Thus, while EU parlance often reflects the more general definition of mainstreaming adopted at the Beijing conference and by the UN,⁶¹ its policy is clearly aimed at a narrower outcome than the Beijing platform. Within even the narrower scope of gender equality, however, EU mainstreaming efforts still have a large remit. This is evident in the following examples of 4th AP-financed projects aimed at mainstreaming:

- An Asturias, Spain project, *Simploqué*, trained the technicians and staff (*funcionarios*) in its capitol's municipal offices about issues of gender. The project is limited to technicians in economic and cultural policy areas, but includes transport and health care issues. The idea was to "sensitize" (*sensibilizar*) these technicians to the issues of gender in their realm of policy. (Angeles Queipo, personal interview, 26 April 1999)
- The 1997+ *Trans-Faire* project, whose partners included actors in Lyons (France), Copenhagen, and Barcelona, aimed to "integrate the question of equal opportunities between women and men into public departments,"⁶² as well as in civil society, including "sensitizing" (*sensibiliser*) actors in these realms (Laurence d'Ouille & Christine Guillemaut, 1998: 5). The training involved the following public actors in the Rhône-Alpes region: the economic and social

⁶¹ For example, the EU Commission says mainstreaming involves the assessment of "all policies, whether concerning transport, environment, employment, education, research foreign affairs or even economic and monetary issues," in order to "determine whether they have a different impact on the lives of men and on the lives of women, and to see how the respective needs of women and men can be taken into account" European Commission. (1998b). *Directory of the Projects 1998*, p. iii.

⁶² The original text reads "l'intégration de la question Égalité des chances entre les femmes et les hommes dans les dispositifs publics existants." d'Ouille, Laurence and Guillemaut, Christine. (1998). *Trans-faire: Mobiliser les politiques publiques pour l'égalité des chances entre les femmes et les homes, juillet 97-juin 98* [Trans-Faire: Mobilizing public policies for equal opportunities between women and men, July 97-June 98]. Rhône-Alpes (France): Regional government of Rhône-Alpes.

council of Rhône-Alpes; department directors of work, employment, and professional training; the French National Academic Services of Information and Orientation; *Chefs de service* of the regional government (op. cit. 4).

- The project *Equality in Broadcasting* partnered the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, the Greek *Dimitra* Institute of Training and Development, and the Danish Broadcasting Corporation in an effort to ensure that “women get equal part in both achieving technical skills and appearance in the programmes” of European media. This included designing, developing, testing and producing an “equality awareness raising training package” to serve the broadcasting industry. (Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, 1998: 2).

EU mainstreaming efforts therefore have an unmistakable potential to transform the ways in which not only state, regional, and municipal policy, but also industry practice. However, while one mainstreaming expert (Teresa Rees, 1998) defines mainstreaming as “transformative,” in that it goes beyond “tinkering” (i.e., equal treatment policy) and “tailoring” (i.e., positive action and discrimination policy), I would argue that it is transformative only insofar as it encourages the re-consideration of women as individual economic actors. Rees actually implies as much herself. While arguing that mainstreaming is transformative because it attempts to “develop a set of programmes and policies which are based on a recognition of diversity and the politics and the diversity of difference” (1998: 6), she also says that the culmination of mainstreaming would occur once all public policies, particularly

apparently gender-neutral policies such as transportation, housing, tax policy, etc., *treat women as individuals*, rather than members of a nuclear family (Rees, 1998: chapter 9). Thus, any efforts to put mainstreaming to a different use than promoting gender equality may run into problems.

The *Equality in Broadcasting* project illustrates this point – and also suggests that even EU mainstreaming efforts demonstrate a North-South dynamic. The Swedish project leaders mention problems with getting feedback from Greek broadcasting employees, who were assigned by their managers to participate in the project's development of the mainstreaming tool. They say,

We would also like to add that we feel people in Greece are not at all experienced and comfortable with expressing their views or proposing solutions in WRITTEN form. Orally they will easily take part in discussion, but when answering a questionnaire or evaluation, often the responses are irrelevant (they haven't understood the question? they haven't read the question carefully enough?) or one-word answers (avoiding making a statement?). We believe that we should have given more time to taking the participants through each question...We felt being journalists, they would not have this problem. We were wrong. (Swedish Broadcasting Corporation, 1998: 8).

Interestingly, however, this project also indicates the room for manoeuvre granted through mainstreaming and EU support, just as suggested by the Finnish NGO in the previous chapter: the evaluation concludes, "It is obvious that this project has lead [to the conclusion] that equal opportunities now is more looked upon as a question of human than a question which only concerns women" (op. cit. 9).

Thus, project leaders may choose not to follow the EU's parameters, and may use mainstreaming funding to promote other goals besides gender equality. Certainly

the Commission has little power to ensure a particular result (and indeed, the European Court of Auditors has duly noted problems with evaluating and learning from 4th AP-sponsored projects⁶³). And even within Commission guidelines, it is unclear exactly what conclusions some mainstreaming-project participants will reach or whether those conclusions will lead to women's equality. The *Simploqué* project is an example of the relatively indeterminate nature of the outcomes of mainstreaming. However, I argue that the context of encouraging economic growth helps determine how the kinds of social relations – namely, market-exchange mediated relations – policy makers will encourage as a result of mainstreaming.

Moreover, leaders of EU-sponsored projects have expressed frustration at the exchange of good practice, saying it is either very difficult to encourage or not worthwhile because of the wide variety of circumstances faced by project participants located in different member states (Annemie Drieskens, project leader, European Family Dialogue project #Bb/01/97 personal interview, 23 April 1999; Nadja Tschirmer, Project leader, Mentoring women in Europe project #DEb/06/97, telephone interview, 14 December 1998). As one leader of the 4th AP-sponsored project "Athene APS" says, "even with transnationality, it's a difficult exercise because we *are* different, on equality, in political structures, etc." (Lotte Valbjørn, personal interview, 19 May 1999). Thus, even actors committed to EU policy, and not just municipal actors such as the Copenhagen *kommun* representative, find transnationality befuddling at best, and it

⁶³ See for example the Court's audit of the Fourth Action Programme. Special Report No 22/98 concerning the management by the Commission of the implementation of measures to promote equal opportunities for women and men accompanied by the replies of the Commission. OJ C 393 16.12.98.

is not clear that the Commission or any other EU actor can draw uniform policy recommendations from this exchange.

Nonetheless, I suggest that through encouraging and requiring⁶⁴ gender mainstreaming, the EU has not only increased state policy reach, it also shapes local and regional policy, including interpretations of women's needs, such that those needs are increasingly seen as particular to women as individuals, rather than to women as members of larger communities, and such that women are increasingly viewed as discrete economic actors.⁶⁵ Recalling the argument that European integration excludes women, mainstreaming clearly works towards the inclusion of women. At the same time, it also serves as a means through which market-exchange views of gender and gender relations are imported directly into not only national, but also regional and local policy-making processes.

⁶⁴ *Fourth Action Programme*-sponsored projects do not have the status of law; they are projects some of whose aims include either the implementation or enactment of mainstreaming processes in public agencies or other organizations. (Indeed, two projects on mentoring and company gender issues even indicate that mainstreaming might be implemented in private corporations as a result of the project – though this was not required. See “Mentoring women in Europe,” *Fourth Action Programme on Equal Opportunities* project number DEb/06/97, Gender Studies department, Deutsches Jugendinstitut, Germany; and “Athene APS,” a *Fourth Action Programme*-sponsored project organized by the *Athene* consulting group, based in Copenhagen, Denmark.) N.Tschirner. (1998). Telephone interview, December 14, 1998. L. Valbjørn. (1999). Personal interview, Copenhagen, May 19, 1999.

Neither do the NAPs on employment have the status of law; rather, they constitute what observers call “soft law” – one Commission representative (Trojan, 1998) included non-binding measures, good practice, and pressure politics in his definition of EU soft law. However, the NAPs are based on Article 126 of the Amsterdam Treaty (see Chapter 4), and while implementation and enforcement of gender mainstreaming is difficult and slow (European Commission, 1999) the high visibility of mainstreaming in these high-profile agreements almost certainly guarantees that mainstreaming will become more visible – and thus, state policy reach more extensive – as the NAPs become more firmly institutionalized. In this sense, it seems EU gender equality policy will indeed have an impact on local, regional, and national policies. Trojan, Carlo. (1998). *Insider's View of the Commission*. September 29, 1998. European Commission (1999). *Employment Policies in the EU and in the Member States – Joint Report 1998*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

⁶⁵ This point is especially reinforced in the examination of employment policy throughout Europe, and EU employment policy in particular. I discuss these issues in Chapter 4.

Conclusion

Including a gender dimension to political decision-making and policy implementation processes likely will obstruct some EU efforts to encourage inclusiveness, cohesion, or community. In some instances, mainstreaming projects and social inclusion projects are at loggerheads, because the former encourages viewing societies as separated along gendered lines, while the latter encourages a more holistic view of social relations. But my analysis thus far indicates that EU mainstreaming (as equal opportunities) and social exclusion policies are not so diametrically opposed, and that in fact, both policies encourage a vision of society as comprised of discrete economic actors. In the next chapter, I discuss how EU employment policy contributes to this vision.

Chapter 4

Prospecting for Need:

EU Employment Policy and the Rush for High Employment Rates

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I argued that the EU's practice⁶⁶ of gender mainstreaming has increased state policy reach and shaped local and regional policy, including their interpretations of women's needs, such that those needs are increasingly considered as particular to women as individuals, rather than to women as members of larger communities, and such that women increasingly are viewed as discrete economic actors. Mainstreaming may help include women in an arguably male-dominated European project. But the EU's narrow interpretation of mainstreaming as a gender-equality tool, and its use of mainstreaming within the context of state economic growth, indicate that mainstreaming will not mitigate the general trend toward individualized notions of women, and market mediation of women's social relationships. Indeed, mainstreaming as implemented through EU processes will entail the importation of this model of gender relations directly into national, regional, and local policy-making processes throughout EU member states, increasing state

⁶⁶ *Fourth Action Programme*-sponsored projects do not have the status of law; they are projects some of whose aims include either the implementation or enactment of mainstreaming processes in public agencies or other organizations. Neither do the NAPs on employment have the status of law. However, the NAPs are considered international agreements, and while implementation and enforcement of gender mainstreaming is difficult and slow (European Commission, 1999) the high visibility of mainstreaming in these high-profile agreements almost certainly guarantees that mainstreaming will become more visible – and thus, state policy reach more extensive – as the NAPs become more firmly institutionalized. In this sense, it seems EU gender equality policy will indeed have an impact on local, regional, and national policies. Trojan, Carlo. (1998). *Insider's View of the Commission*. September 29, 1998. European Commission (1999). *Employment Policies in the EU and in the Member States – Joint Report 1998*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

policy reach as it narrows the possible conceptions of women's social relations by decision-makers at those levels.

I also noted in the previous chapter that the lack of mainstreaming experience in southern member states, as well as the resistance to EU processes and recommendations in at least some northern European (and particularly Nordic) member states means that EU mainstreaming efforts will tend to repeat the North-South dynamic noted in EU social exclusion policy. Finally, I noted that the EU's division (and vision) of society into discrete, individual (though gendered) economic actors threatens EU efforts to create social cohesion, even as it calls on all EU citizens and residents to work for the economic growth of member states and the region as a whole.

The EU's campaign for higher employment rates has amplified this call. Unemployment has been a concern of European leaders for at least the past thirty years, but recent events have heightened its profile among EU officials and EU member states. Indeed, EU member states implemented the Employment Title⁶⁷ of the Amsterdam Treaty (the latest EU treaty) in 1997, even though the Treaty itself did not come into effect until a full two years later, on 1 May 1999 (Catherine Barnard & Simon Deakin, 1999). Moreover, while states accelerated employment policy implementation, there was little emphasis in the Treaty at all – either prior to or in the final implementation of the Treaty – on social protection. The call for improved

⁶⁷ According to the Employment Title of the Amsterdam Treaty, promotion of employment is a "matter of common concern" of the member states and one of the Community's goals. European Commission (2001d). Economic and Monetary Union. [Online.] Available <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/> [2001, June 25].

employment rates has been amplified yet further by the 1999 advent of a common European currency (the euro) and of economic and monetary union (EMU) among eleven⁶⁸ of the fifteen EU member states. These events ultimately have culminated in the launch of an official European Employment Strategy.

In other words, European social policy is finding its niche in the area of employment. In some ways, this is not surprising: European social policy often has been “perceived as a form of intervention on employment issues” (Barnard & Deakin, 1999). But it is important to understand this development in the context of EU social policy as a whole. The European Employment Strategy is an attempt to form a coherent approach to unemployment issues by providing general guidelines to EU departments and policy areas. It includes the programs and initiatives of the EU Structural Fund, and particularly the Structural Fund’s sub-department, the European Social Fund. The Strategy also encompasses national policy, including national processes for designing and implementing economic and monetary policy: under the Strategy, EU member states understand that these policy design and implementation processes must be effected not only to fulfill economic and monetary goals, but also to improve national employment rates.

In this chapter, I argue that the most important aspect of EU employment policy is that it represents another policy area – and arguably the most advanced policy area – in which European integration enlists local and regional actors in the goal of economic growth, prioritizes market exchange relations among citizens and

⁶⁸ The eleven member states of the EMU are Belgium, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, and Finland.

residents, and encourages their participation as consumers and producers, all in the name of Community membership and cohesion. Because of the multitude of economic and monetary policy instruments available to the EU and its member states, and because of the sheer strength of initiative behind the employment issue, EU employment policy stands to increase state policy reach⁶⁹ and shape social relations along market lines like no other EU social policy.

My argument differs from that of many observers of EU employment and industrial policy. Most notably, it assumes the policy's effectiveness, at least insofar as it establishes new institutional relationships and refines the thinking of local, regional, and national authorities about citizens – though not necessarily insofar as it increases employment rates in Europe. This differs from most analysis of EU industrial policy, which draws from public policy scholarship. From the perspective of public policy experts, EU industrial and employment processes and institutions appear overwhelmed by the issues at hand, outsized and outclassed by comparable state processes and institutions, and/or fraught with discord between business and labor representatives. While my argument addresses these points, it generally leaves the institutional failures and successes of EU employment policy to public and labor policy experts, and insists on analyzing the socio-political content of the policy itself.

⁶⁹ To recall, a state's policy reach includes policy goal-setting as well as public agency dynamics including how departments interact with one another and central agencies, how departments and central agencies interpret, understand and communicate objectives, how individuals and policy communities define excellent policy work, how recruitment and staff training takes place, and how much policy capacity exists in research institutes and think-tanks. C. Polidano (2000). Measuring public sector capacity. *World Development*, 28, 5. [Online.] Available <http://web4.infotrac.galegroup.com/> [June 2, 2001].

Of course, some discussion of institutions is necessary in order to contextualize EU employment policy. Thus, in this chapter, I outline the development of EU employment policy over time. First, I review the most important efforts by the EU in recent years to enact general industrial policy, including the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights (a.k.a. the Social Charter) and the Social Dialogue (a forum for European-level negotiation between business and labor). I show how these efforts have proved disappointing comparable to similar state-level efforts, particularly in an era in which the nature of European citizenship is being debated. But I also show how these efforts have ended up serving as “a springboard to a more substantial form of consensus-based policy formation,” as projected by one analyst (Rhodes, 1995: 107).

The “more substantial” policy formation is the European Employment Strategy. I cover the Strategy in the subsequent sections of this chapter, focusing in particular on the so-called Luxembourg process, which, unlike the EU social exclusion and gender equality policies I have examined, guides *member-state* policy. I also examine two Community Initiatives similar to the *Action Programmes* on social exclusion and equal opportunities, namely the territorial employment pact and one particular kind of pact, the local development and employment initiative. Like EU social exclusion and gender equality policy, these Initiatives involve state, local, and regional actors. Yet these instruments are exceptionally innovative and creative. What makes them particularly interesting for my argument is the remarkable ways in which they link the satisfaction of people’s needs to the development of local and regional economies, and to the creation of new private industry. Specifically, territorial employment pacts, and in

particular the LDEI, encourage local and regional officials to join with producers (private business and other employers) and with labor in a process of *identifying the unmet needs* of people, on grounds that those needs represent new realms for production and consumption and hence for job creation and higher employment rates. While targeting a specific demographic is not a new concept to business, and while the privatization of public welfare is not new to states, *identifying* needs for the purpose of increasing employment rates is a new tactic in European industrial policy. It therefore deserves close attention, regardless of its impact on European employment rates.

Thus, my analysis of EU employment policy emphasizes a different tension than that highlighted by other observers. Some observers of EU industrial policy note the tension between the Commission and Council's limited agenda of establishing workers' rights, and the Court of Justice's attempts at establishing a broader range of citizen's rights (see for example Martin Rhodes, 1995). By contrast, my analysis focuses on the non-legislative and project-oriented dimension of EU employment policy, and on the politics of need interpretation evident in that policy.

Finally, my argument highlights the careful balancing act the Commission and the Council must play in convincing actors at all levels of authority of their expertise and legitimacy – not necessarily as representatives of a sovereign authority, but as a valid partner, facilitator, and administrator of industrial relations. The difficulty of the EU's task lies in doing it with few binding legal instruments, intensified international attention on the performance of the euro, and heightened expectations of EU performance – including employment performance – with every new agreement

reached among its member states. Insofar as the EU succeeds in establishing or reaffirming EU legitimacy as a sound economic advisor, we are likely to witness a transformation of European social relationships into exchanges between discrete (employed and gendered) producers and consumers in a political arena in which new needs are identified and interpreted by state and business actors, and ultimately are met through the establishment of market exchange relations.

EU Industrial Policy and the Focus on Unemployment

Unemployment is a persistent problem in Europe. Average unemployment in the European Union stood at 9% in January 2000, at which time an estimated 15.5 million persons were unemployed. This does mark an improvement over previous years: in 1997, for example, average unemployment across the EU reached almost 18 million (European Commission (quoting Eurostat), 2001e), and in 1999, national rates hovered at 12% in France, Germany, and Italy (Visco, 1999). Spain has shown a particularly remarkable improvement, moving from 24% unemployment in 1994 (European Commission, 1995: 164) to 13.5% in March 2001 (OECD, 2001).⁷⁰ Meanwhile, some member states, including Denmark and Sweden, face employment gaps, and are more concerned with training currently employed persons than with the insertion or re-insertion of individuals into the labor market. Yet no member state is comfortable with

⁷⁰ The complete OECD data for March 2001: "In March 2001, the unemployment rate rose 4.6 per cent in Portugal and to 5.4 per cent in Sweden; it fell to 9.0 per cent in Finland and to 13.5 per cent in Spain; and it remained stable at 4.7 per cent in Japan, at 3.7 per cent in Austria, at 6.8 per cent in Belgium, at 8.6 per cent in France, at 7.7 per cent in Germany, at 3.8 per cent in Ireland and at 2.3 per cent in Luxembourg." Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (2001). News Release: Standardised Unemployment Rates (1). [Online.] Available <http://www.oecd.org>, [2001, June 25].

9% average unemployment in the EU, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) continues to call unemployment the primary problem in European economic policy (ibid.).

The consensus among analysts is that European unemployment is “not mainly cyclical but reflects important structural rigidities,” and that labor market reforms are necessary (Lars Calmfors, 2001). Indeed, an analyst at the OECD argues, “The most important task...remains that of removing the structural obstacles to employment growth and the reduction of joblessness in the euro area. It is above all with this in mind that economic policy should be coordinated”⁷¹ (Ignazio Visco, 1999: 3). But structural reforms entail policy measures that are difficult and sometimes unpopular, including:

...less generous unemployment insurance; less stringent employment-protection legislation; less of minimum-wage regulations; changes in the legal framework for wage bargaining that aim to increase the bargaining strength of employers vis-à-vis unions; a larger scope for individual wage contracts as opposed to collective agreements; and more effective active labor market programs intended to increase competition for jobs. (Calmfors, 2001)

Enacting such reforms at state level is certainly no mean feat; enacting such reforms through a supranational organization that already appears arcane and quasi-legitimate by the European public, and that faces charges of a “democratic deficit” is yet another matter. Add to this the highly complex nature of industrial relations in each separate member state, and the charge of incorporating national collective agreements into a European-level strategy, and the task of providing some sort of

⁷¹ The euro area is the area encompassed by the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). This includes eleven of the fifteen EU member states. I discuss the EMU further, below.

worker protection at the EU level becomes monumental. Yet this is one aspect of the Community's Social Charter and of the European Social Dialogue.

The Social Charter. The Community Charter of Basic Social Rights was adopted by eleven of the (then twelve) EC member states at the Strasbourg summit in December 1989.⁷² Originally intended as a means to jump-start a "citizens' Europe," the Social Charter began as a proposal for formal EC legislation, but eventually took the form of a "solemn declaration." This result occurred because of glitches in negotiations in which member states attempted to accommodate the concerns of the British, Spanish, and Portuguese governments, who "remained uncertain about the desirability of a floor of social rights and entitlements" as proposed by the Commission in league with the Belgian, German, French, and Greek governments (Rhodes, 1995: 96). Ultimately, the British government rejected the Charter, claiming that "'it did not satisfy criteria which were unanimously agreed by the Heads of Government at the Madrid Summit in June 1989': priority to job creation, adequate regard to subsidiarity and respect for the diversity of practice among member states" (ibid.). Even though Britain did not sign the Charter in 1989, these concerns were incorporated into the Charter so that in the end it contained narrow language limiting its remit. Thus, in its final form, the Charter was "an immense disappointment for those seeking to enshrine citizenship rights at the center of the project for closer political and economic union,"

⁷² Eleven of the then-twelve EC member states signed the Community Charter of Basic Social Rights – the Social Charter – in the face of continuing (and apparently endless) British resistance to formal EC legislation on some social issues. Britain has since signed on to this aspect of the EU, which now forms part of the Amsterdam Treaty.

in part because it referred to the fundamental rights of *workers*, rather than *citizens* (Martin Rhodes, 1995: 96-97).⁷³

Nonetheless, the Charter served as a rallying point for future social policy in Europe, and later became incorporated into the Maastricht Treaty (ultimately ratified by 1993). Britain has since signed on to the Treaty, and hence incorporated the social aspects, due largely to a Labor government, but also because of British trade unions' switch to a pro-Community stance in 1989 (an issue I discuss below). But for better or for worse, the Charter's limited remit to workers' rights remains largely unchanged, even within the new treaties and with new-found support. This emphasis on market relations is emblematic of EU social policy, as I have argued. And it is reinforced by the considerable effort placed at developing a social dialogue (i.e., a European-level business-labor dialogue), while attempts at a civil dialogue (i.e., a European-level NGO dialogue) have sputtered and lagged.⁷⁴

⁷³ Martin Rhodes (1995) explains in detail the conditions surrounding the adoption of the Social Charter: "The Community Charter of Basic Social Rights...was the result of a compromise to accommodate the concerns of the British, Spanish, and Portuguese governments. They remained uncertain about the desirability of a floor of social rights and entitlements that the Commission was promoting in league with the Belgian, German, French, and Greek governments, whose presidencies had been critical in moving the agenda forward. In the end it was the British government that rejected the Social Charter, claiming that 'it did not satisfy criteria which were unanimously agreed by the Heads of Government at the Madrid Summit in June 1989': priority to job creation, adequate regard to subsidiarity and respect for the diversity of practice among member states...in effect the British succeeded in diluting the substance and modifying the spirit of a document to which they did not subscribe." M. Rhodes (1995). A regulatory conundrum: Industrial relations and the social dimension. In P. Pierson and S. Liebfried. (1995). *European Social Policy: Between Fragmentation and Integration*, p. 96.

⁷⁴ In European Union terminology, "social" is often used to indicate the involvement of business and labor. Thus, attempts at creating a dialogue amongst EU institutions and business and labor is called a Social Dialogue, while attempts at creating a dialogue amongst EU institutions and social-minded NGOs is called a "civil dialogue" (NB: because it is not yet an official forum, I do not use capital letters).

The Social Dialogue. The European Social Dialogue is a formalized process for pan-European collective bargaining between representative organizations of business and labor – known in Europe as the social partners. Established in 1985, the Dialogue also enables business and labor representatives to hold formal meetings with the committees of the European Parliament, as well as to have audience in other official EU events. Since its inception, the Dialogue has suffered from lack of authority, and particularly from the lack of support of European businesses. These problems have led Rhodes (1995) to say of the Dialogue,

A system of neocorporatist policymaking it is not: the social partners have no formal role in the policy process, and the joint opinions do not amount to real and consequential agreements – even if they did, neither UNICE nor the ETUC has the means to deliver members' support for them. Nor do they have sufficient organizational strength to engage in a genuine process of neocorporatist bargaining. (Rhodes, 1995: 106-107)

Nonetheless, understanding the Dialogue helps us comprehend the complex nature of European industrial policy, the reasons for business and labor's respective approaches to European-level policy, and the ways in which the Dialogue, along with the Social Charter, have laid the groundwork for current EU employment policy.

The Dialogue's problems rest in part in the indeterminate prospects of European integration for either labor or business. This is evident in recent analysis of European Monetary Union (EMU), which eleven of the fifteen member states had joined as of 1999. In terms of national labor policies, analysts have been indecisive about the impact of EMU. One analyst (Torsten Peters, 1995) argues that labor market performance "could either improve or deteriorate" depending on whether EMU

changed trade-union behavior (which in 1995 was also unknown). More recently, another analyst (Calmfors, 2001) has argued that incentives for labor market reform could very well prove stronger for states outside the EMU – i.e., Denmark, Greece, Sweden, and the UK – than inside.⁷⁵ With such uncertainty about labor’s situation in and reaction to both the EU and EMU, it is not surprising that EU industrial policy has stumbled and occasionally lacked the support of business and/or labor. (Indeed, the indeterminate effects of the EU and EMU also suggest that member states will not enact the structural reforms recommended by the OECD.)

Aside from these forecasting problems, the Dialogue must face the panoply of European labor agreements, whose sheer scope also undoubtedly contributes to the Dialogue’s problems. Collective-bargaining agreements vary greatly in both extent and significance across EU member states. In some member states,⁷⁶ “regulation by means of collective bargaining [is] sound and comprehensive;” in others (e.g., Greece, Portugal, and Spain), “the application of negotiated agreements is limited;” and in yet other member states (e.g., the UK, Ireland), collective bargaining has an almost negligible effect on employment relations (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 1997: 24). One statistic puts a finer point on the

⁷⁵This is true “to the extent that countries would suffer from an inflation bias outside the EMU.” Calmfors says, “An inflation bias arises when policy makers try to achieve an employment goal in excess of the equilibrium rate [of unemployment],” and “the temptation to inflate...may exist in a discretionary policy setting.” L. Calmfors, (2001). Unemployment, Labor Market Reform, and Monetary Union. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 19, 2. [Online.] Available 25 June 2001.

⁷⁶ States with this structure include Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Germany, Austria, and Italy and to a lesser extent Belgium, France and the Netherlands. European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (1997). *Equal Opportunities and Collective Bargaining in the European Union, vol. 2: Exploring the Situation*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 25.

problem: in 1994, Spain had 300 collective agreements; Germany had 43,000 (op. cit. 25).

Nonetheless, within the Social Dialogue, the EC/EU has been able to “transmute” or transfer trends in national labor law to the Community level (Brian Bercusson, 1993). An example of transmutation is the implementation at Community level of British provisions that employer-employee contracts include descriptions of the terms of employment in some form, including a reference to some document that had those terms laid out, such as a collective agreement. All employers are now required by EC law to provide such a job description (or reference to one) within employment contracts (op. cit.). Put in more general terms, “EC law has clearly linked the determination of individual workers’ terms of employment to the provision of collective agreements, and...this will now be a requirement in the labour law of every Member State” (op. cit. 258). Another trend in EC labor law has been to compel all employers to adhere to collective agreements – a practice drawn from French law (ibid.). These two trends in EC labor law have resulted in what Bercusson calls “a common labour law of Europe which is not the predicted result of a theory of inevitable convergence of systems, but the product of a specific set of institutional arrangements through which national labour law experience is refined in the crucible of EU law-making processes” (ibid.).

Thus, the Dialogue has proved effective in terms of establishing extant state-level collective labor standards at the European level, and linking this practice with sectoral bargaining at that level (op. cit. 270). But the lack of support of business

representatives remains a particularly large stumbling block for the Social Dialogue. Like the Brits with the Social Charter, European employers have played the spoiler in this non-legislative pillar of EU industrial policy. Business's representative in the Dialogue, UNICE (the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe), has "consistently opposed both EC collective bargaining and any legislative enhancement of workers' participation rights in transnational companies" (Rhodes, 1995: 104). Thus, during pre-1992 Commission efforts to promote discussion among UNICE, the European Centre of Public Enterprises (CEEP), and the European Trades Union Congress (ETUC) within the framework of the Dialogue, "employers...refused to be party to any statement that might be used for legislation" (ibid.). Since the 1992-1993 ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, business's stance has become more solidified, and it seems to view the EU as a legitimate entity, at least in its role of protecting national labor laws. As Rhodes says, "UNICE stresses that the relationships between legislation and agreements should be dealt with at the EU level to ensure that national traditions are not violated" (1995: 117).

Judging from business's stance, one would assume that the EU intends to increase regulation of commerce such that businesses do not benefit in the process of European integration. Certainly it cannot be lost on business that the notion that the 1992 completion of the internal market "reflected the redefinition of European integration by the forces of neo-liberalism" (Ben Rosamond, 1993: 422). Arguably, this is a step that would benefit business. In terms of EMU's effects for business, one view is that "some nations may adopt subsidies, looser regulation, wage moderation, and

other inducements to business development” and that in fact, “This process should help abolish many of the rules and regulations currently restricting the expansion of product markets and help moderate labor costs across Europe” (United States Department of Labor, 1999 (quoting McGuckin and van Ark, date unspecified)).⁷⁷ Again, this development also seems to favor business.

Thus, the Dialogue – and EU industrial policy generally – appear to favor business, even as attempts have been made to introduce worker-protection measures through its institutions. And the prospects for reinforced workers’ rights seems somewhat dimmer, because in recent years, labor has come to view EU industrial policy as a positive development. For example, Rosamond (1993) argues that the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) switched its stance on European-level industrial policy not because it was acting opportunistically (as others argue), but rather because it had gradually come to the conclusion that it needed to support the policy. The TUC did not embrace the European project as a whole, and remained critical of such things as the Commission’s stance on social security. But in the end, the TUC demonstrated “cautious acceptance of the benefits of the single market, defence of the social dimension, advocacy of trans-national trade union strategies and vituperative criticism of the intransigence of the Thatcher government” (op. cit. 423). Rosamond attributes the TUC’s positive response to the inception of the internal market in 1992 to “a

⁷⁷ Besides EMU, other EU policy also indicates that European integration ultimately will prove beneficial to business. At the Commission’s Directorate-General for competition policy, for example, experts develop anti-cartel, anti-trust, and control of state aid policy instruments. To be sure, states are discouraged from aiding national businesses (“aid towards the functioning of a firm is not smiled upon”), and guidelines have been developed regarding what kinds of state aid of business are acceptable⁷⁷ (Michel Petite, Director, Directorate-General IV, European Commission, presentation, 29 September 1998). Nonetheless, these departments and activities indicate well the prioritization of commercial exchange relationships over other social relationships in EU activities.

growing strategic appreciation of the efficacy of the European dimension from the early 1980s onwards" (op. cit. 425).

The Social Dialogue therefore illuminates an important aspect of EU employment policy, namely the "co-opting" of labor in a formalized process. Given labor's stance toward EU industrial policy, it is quite unclear whether labor can call itself a true "oppositional" voice in the process of interpreting people's needs in the European Union. I elaborate on the problems of identifying oppositional voices in social politics in the following chapter.

Regardless of the effectiveness of the Social Charter and the Social Dialogue relative to comparable state institutions, they have set a precedent for future EU industrial policy in which the EU is forced to court sub-state actors, labor, and business, in addition to member states themselves, in efforts to shape economic relations. In the process of developing European-level industrial policy, the positions of business and labor seem to have converged, at least in terms of perceiving European institutions as legitimate arena in which to defend their interests where those differ, but more importantly to encourage the development of market relations across the EU. In fact, the problems encountered in the Charter and the Dialogue have taught EU actors (especially the Commission) to enlist the support of these actors by working within a limited scope in which EU citizens and residents are apprehended above all as producers and consumers, or as potential producers and consumers. We see this dynamic at work in the European Employment Strategy.

The European Employment Strategy

The European Employment Strategy is the EU's first attempt at forming a coherent approach to unemployment issues. At its core lies the "Luxembourg process," a process that establishes guidelines for member-state employment policy, requires annual submission of National Action Plans (NAPs) on employment by all EU member states, and that builds on previous economic and monetary agreements as well as the Social Charter and the Social Dialogue.⁷⁸ In addition to the Luxembourg process, the Employment Strategy also includes the Employment Pact (a.k.a. the Cologne process), whose purpose is "to encourage dialogue between all the parties involved in macroeconomic policy and to strengthen their confidence in order to encourage growth and job creation" (European Commission, 2001d). The Pact therefore builds on the activities of the Social Dialogue, but loops in "budgetary and monetary decision makers" in addition to the social partners so as to create a "macroeconomic dialogue on economic reforms" (ibid.). The Strategy also includes the territorial employment pacts and their subset, local development and employment initiatives (LDEIs).

These policy instruments are based on the Amsterdam Treaty. As such, they reflect the Social Charter and the Social Dialogue in their limited power to directly influence the behavior of labor, business, or state-level representatives. Yet even though these employment policy instruments are weak in this area, they nonetheless

⁷⁸ The Commission explains that the Luxembourg process "builds upon earlier efforts at EU-level in dealing with employment issues through analysis and reporting as well as social dialogue and legislative initiatives, and draws strength from the macroeconomic context defined by the Broad Economic Policy Guidelines as well as the Growth and Stability Pact." European Commission (1999). *Employment Policies in the EU and in the Member States – Joint Report 1998*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, p. 13.

given an important indication of the direction of EU social policy in general: they are, after all, supported by a treaty which includes no special programs on social protection.⁷⁹ I address the Luxembourg process and the Community Initiatives in turn.

The Luxembourg process. The Luxembourg process was initiated at the November 1997 Extraordinary European Council on Employment in Luxembourg. At the Council, EU member states opted for early implementation of the Employment Title of the Amsterdam Treaty (which itself did not become effective until 1999). The goals of the Luxembourg process include increasing the coherence of EU and member-state policy and establishing higher employment rates across the EU (European Commission, 1999: 13). It does this by establishing European and national targets for employment, and by building upon the Social Charter and other EU legislation, including Council Directives (op. cit. 27). While the Luxembourg process does not hold the status of binding legislation, "Member States are required to implement their employment policies in a way which is consistent with the Broad Economic Guidelines" included in the Amsterdam Treaty; the process is intended to help them in that effort (European Commission, 2000: 10). The Luxembourg process is also inspired by the Growth and Stability Pact, which establishes guidelines for restructuring public expenditure (European Commission, 1999: 27).

The Luxembourg process is grounded on four policy principles or "pillars," namely *employability* (preventing long-term unemployment and increasing training

⁷⁹ This observation was made by Mrs. Marie-Françoise Wilkinson of the Platform of European Social NGOs, at a 31 March 1999 public hearing with members of the European Parliament's Social Affairs and Employment Committee. Ms. Wilkinson "stressed that the convergence of social protection should be brought to the forefront of the political agenda in the same way as employment policy in recent years."

efforts), *entrepreneurship* (making it easier to start up and run businesses, particularly small and medium-sized businesses or SMEs), *adaptability* (bringing about “a higher degree of flexibility in productive systems and working relations in a changing environment”); and *equal opportunities* (raising awareness of “the importance of equal opportunities policies for women and men, as well as...the particular needs of people with disabilities”) (European Commission, 2000: 7-9). The process commits all member states to submit annual National Action Plans (NAPs) on employment and annual employment policy implementation reports to the Commission, which uses them to evaluate member-state efforts to adhere to the four pillars of the Luxembourg process, and to assess general state progress on employment.

Of course, putting these principles into action can lead to contradictory policy aims. For example, the principle of *adaptability* emphasizes the need for flexibility of labor contracts, working hours, and work environments, while the *equal opportunities* principle may call for more rigidities in the workplace (e.g., in form of positive action), not less. Moreover, these pillars are grounded in rather narrow views of European society. This is the argument advanced by the European Women’s Lobby (EWL), a Brussels-based social NGO. The EWL argues that “Aiming for flexibility and constant renewal of skills...must be accompanied by universal social security systems as well as considerations for care needs” (1998: 13).

Yet from my perspective, even the EWL’s critique of the four pillars simply reinforces the larger aims of EU employment policy, and indeed deepens the call for European integration along the lines of prioritizing market relations over other social

relations. This is because the EWL calls for more state intervention *for the purpose of improving* women's abilities to produce in the market. The EWL (which is admittedly a liberal feminist organization) therefore seems complicit in the EU agenda. In short, the EWL is no policy saboteur.

Indeed, a Commission assessment of state *employability* policy in 1998 demonstrates the range of options encouraged by EU policy for state economic growth. Employability concerns both finding new employment for unemployed persons and encouraging the labor-force participation among persons that have not yet joined the formal labor force. As such, the Commission suggests the following measures: creation of new jobs in new and old sectors; prevention of job loss and of participant exit from the labor force; helping unemployed persons find new jobs; training and re-training unemployed as well as currently employed persons; and using technology to improve the employability of persons (such as disabled persons) who have difficulty with some forms of work (European Commission, 1999: 7). The Commission mentions the following member-state practices as practices that support the *equal opportunities* pillar: tax subsidies and benefits to reduce the cost of childcare; setting concrete targets for the provision of nursery and childcare facilities; assistance to the elderly and assistance to "other family dependants" as well as disabled persons (op. cit., 9).

These policy recommendations are notable because they indicate the breadth of social relations and institutions through which European-level policies can influence people's lives. Through the NAPs and their annual evaluation by the Commission, it is clear that the Luxembourg process is intended to steer member-state policy gently yet

firmly toward the ultimate goal – higher employment rates; to do so in the name of the larger Community of which they are part, and to whose other members they will be compared; and to do so through capitalizing on a remarkably broad range of social relations. Indeed, the EU seems to have embarked on a rush for employment. The territorial employment pacts and the LDEI demonstrate how this rush has engendered a process of identifying people's needs, and indeed prospecting for needs, at the local level throughout the EU.

Territorial employment pacts and LDEIs: Prospecting for need in the quest for higher employment rates. The EU has dedicated two Community Initiatives to increasing employment rates at the local level, territorial employment pacts and local development and employment initiatives (LDEIs). These instruments have become part of the EU policy quiver in part because "The Commission considers that local action for employment remains a mainstay of European policy given its job creation potential" (European Commission, 2001d). Indeed, according to the European Commission, the European Employment Strategy has encouraged the "devolution" of policy authority (to more localized levels). As the Commission says,

The Member States are recognising the importance of local level action for the overall success of the European Employment Strategy. However, here much more also needs to be done in the area of devolution, establishment of an enabling environment, encouraging partnership among the local actors and developing comprehensive local employment strategies for the provision of more and better jobs. (European Commission, 2000: 9)

In the spirit of deepening those efforts, the Commission encourages broader use of territorial employment pacts, agreements between local authorities, businesses, labor, and NGOs that involve a lengthy, complex process of goal setting and partner

selection. These programs culminate in the signing of an actual pact, a document detailing the views and commitments of the various concerned parties.

The Commission's guidelines for the territorial employment pacts emphasize that the pacts must be based on a "genuine bottom-up" approach – i.e., that the initiatives deal with the employment problems of the geographical area in question, and that they rely on the resources available (and perhaps "native"?) to that locale (European Commission, 1998d). Territorial employment pacts can take many forms, one of which is the LDEI – in fact the Commission's first report on LDEIs was intended for the benefit of territorial employment pacts (European Commission, 1997b: 1).

To my mind, the LDEI is one of the most fascinating and innovative of all EU social policy instruments. This is because LDEIs entail the following actions, enacted through the collaboration of the EU Commission, local or regional authorities, and local or regional business leaders:

- First, LDEIs capture a (perceived) problem of unmet personal needs, including "collective utility services," e.g., housing improvements, security, local public transport; "leisure and cultural services," e.g., tourism, cultural heritage, sports; and "services for everyday life," e.g., childcare, domestic services, assistance to disabled persons.
- Then the LDEIs tie those needs to the problem of unemployment (framed as the need for new job creation)
- Then they tie both those problems – unmet needs and unemployment – to a specific geographical location, e.g., a city, a county, a province)

- and then they enlist the efforts of business (as businesses, or as new entrepreneurial citizens), unorganized labor (including the labor of citizens who therefore are also potentially persons in need), and citizens – who may also be business or labor representatives, or simply citizens in need
- they can include the creation of “consumption subsidies” – i.e., financial instruments that enable those in need to purchase goods or services that satisfy the targeted needs
- And all of these efforts are geared toward restructuring labor markets such that goods and services are produced and consumed to satisfy both the unmet personal need and the need for employment in the region.

In other words, LDEIs involve local and regional authorities, in collaboration with EU-level expertise, and through the use of state funds, in the interpretation of *new* needs in order to create new jobs and raise employment rates. Thus, the LDEIs mark an extremely intriguing form of the politics of need interpretation, in which it is not the *means* of satisfying a need that is in question – it is a foregone conclusion that the way to satisfy these needs is through creating jobs and producing and consuming goods or services. Rather, what is in question is the existence of needs that will sustain jobs that are considered viable and legitimate in local economies. The research of Commission and local and regional authorities led in 1997 to the identification of seventeen fields of unmet need in which jobs could be created. They included the following:

...domestic services, child care, new information and communication technologies, assistance to young people facing difficulties, housing

improvements, security, local public transport services, revitalisation of urban public areas, local shops, tourism, the audiovisual sector, cultural heritage, local cultural development, waste management, water management, protection and conservation of natural areas, monitoring and control of pollution (op. cit. 6, fn 1).

Undoubtedly, this is a remarkable array of areas in which people have needs, and a remarkable array of potential areas for market exchange. The project of convincing potential business leaders to create businesses to meet these needs, and of convincing people to consume in order to satisfy these needs, is an ambitious one, to say the least. But this is precisely what the LDEIs and other territorial employment pacts aim to do.

The Commission recognizes the change in logic that LDEIs support. But it comes armed with the conviction of regional authorities, among others, who are “becoming aware of the minimal effect on local employment of strategies purely centred on the attraction of new enterprises by advantageous tax conditions and on large infrastructure projects” (op. cit. 19). As such, the Commission acknowledges openly that LDEI success results from “a reversal of the logic underlying the consumer society and uniform production methods. Supply must be driven by demand, bring together all forms of technological, commercial and social innovation, and take into account social and environmental assets as well as the financial costs” (op. cit. 29).

Another notable aspect of territorial employment pacts like the LDEI is that they involve the collaboration of local authorities in ways not seen before in Europe, enlisting the efforts of local, regional, and national authorities. Indeed, says the Commission, the LDEI “requires a profound change in working methods” of local and regional administrative authorities and their staff, in order for them to “become

genuine intermediaries for local development" (ibid.). Finally, territorial employment pacts like the LDEI require administrative restraint on the part of governmental authorities, who are advised against treating these tools as mere job-creation engines. For example, the Commission admonishes these authorities, "To restrict LDEIs to being a tool of policies for alleviating unemployment and providing assistance to the most disadvantaged groups in society is to run the risk of creating a sub-category of jobs and citizens and devaluing an important range of services" (ibid.).

The Commission therefore makes it known explicitly that LDEIs and other territorial employment pacts are not job factories. Indeed, it expends considerable effort explaining ways in which to obtain the positive support of occasionally openly hostile private-sector businesses. In addition, it explains numerous ways to prevent the pacts and LDEIs from creating second-class jobs – and hence, according to the Commission, second-class citizenship – and to ensure that they create businesses which "hold their own" (ibid.). These include funding "intangible investment" such as the time of project promoters and consultants, and "developing the partnership between traditional private-sector businesses and subsidized employment enterprises" (op. cit. 29-30). "Over time," the Commission says, "it will be possible to overcome the reticence of SMEs by more effectively raising awareness of the positive effects at local level of policies promoting LDEIs" (op. cit. 30).

Indeed, the private and non-profit businesses that are created using the LDEI and other territorial employment pact strategies face difficult futures, particularly as they can be viewed as "artificial" forms of business. This is recognized by the

Commission, which states that “The challenge now is not only to consolidate LDEIs and local employment-promotion measures, but to avoid their becoming marginalised, before they come to fruition, owing to emergency social-policy measures or the distrust of the private sector” (European Commission, 1997b: 29).

Territorial employment pacts like the LDEI therefore appear to be powerful tools for social change. Because they enlist the efforts of so many levels of governance, and because they have the potential to cover such a broad range of social relations, it is difficult to classify them in critical-theoretical terms such as “oppositional” voices or “expert” voices. After all, they involve business as much as labor, and ultimately seem to represent the interests of European Union citizens and residents. On the one hand, the LDEI may be interpreted as an ingenious new form of social welfare, in which two needs – the personal need and the need for employment – are met at once without the “interference” of the state as in many welfare services, and without the dependence of a particular population on the beneficence and largesse of the state (e.g., women employees of Nordic welfare regimes). The Commission’s characterization follows these lines, explaining that the LDEI concept results from “the combination of a sector-based and territory-based approach. In very schematic terms, it represents the a [sic] crossroads between job creation, enterprise creation and local development” (op. cit. 6).

On the other hand, the LDEI may be interpreted as a new means of transforming erstwhile unmediated social acts (e.g., giving and receiving care, playing games, traveling) into openings for market exchange – though of course, the idea that those activities were “unmediated” by market exchange prior to the creation of the

LDEI is most definitely arguable. I discuss these issues further in the following chapter, where I conduct a theoretical analysis of the three policy areas I have discussed in the past three chapters.

Ultimately, however, I argue that territorial employment pacts like the LDEI must be interpreted as an incredibly innovative means of introducing market exchange and the roles of production and consumption into arena of social relations that have not yet been tapped by market forces. In this regard, these initiatives have relevance to people in the EU regardless of whether they create viable, sustainable businesses, regardless of whether private enterprise ultimately welcomes their activities, and regardless of whether they raise employment rates in Europe. These initiatives mark the foremost means available to European-level officials, along with state, regional, and local authorities, to introduce market relations where they have not existed or been sustained before. They therefore mark a new form of social policy-making – though not necessarily a new form of business – that deserves further scholarly attention.

Conclusion: EU Employment Policy and the Ubiquitous South

We have seen that the Commission considers local-level efforts as central to the European project. This statement is reinforced not only by the territorial employment pacts like the LDEIs, but also in the fact that the EU has re-positioned the European Social Funds as an instrument for employment growth: as the Commission says, the Funds now play “a key role as an instrument to underpin the European Employment Strategy” (ibid.). Further, the Commission implies that the Structural Funds generally

should play even more of a role in local processes, as it expresses dissatisfaction with member-state efforts to utilize the other Structural Funds (“The role of the other Structural Funds, beyond the ESF, in support for the European Employment Strategy is not sufficiently explicit”) (ibid.).

Indeed, it is clear that the Commission is looking for an especially close, almost biological, relationship between EU, state, regional, and local authorities and policy measures, in creating employment in Europe. It even goes so far as to describe its vision as “organic,” saying in its most recent evaluation of employment NAPs that “the participation of those responsible for the management of the Funds at the national level in the implementation of the National Action Plans for Employment could be much more organic” (ibid.).

Thus, even though the EU urges a “bottom-up” approach in the design and implementation of LDEIs, and while it repeatedly emphasizes the need to include local and regional policy-makers in its employment campaign, it is clear that the EU will empower local governance and local economies only insofar as local government pursues a path of neo-liberal economic development.

In terms of the implications of EU industrial and employment policy for the different geographies of the Community, the states that are least able to enlist the efforts of regional and local authorities in increasing employment rates will have to learn from their more successful counterparts. It is not immediately apparent whether southern states will prove less fit for the task of enlisting regional and local help. It may be, for instance, that states with less centralized policy-making processes are less

able to implement the kind of coherent employment policy encouraged by the EU – and government centralization is not particular to northern member states. In this case, Denmark and Germany (among other states) would have at least as much trouble as Spain in implementing these goals.

In this sense, it is not clear that there will be a North-to-South policy dynamic in the area of employment policy. Nonetheless, northern states generally have more experience, and hence more institutional know-how, than southern member states, in the area of business-government collaboration. Recall that of the “four poor” member states, three – Greece, Portugal, and Spain – are southern, and each of the three has only recently installed liberal economies and democratic institutions. In this sense, there may be a North-South dimension to EU employment policy, just as we have found in EU social exclusion and gender equality policy.

Yet because EU policy clearly is emphasizing services as a sector of potential employment growth, I believe that ultimately we will agree with Wendy Harcourt that indeed, “the economic South [is] found throughout the world” (1998: 13). This is because “immigrants in post-Fordist Europe may be under more pressure to accept jobs in the low-wage sector than nationals; that unemployment amongst immigrants has increased dramatically since the 1970s; that increasing importance of the “service or ‘sheltered’ sector” for immigrants and ethnic minorities (Samers, 1998: 135). And the service sector is precisely one of the sectors in which the EU is encouraging through its employment policy, particularly through LDEIs.

Thus, to speak of a North-to-South policy dynamic in EU employment policy is too simple: rather, “it is imperative to recognize that across the EU, inter-ethnic differences abound in terms of employment” (op. cit. 135-136). It is nonetheless clear that EU employment efforts increase states’ abilities to access the activities of business, labor, and other local and regional actors, and most importantly to access an increasing array of social relationships for the purpose of identifying – and occasionally, if the efforts are successful establishing – new arena for market exchange.

In the following chapter, I examine more closely the implications of my critical-theory-inspired argument as I have sustained it over the past four chapters. Specifically, I take one specific model of critical theory, Nancy Fraser’s (1989b, 1989c) outline of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late-capitalist political culture, and apply it to a concentrated area of EU social policy, namely several projects sponsored by the Fourth *Action Programme* on equal opportunities. I show that just as in the case of EU employment policies like LDEIs, identifying “oppositional” from “expert” or even “reprivatizing” discourses in EU social policy is a difficult task that is dependent on historical and geographical context. Ultimately, I indicate that critical theory needs considerable refinement if it is to apply to the innovative policy designs and implementation tactics found in the European Union.

Chapter 5

What Does Critical Social Science Really Tell Us

About European Integration?

Introduction

European-level social policy presents a fascinating case for social inquiry. It presents us with novel and creative attempts to meet people's needs. It illustrates ways in which the satisfaction of people's needs can be tied at multiple levels of governance and analysis to a project of development defined as economic growth. And finally, as I have suggested, it demonstrates potentially new forms of cultural domination and subjection.

In this chapter, I examine more closely the theoretical implications of the argument I have conducted in the previous chapters. To review, I have argued that through its social exclusion, gender equality, and employment policies – especially those programs and projects financed through EU Structural Funds – the European Union has enlisted citizens, residents, and local and regional authorities as well as NGOs and even national state actors in the project of development defined as economic growth. Further, I have argued that even though these policies rely on transnational networks of actors, they are designed and implemented in ways that facilitate a North-to-South policy learning process, but not the reverse. Finally, I have argued that through these policies, the EU lengthens the policy reach of its member states, enabling them to guide the interpretations of social phenomena and to shape the actions of implicated actors.

My argument has been inspired by critical social science perspectives, particularly feminist critical analyses and critical analyses of development. A general critical perspective indicates that EU policies engage actors not in a pluralist exchange of ideas, but rather in a state-controlled process that holds widely different implications for different member states, based on their varying levels of welfare institutionalization, as well as for various sub-state regions and social groups within all member states, based on their relationship to state economies. This perspective assumes that "late capitalist societies...are stratified, differentiated into social groups with unequal status, power, and access to resources, traversed by pervasive axes of inequality along lines of class, gender, race, ethnicity, and age" – and, I would add, geographical location (Fraser, 1989b: 165).

Furthermore, a critical approach indicates that EU policies (whether pluralist or not) are implemented and enacted with a mind to changing the cultural environment and daily practices of citizens and residents to a degree determined not by the policies' relation to standards of equality or democracy, but rather by their relation to processes of economic growth. Insofar as the cultural environment and quotidian lives of EU citizens support the project of economic growth, they will not be changed; insofar as they are unrelated to the project of economic growth, they stand to be more drastically affected by European integration. This in turn has different implications for people in different member states, varying by the level of state wealth, which itself happens to vary largely by state geographic location.

This approach deserves closer attention as it relates to EU social policy. That is the purpose of this chapter. In this chapter, I apply a socialist-feminist critical theory of late-capitalist political culture as outlined by Fraser (1989b, 1989c) to EU social policy. I demonstrate how applying this lens to EU social policy illuminates aspects of European integration that have been overlooked by neo-functional⁸⁰ and intergovernmental approaches. At the same time, my application of this lens to EU policy illuminates areas of critical analysis that need refinement. Specifically, critical theoretical approaches need to develop a broader understanding of the role of international actors, including international organizations as well as the EU, in the politics of need interpretation. Additionally, critical theorists must incorporate a greater sensitivity to historical and geographical practices – in particular, traditions – than is usually displayed by theorists of this rationalist bent. Critical theorists do not make claims to the contrary, but these points deserve emphasis because they hold heightened relevance in discussions of EU social policy and European integration, as well as in international arena of social policy discussion and discourse. If critical approaches, including feminist critical approaches, are to remain resilient and relevant, they must apply not only to traditional state welfare policy, but also to the most novel forms of social policy such as those found in and designed by the European Union.

⁸⁰ Fraser attempts to distinguish her socialist-feminist critical line of inquiry from functionalist arguments, which she says, “occult female agency and construe women as mere passive victims of male dominance.” By contrast, she attempts to demonstrate how women, feminist or otherwise, actually participate in the interpretation of needs. N. Fraser (1989c). *Women, welfare and the politics of need interpretation*. In N. Fraser. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse, and gender in contemporary social theory*, p. 156.

Critical Theory and EU Social Policy

In order to examine how critical theory illuminates EU social policy, I draw from the work of Nancy Fraser, in particular her analysis of US welfare policies (1989c) and her “outline of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late-capitalist political culture” (1989b). Fraser’s work has inspired my analysis of EU social policy thus far, and its concepts map nicely onto the actors and ideas in EU social exclusion, gender equality, and employment policy. As such, it proves particularly useful in conducting a theoretical analysis of EU social policy.

Fraser’s aim in these essays is to conduct a “meaning-oriented sort of inquiry” that considers welfare programs as, “among other things, institutionalized patterns of [need] interpretation⁸¹” (1989c: 146). In these societies, “the interpretation of people’s needs is itself a political stake, indeed sometimes *the* political stake” (op. cit., 145). However, while Fraser conceives of needs as “culturally constructed and discursively interpreted” (1989b: 182), her approach is not post-modern or purely “constructivist” in the sense of understanding the subject as constituted by language. Rather, Fraser apprehends the subject as an embodied agent possessing variable amounts of power.⁸² This is evident in her contention that a central problem in late-capitalist societies is that

⁸¹ Fraser attributes the phrase “institutionalized patterns of need interpretation” to Jürgen Habermas (1975). N. Fraser (1989c). *Women, welfare and the politics of need interpretation*.

⁸² I draw this distinction in part from Susan Hekman (1992). In this argument, Hekman compares feminists and communitarian theorists to post-modernists, and says that the former two groups offer a critique of the modern liberal subject that differs from postmodernists’ critique: the former agree that the subject is constituting; the latter, that it is constituted by language (1099). Hekman notes that the problem with feminist and communitarian critiques lies in their difficulties in answering the question, “If we replace the disembodied subject of modernity with an embodied one, must we accept the traditional definition of subjects extant in any given community?” (1099). S. Hekman (1992). *The Embodiment of the Subject: Feminism and the Communitarian Critique of Liberalism*. *The Journal of Politics*, 54, 4, (1098-1119).

most social-welfare discussion centers on whether and how the state should satisfy *given* needs, while feminists must establish what women “really need” in the first place (1989c: 145). In other words, for Fraser, needs lie outside language.

Fraser’s argument is strongest in its description of the different discourses at work, and the different tactics available to participants, in the politics of needs interpretation. The primary axis in this struggle is the politicization-depoliticization axis. On one end of this continuum, we find “oppositional” discourses that undertake the task of politicizing a need. Oppositional actors speak “the heretofore unspeakable” (1989b: 172). On the other end of the continuum, we find “reprivatizing” voices that are so designated not because they necessarily come from private actors, but rather because they “defend the social division of discourses” and hence defend the status quo in which the specific need is already private (1989b: 172). Of course, in so doing, reprivatization discourses tend to politicize those needs yet further (*ibid.*). Institutionally, “‘reprivatization’ designates initiatives aimed at dismantling or cutting back welfare services, selling off nationalized assets, and/or deregulating ‘private’ enterprise” (*op. cit.* 172). Discursively, reprivatization means depoliticization of a need (*ibid.*).

The second axis in this struggle concerns the *content* of the (by now successfully politicized) need. The principal contestants here are “oppositional social movements and organized interests, like business, that seek to influence public policy” (*op. cit.* 173). These actors struggle to create a “hegemonic” definition of the politicized need in

question; this struggle “usually points toward the future involvement of the state” (ibid.).

The oppositional and organized interests struggling for hegemonic interpretations of a specific need often refer to or incorporate “expert” needs discourses, which are “the vehicles for translating sufficiently politicized runaway needs into objects of potential state intervention” (ibid.). Expert needs discourses are “closely connected with institutions of knowledge production and utilization,” including social science discourses, legal discourses, administrative discourses, and therapeutic discourses (op. cit. 173). In general, they tend to be administrative and de-politicizing, and to become normalizing, “aimed at ‘reforming,’ or more often stigmatizing, ‘deviancy’” when they are institutionalized in state apparatuses (op. cit. 174).

Expert discourses are also a tool of oppositional movements, which can refer to and even incorporate expert discourses in their struggle for hegemonic needs interpretation. In this sense, expert discourses “become the *bridge* discourses linking loosely organized social movements and the social state⁸³” (op. cit. 173, 174). Expert discourses therefore appear at different points along both the politicization-depoliticization axis, and the need interpretation axis. Figure 1 (below) presents a graphical illustration of the politics of need interpretation, including a depiction of the suggested and potential locations of oppositional, reprivatization, and expert discourses.

⁸³ The social state is a term used by Habermassian critical theorists. See N. Fraser. (1989b). *Struggle over needs: Outline of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late capitalist political culture.*



Figure 1. Schematic of the politics of need interpretation⁸⁴

Three key points emerge from this outline of Fraser's (outline of a) theory. The first is that there is no indication of the level of governance – i.e., local, regional, national, EU, international – or its significance to the nature of any of the discourses mentioned. It may be that this framework maps neatly onto any level of governance: we could, for example, simply copy the plane of this graph and stack the copies to indicate the multi-dimensionality of political discourse in the “real” world. Yet this would not overcome the problem of depicting relationships between discourses at different levels. To convey that sort of relationship, which is precisely the relationship I have been elaborating in the preceding chapters, we would need to draw “fingers” emanating from one plane and piercing the others. If we were depicting EU social policy in particular, the majority of these fingers would “point” from the EU plane to

⁸⁴ Derived from N. Fraser. (1989b). Struggle over needs: Outline of a socialist-feminist critical theory of late capitalist political culture.

the other planes (local, regional, national), indicating the direction in which (discursive) influence flows – at least within the area of EU social policy; other EU policy areas may show more influence flowing from states or sub-state levels to other levels (including the EU level).

Another striking aspect of this model is its lack of contextualization in a geographical setting, or geography's significance to the nature of any of the discourses mentioned. Thus, we would be hard-pressed to indicate within this map the general flow of information from North to South that I have suggested results from EU social policy. While we could set two copies of the graph next to each other and call them different states, nothing inside the graphs themselves indicates the different institutional and cultural *milieux* found in different EU member states, and nothing about the graphs would enable us to compare northern to southern (or northern to northern, or southern to southern) member states. In comparative political science terms, Fraser's model is not well equipped for "travel" (Giovanni Sartori, 1970).⁸⁵

Finally, the theory is striking in its ahistoricity. There is no indication, for example, of discourses as processes – as conversations with beginnings, or middles (and one assumes, eventually, ends). This is a potential weakness to the theory because it limits our ability to understand how different discourses have related to

⁸⁵ In fact, we see below that despite Fraser's abstract language, her theory suffers from the over-influence of American political systems. Thus, the theory supports Sartori's observation that "in spite of bold attempts at drastic terminological innovation, it is hard to see how Western [read: US Americanist] scholars could radically depart from the political experience of the West [the US].... the larger the world, the more we have resorted to *conceptual stretching*." My aim will be to apply Fraser's model in an attempt to deepen our understanding of both EU social policy and Fraser's theory, hence, I hope to sidestep the problem of conceptual stretching. G. Sartori (1970). Concept misinformation in comparative politics. *The American political science review*, 64, 4 (1034). N. Fraser. (1989b). Struggle over needs. In N. Fraser. (1989). *Unruly practices*.

each other or to the political environment over time. It may be, for example, that an oppositional discourse becomes an expert discourse – or what is more likely, a reprivatization discourse. While Fraser makes mention of these possibilities in her work, there is little indication of how to theorize the effects of history on the politics of need interpretation.

As we see in the following section, these aspects are crucial to analyzing the roles of the different discourses operating and surrounding EU social policy – and hence, are crucial to understanding the implications of European integration for EU citizens and residents. By applying Fraser’s theory to EU social policy, I hope to illuminate ways of improving the theory, as well as to illuminate aspects of EU social policy at which I have hinted, but not fully explored, in the preceding chapters.

Mapping the politics of need interpretation to EU social policy. How does this outline map to EU social policy as I have described it? This is a complex question; as we shall see, this model’s abstract concepts (opposition, reprivatization) become thorny once they are placed in specific historical, political, and geographical contexts. Indeed, the following analysis demonstrates the importance of context in determining the political nature of a given discourse, and indicates that critical theory must attend more closely to geographical considerations and to levels of governance before identifying with or endorsing movements for social change.

Generally speaking, EU social policy plays the role of “expert” in that it “bridges” the communication amongst various actors; in fact, cooperation across actors

is required in nearly every EU-sponsored project. In this respect, the EU can play a powerful social role in member states, because those who enact EU social policy include a wide range of actors. The projects I have surveyed alone include the following: local authorities (for example, the Copenhagen equal opportunities office), regional authorities (e.g., the Regional Council of North Karelia, Finland), and national authorities (e.g., the French Socialist party, the Spanish Women's Institute, the Danish Ministry of Labor); local and regional NGOs (e.g., a Brussels-based family NGO⁸⁶, a Munich-based research group⁸⁷), international organizations (e.g., the Nordic Council of Ministers); businesses (e.g., Daimler-Chrysler⁸⁸, the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation); trade organizations (e.g., the Greek *Dimitra* Institute of Training and Development); and of course, European actors, particularly Commission actors (e.g., Commission Directorate-General V).

EU social policy also encourages the politicization of certain needs (or other issues), specifically equal opportunities and reconciliation of work and domestic responsibilities. EU advancement of these issues has enabled them to become part of social discourse and to be established as legitimate political issues in EU member states, sometimes in otherwise unfriendly environments. In this sense, EU policy may be considered a tool of "oppositional" discourses – in other words, part of an (oppositional) expert discourse.

⁸⁶ This NGO is *Bond van Grote en van Jonge Gezinnen* (League of Large and Young Families), to whose project leader I referred in Chapter 3. See the reference to Annemie Drieskens, leader of the project European Family Dialogue, project #Bb/01/97.

⁸⁷ This NGO is *Deutsches Jugendinstitut e.V.*, to whose project assistant I referred in Chapter 3. See the reference to Nadja Tschirner, assistant to the project Mentoring women in Europe, project # DEb/06/97.

⁸⁸ See the Introduction to Chapter 3.

This dynamic is particularly evident in mainstreaming projects. Take for example the Rhône-Alpes (France) – based project *Trans-Faire*. The project is coordinated by the Rhône-Alpes Regional Delegation on Women’s Rights. The general objectives of this project are “To firmly mobilize public policy for equal opportunities between women and men in the realms of vocation and employment...along three major axes: youth employment; equality in entrepreneurship; reconciliation of professional life with family life, social life, and citizenship”⁸⁹ (d’Ouille & Guillemaut, 1998: 5). The project leaders describe Rhône-Alpes, the French region in which the project is enacted,⁹⁰ as “*un territoire d’expérimentation*,” because while mainstreaming is encouraged, it has not been translated “in explicit fashion” into the framework and objectives of public policy⁹¹ (op. cit. 4).

Because this project attempts to legitimize processes that contribute to equal opportunities and reconciliation, in an otherwise indifferent or potentially hostile environment, we can say that this project contributes to oppositional discourse.

Sharpening the focus of the critical lens – that is, moving “down” a level of

⁸⁹“Mobiliser durablement les politiques publiques pour l’égalité des chances entre les femmes et les hommes dans les domaines de l’orientation et de l’emploi (insertion, formation professionnelle) selon trois axes majeurs: l’emploi des jeunes; l’égalité professionnelle en entreprise; l’articulation vie professionnelle / vie familiale, sociale et citoyenne.” d’Ouille, Laurence and Guillemaut, Christine (1998). *Trans-faire: Mobiliser les politiques publiques pour l’égalité des chances entre les femmes et les homes, juillet 97-juin 98* [Trans-Faire: Mobilizing public policies for equal opportunities between women and men, July 97-June 98], p. 5.

⁹⁰The project partners include the Women’s Institute in Barcelona, the group CERES in Madrid, the Danish Equal Status Council, and the Scottish Equal Opportunities Commission, though it appears those regions have not implemented precisely the same project as the one implemented in Rhône-Alps. L. d’Ouille, & C. Guillemaut (1998). *Trans-faire*, p. 11.

⁹¹Mainstreaming est une stratégie encouragée mais non encore traduite de façon explicite dans le cadrage et les objectifs des politiques publiques.” L. d’Ouille, & C. Guillemaut (1998). *Trans-faire*, p. 4.

governance, or as the EU terms it, "devolving," shows EU policy to be oppositional, even radical.

But this project also intends to "fill gaps" in state activity for equal opportunities:

State services in the region do not receive instructions from the national Ministry of Employment and Solidarity, which occasionally produces reticence on the part of some [intra-regional] partners and constitutes a brake in the action in this [policy] area. In response, the active engagement of the regional prefect and of the general secretariat for regional affairs constitutes a motor of action and accentuates the legitimacy of the Trans-Faire project.⁹² (ibid.)

Specifically, the project includes as one of its activities the "sensitization of department specialists in the planning and reduction of work time to women's and men's uses of 'free time'"⁹³ (ibid.). It also intends to conduct an evaluation of actions to "re-dynamize" (*actions de redynamisation*) women furthest removed from employment,⁹⁴ and to conduct research on "transversal skills and employability" (ibid.).⁹⁵

These activities indicate that in fact, the project itself occupies an "expert" role: it "bridges" oppositional discourses with extant discourses and practices in the regional government departments; it undertakes the training of state actors rather than the education of the public at large; and it is "closely connected with institutions of

⁹² "Les services de l'Etat en région ne reçoivent pas de directives nationales du Ministère de l'emploi et de la solidarité, ce qui provoque parfois des réticences de certains partenaires et constituent des freins à l'action dans ce domaine. En revanche, l'engagement actif du Préfet de Région et du SGAR constitue un moteur de l'action et accentue la légitimité du programme Trans-faire." L. d'Ouille, & C. Guillemaut (1998). *Trans-faire*, p. 4.

⁹³ "Sensibilisation de cabinets consultants spécialistes de l'ARTT sur l'utilisation par les femmes et les hommes du « temps libéré »." L. d'Ouille, & C. Guillemaut (1998). *Trans-faire*, p. 8.

⁹⁴ "Évaluation des actions de redynamisation des femmes les plus éloignées de l'emploi." L. d'Ouille, & C. Guillemaut (1998). *Trans-faire*, p. 8.

⁹⁵ "Recherche sur les compétences transversales et l'employabilité." L. d'Ouille, & C. Guillemaut (1998). *Trans-faire*, p. 8.

knowledge production and utilization" (Fraser, 1989b). Furthermore, it is unclear that the project of mainstreaming is in fact an oppositional project once we consider the larger context – that is, once we "move up" a level of governance. While mainstreaming in Rhône-Alpes regional governmental departments may be oppositional, its larger aim as the EU has defined it is to provide women and men equal opportunities in the labor market. To recall, one aspect of the EU's larger project is economic growth includes structural adjustment policies that can include "less generous unemployment insurance; less stringent employment-protection legislation; [and] changes in the legal framework for wage bargaining that aim to increase the bargaining strength of employers vis-à-vis unions" (Calmfors, 2001). In this larger context, then, EU support of the *Trans-Faire* project may actually constitute reprivatization, in the sense that it "designates initiatives aimed at dismantling or cutting back welfare services...and/or deregulating 'private' enterprise" (Fraser, 1989b: 172).

This ambiguous interpretation of EU activity undoubtedly results, at least in part, from the fact that *Trans-Faire* works with an incremental, rather than "transformative" (Rees, 1998) view of mainstreaming. It also results from the lack of a geographical dimension to Fraser's theory. I discuss the latter point in the section that follows; I address the former point here, by considering EU support of another, potentially more transformative project, preferably one not coordinated by regional authorities, but rather an NGO, whose "oppositional" character is somewhat less debatable.

One such project is *Compartir* (Sharing), a 4th AP-sponsored project coordinated by *Salut i Família* (Health and Family), an NGO established by a doctor in public health, and located in Barcelona, Spain.⁹⁶ Under the auspices of the *Compartir* project, the NGO has set up a time bank in Barcelona, where people exchange reproductive time; in the time bank, the currency is time, not money. The primary users (*usuarias/usuarios*) of the time bank include “about forty-five” women in their forties or fifties, who are not employed and who spend much of their time caring for others. The time bank’s motto is “*tanto das, tanto recibes*” (you get what you give), and its philosophy is “that all people ought to have time to themselves, to be their own person, and not have to spend all their time reproducing and caring for others...it should not be that some do all the giving and others not as much” (Project Coordinator Sandra Tejedor, telephone interview, 6 May 1999).

This project appears oppositional because it politicizes a need – in this case, people’s (and specifically women’s) need for time to perform or be relieved from reproductive work. And it does so in a city whose national government transitioned from rightist dictatorship to constitutional democracy just twenty-two years prior. Further, the project appears oppositional in that it reinterprets women’s reproductive work as something of value: Because the project actually makes reproductive time a currency of exchange, it “gives value to this work [and] to the talents of women, which are otherwise often taken for granted” (*ibid.*). Finally, the project appears oppositional

⁹⁶ While *Salut i Família* is located in Barcelona, it is difficult to call this NGO a Spanish or even a Catalán NGO. The NGO has contacts with groups in Madrid and a few other places in Spain, and it is connected with municipal entities in Barcelona. But Ms. Tejedor says that in fact, *Salut i Família* works at the international level as much or more than the local, regional, or national level. S. Tejedor (1999). Telephone interview, May 6, 1999.

because it provides a public forum for discussion of women's need for time and the value of reproductive work. "The discussion [at these meetings] just shows how often women feel that they have to care for others, how strong that assumption is in them, that that's their role, and they don't really have the right to take time for themselves" (ibid.).

The project involves the presence of what Fraser would call an "expert," a representative of the Cultural Center of Montserrat, who sits as counselor in the monthly meetings of time bank participants. Thus, the *Compartir* project appears to adopt the tactic noted by Fraser of incorporating expert discourse into its oppositional camp. Interestingly, however, Fraser depicts the participation of similarly placed therapists and other social workers in US welfare policy as a form of potentially insidious social control (1989c). Indeed, aspects of the project appear uncomfortably controlling. For example, Coordinator Tejedor says the biggest obstacle in this project is "Getting the women at the time bank to take time for themselves" (ibid.). She says they need to "*cambiarse el chip*"⁹⁷ (change mentality) but "it's very, very hard, you really see how ingrained it is in some women's minds that they must care for others, it's such a change in mentality for some of these women, it's hard for them sometimes" (ibid.).

While it is easy to see how *Compartir* appears oppositional in the context of Spanish social customs and political history, one also sees how it can be interpreted as part of a less oppositional, more controlling, expert discourse. To be sure, the project

⁹⁷ Literally, "change the chip" -- i.e., the computer chip. This phrase was used at least twice by Spanish interviewees to indicate a change in mentality. It is a newer expression in Spain, and probably not one that would be used by the subjects in question (in this case, heterosexual, married, unemployed women in their forties and fifties). S. Tejedor. (1999). Telephone interview, May 6, 1999.

does not go so far as to redefine the politicized need for time as “the correlate of a bureaucratically administrable satisfaction, a ‘social service’” – rather, it has established a time bank whose functioning depends on the work of people in need themselves, instead of a state bureaucracy. Nonetheless, Tejedor’s account of the time bank-participant meetings indicates that “the people whose needs are in question” have in fact already “become individual ‘cases’ rather than members of social groups or participants in political movements,” as Fraser says they tend to do in the context of expert needs discourses (Fraser, 1989b: 174). In this sense, *Compartir* may actually contribute to the depoliticization of the need for time. “Oppositional” discourses can actually appear depoliticizing, depending on the context in which they are considered.

The Spanish project *AUKERA* demonstrates again how historical-political context influences the political nature of discourse. In Spain, interactions between Spanish feminist activists and state feminists (or “femocrats”) at the Spanish *Instituto de la Mujer* (IM) “have been scarce and only very rarely cooperative in character” (Valiente, 1997: 127). Indeed, this gap between feminists within the state and in society has stymied IM efforts to “[push] state officials further down the equality path” (ibid.). *AUKERA* is coordinated by the Basque branch of the IM, but includes among its sub-national partners some Spanish NGOs (European Commission, 1997a: 28). These partnerships indicate that EU sponsorship bridges the femocrat-activist gap in Spain; in this sense, the EU looks like an (oppositional) expert.

By contrast, EU policy stands to play a different role in regions or states marked by corporatist political structures. This is because corporatist systems refigure and

institutionalize a variety of political discourses, including oppositional and reprivatization discourses, as formal negotiation. For instance, the Danish corporatist tradition "means that groups gain access to policymaking primarily through their representation on statutory commissions and committees in the executive and the bureaucracy, rather than by lobbying members of the legislature. Thus, the failure by any interest group to gain formal representation...might permanently curtail any prospects of influencing policy" (Anette Borchorst, 1995: 63). In this context, business and labor occupy modified "reprivatization" or "oppositional" roles, because they are permanent members of all corporatist collective bargaining structures. By the same token, corporatist political cultures tend to limit the potential for radical change (op. cit. 74). This context also magnifies the significance of slighter changes in practice. For example, in the context of corporatist structures, the recent shift in Danish trade-union bargaining emphasis from wages to training and flexibility⁹⁸ becomes a significant change in policy.

These characteristics of the corporatist context complicate a critical analysis of any EU social policy that is designed and/or implemented in corporatist states. Take for example the project, Athene APS. This project is coordinated by a private Copenhagen-based consulting firm whose aims, according to co-founder Lotte Valbjørn, include partaking in the "fundamental changes" to public and private sectors in Denmark and in Europe generally, and contributing to EU employment policies (Valbjørn, personal interview, 19 May 1999). The firm pursues these goals by advising

⁹⁸ This information comes from L. Valbjørn (1999). Personal interview, Copenhagen, May 19, 1999.

public and private companies that must translate Collaboration Agreements (i.e., agreements reached through collective bargaining with trade unions) into company policy. For example, the firm advises companies that need to learn how to negotiate employee salaries under new Collaboration Agreements, or how to implement work-time, training, or night-shift regulations under new Agreements (ibid.). The project Athene APS is inspired by the decline in trade-union interest in gender issues. It develops tools “to help companies to take equal opportunities issues into account during the planning and implementation of innovative ways of organising work” (European Commission, 1997a: 14).

It is difficult to determine whether this project supports (modified) oppositional or reprivatization discourses. On the one hand, the project operates within a business environment that is not known for its openness to equality issues. Indeed, Valbjørn says that one of the first orders of business in teaching corporations about equality issues is to “make it clear that we are not members of the Redstockings [a Danish radical feminist movement of the 1970s⁹⁹]...No one wants to be perceived as a Redstocking or as working with a Redstocking” (ibid.). Taken within the context of an individual company that applies Athene APS’s tools, the project appears oppositional, if not radical. In this case, EU policy supports an oppositional discourse.

On the other hand, it is clear that even if the project had the leeway, it would not promote radical changes within companies (or between companies and women, or

⁹⁹ The Redstockings were formed in Denmark in 1970. “Rather than directing their efforts primarily at government as the older women’s organizations had done, the Redstockings focused primarily on older women, seeking changes of consciousness, attitudes, and behavior, and did not shun methods of direct action.” Miller, K. (1991). *Denmark: A troubled welfare state*, p. 90. Boulder: Westview Press.

between companies and society at large). The firm is decidedly not radical. This is evident not only in its area of expertise – business organization – but also in Valbjørn’s description of the Redstockings as “those furious feminist women that wanted awful things” (ibid.). Thus, considering Athene APS from a broader social perspective, the project appears less than oppositional. Indeed, this perspective places the project squarely within the “expert” camp – and also suggests the project has a cozier, even complicit, relationship to state and EU actors, and to the European project as a whole.

Nonetheless, it is clear that a corporatist setting dulls the tools of critical analysis, such as those Fraser employs. We have seen that at least one EU-sponsored project furthers the aims of both business and labor representatives, on the project of equal opportunities. In the context of a corporatist structure, the distinction between oppositional and reprivatization discourses is muted, and hence the role of EU policy becomes (even) less clear.

Finally, we must recall that in EU employment policy, the EU is actively seeking out (and in the process, potentially, creating) new so-called “social needs.” In this respect, the EU may be interpreted as an oppositional actor, in the sense that it “speaks the heretofore unspeakable” and politicizes a need. We must also note, however, that its primary aim in identifying and politicizing these social needs is to link those needs to the private and public actors that can create the goods or services necessary to meet them (indeed, linking private and public actors in the process of producing goods and services is the EU’s foremost goal), and to the private actors that will “need” to consume those goods or services. What is the significance of this

activity? In terms of Fraser's theory, the EU simultaneously plays a role in oppositional and expert (and perhaps even reprivatization) discourses, at least in its employment policy. This conclusion is not particularly helpful for developing a critical understanding of EU social policy.

Thus, even as this analysis indicates that EU social policy plays a limited role in the politics of need interpretation, it also indicates that we reach that conclusion more often if we consider political discourse on a larger or "higher" scale, and that "devolving" to a lower level of analysis can change our conclusions, and even can change our characterizations of the discourses in question. We need to refine the tools of critical analysis if we are to understand current and future EU social policy, or social policy in other parts of the world. I address the implications of EU social policy for critical theory in the following section.

The implications of EU social policy for critical theory. The preceding analysis of EU social policy in critical theoretical terms suggests that critical analysts must attend closely to the context in which a policy is enacted, in order to determine the nature of a discourse. In one context, a discourse can be familiar, normal, institutionalised, and even invisible; in another, that same discourse can appear radical.¹⁰⁰ We must therefore use caution when applying the terms "oppositional," "expert," and "reprivatizing." Fraser is not unaware of these issues,¹⁰¹ and I believe

¹⁰⁰ This observation recalls Hilary Silver's comment that "organicism and Catholicism in a context of entrenched privilege may actually be radical." H. Silver (1994). *Social exclusion and social cohesion*, p. 546.

¹⁰¹ See especially Fraser's Introduction, in which she notes that the relationship between expert discourses, social movements, and the state long has interested her, and in which she explains that one of the attractions of Habermasian critical theory is that it "is elaborated with the 'practical intent' of promoting emancipatory social transformation." N. Fraser (1989a). Introduction: Apologia for

would support my suggestions, particularly insofar as they contribute to the pragmatic dimensions of her approach.

But I also wish to emphasize that critical analysts must take extreme care with Fraser's approach and its spirit of "expanding our sense of what counts as 'political'" (1989a: 4). If we commence to labeling discourses and actors as such without at least a basic understanding of extant social policy, institutions, cultures, and practices, we stand to misinterpret what really is oppositional, to needlessly oppose reprivatization, and to encourage the politicization of needs that are otherwise irrelevant.

What is more, a careless application of critical analytical tools can also encourage the "expertification" of an ever-growing stream of information and actors. Indeed, overzealous critique of a given social practice can lengthen the arm of the state, by increasing the information accessible to the state, without necessarily changing state priorities. Certainly this is not the aim of most critical theorists, but it is a danger.

I set forth these admonishments because like much critical theory, Fraser's approach does not encourage us to compare extant social practices with those supported by oppositional discourses. Instead, we are encouraged only to explore how the proposed changes stand up to abstract ideals. This approach thus leaves very little room for preserving extant, effective social practices of a particular social setting, and implies that any movement for change is better than none. This tendency is not unique to Fraser's approach; Brian Fay notes that because critical theories presuppose that "humans are active and therefore changeable creatures," it becomes "almost

Academic Radicals. In N. Fraser. (1989). *Unruly practices: Power, discourse and gender in contemporary social theory* (1-13). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

inevitable that proponents of a critical theory will try to force others into a particular way of acting even if they resist.... For this resistance can so easily be interpreted as a retrograde allegiance to a dying and evil system, or as a stupid and irrational refusal to see what is in their best interests" (1987: 162). Additionally, (modernist) feminists, as well as communitarians, often confront the question, "If we replace the disembodied subject of modernity with an embodied one, must we accept the traditional definition of subjects extant in any given community?" (Susan Hekman, 1992: 1099). Fraser's approach is unique insofar as it couples a critical theorist's enthusiasm with a post-structuralist's expanded understanding of social phenomena as political phenomena.

In short, I suggest that while it is not necessary to limit our understanding of "what counts as 'political,'" critical analysts must take the utmost care to understand the historical, geographical, institutional, and cultural context(s) of a particular instance of a discourse, before identifying or supporting that discourse. In this sense, I support Fay's suggested resolution to the critical analyst's dilemma, namely to maintain "An appreciation of the importance of tradition in shaping the identities of people, and an understanding of the ways this tradition establishes limits on the sort of revolutionary change which is genuinely possible" (163).

...a certain continuity will remain in any human society worthy of the name, no matter how corrupt or oppressive this society appears. This continuity will reside in the continuation of certain modes of perceiving, feeling, and relating, certain self-conceptions and habitual ways of behavior [that] will continue to be important ingredients in the identities of the people who are what they are because they so deeply share them. (Ibid.)

Indeed, traditions shape not only the identities of people, but also, as Fay notes, their bodies.¹⁰² This insight deepens our appreciation of what is at stake in social movements. It also sheds new light on certain social dynamics. For instance, it deepens our appreciation of the position of women time-bank participants in Barcelona, including why taking time for themselves is “very, very hard,” why “you really see how ingrained it is in some women’s minds that they must care for others,” and why “it’s hard for them sometimes.” By remembering and respecting the traditions and practices that precede them, proponents of critical theory can only deepen their understanding of both the reasons for their oppositional stance as well as the implications of the actions they support.

I explore the implications of this point for critical theory and its relation to science and the scientific process, in the next section.

Conclusion: Critical Theory and Economic Development

The preceding analysis has concentrated on those aspects of EU social policy that are revealed in the politics of needs interpretation. In this section, I wish to analyze more closely the larger argument I have sustained throughout the preceding chapters – an argument about economic development – and how it relates to critical theories. To review, my argument contends that through its social policies, the European Union has enlisted all manner of social actors in a project of development defined as economic

¹⁰² Specifically, Fay (1987) discusses the issue of embodiment, which “reveals that the essentially rationalistic interpretation of education at work in critical theory cannot be adequate for the purposes of liberation” (151). Fay explores means of incorporating the body into critical social movements, including non-manipulative and manipulative body therapies. Fay, Brian (1987). *Critical social science: Liberation and its limits*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, pp. 150-154).

growth, that this project encourages a North-to-South policy learning process, and that it lengthens the policy reach of its member states. I take up each part of this argument in this section.

The European Union is engaged in a project of economic development, using neo-liberal and social-democratic instruments. Competition policies, structural adjustments, employment policies, and labor market reforms all are part of the daily policy discussions amongst Commission, Council, and member-state representatives. Indeed, the EU's heightened emphasis on employment policy stresses the developmental aspect of EU activities. These activities hold different implications for different member states. Poorer states, particularly the "four poor" member states stand to undergo a qualitatively different experience of EU membership than their wealthier co-member states. The poor states face the most stringent economic tests – such as meeting the same monetary convergence schedules and criteria as wealthier member states – but also perhaps the biggest gains – in form of redistributed funds – in the process of European integration.

I have argued that these aspects of European integration imply the installation of increasingly individualized, market-mediated forms of human interaction in the political institutions of EU member states and their regions and municipalities. One defense against such an eventuality is to protect social practices – sometimes known as traditions – that are not mediated first and foremost by market exchange. In my preceding discussion on maintaining sensitivity to cultural traditions, I have tried to make evident that this is a practice I support.

Yet some feminist critics of sustainable development do not maintain sensitivity to tradition. For example, the so-called Women in Development (WID) movement has argued, "current development policies fail to recognize gender relations despite the fundamental roles women play in maintaining the household in informal, rural, and even market economies" (Harcourt, 1994a: 3). At least one WID critic has implied, however, that some traditions should not be maintained. In an analysis of an Indian woman's response to inquiries about her personal welfare, this critic argued that because the woman did not refer to inequality, she might have been suffering it even more acutely (Amartya Sen, 1990, quoted in Frédérique Apffel-Marglin & Suzanne L. Simon, 1994: 34). This WID feminist also argued that "'There is a need to go beyond the primitive feelings a person may have on these matters, based perhaps on unquestioning acceptance of certain traditional priorities'" (ibid.).

The implications of this statement are indeed disturbing, as other feminist critics have noted. One group of critics in particular, known sometimes as WED (women and environment and alternatives to development), say that "What is disturbing in [Sen's] account is the assumption that the source of inequality resides in 'tradition', which tends to be equated with 'backwardness' and 'constraints'" (Apffel-Marglin & Simon, 1994: 34). Apffel-Marglin and Simon's complaint is that Sen and other analysts use the term "tradition" as a "repository of all the forces contributing to women's oppression" (ibid.). Specifically, they argue, "there is no attempt to inquire into the historical interplay between the processes of integration and changes in attitude toward and practices concerning women that these very processes may have

ushered in" (ibid.). Ultimately, these critics argue that "development theory and practice founded on Western biases and assumptions, excludes women and nature from its understanding of development and, in so doing, has contributed to the current economic and ecological crisis" (ibid.).

My argument contains elements of the WED position. I believe there are aspects of the WED that can be applied fruitfully to both the EU project, and to mainstream (US) critical social science. This argument reflects my own desire to attend to the (bodily as well as discursive) residue of history, geography, and culture, for example in the politics of need interpretation in EU social policy implementation. Though I have not incorporated post-colonial arguments into my analysis, I have intended to emulate the tenor of Apffel-Marglin and Simon's argument. Indeed, even as I have employed a socialist-feminist critical theory grounded solidly in modernist rationalist methods, I have attempted not to repeat the mistakes made by others using similar methods, such as remaining insensitive to tradition. Insofar as I have not succeeded fully in this task, it bears mention here that my analysis aims to overcome, not repeat, the "binary opposition between the civilized/emancipated, autonomous Western [or in my case, Northern] woman and the oppressed/backward non-Western [non-Northern] woman bound by a transcendent, ahistorical "Tradition"" (ibid.).

I have, of course, maintained a binary opposition between North Europe and South Europe in my analysis. Yet the intention has been to illuminate the ways in which this opposition remains important in European integration, to re-establish the North-South divide as a legitimate subject of investigation. In this sense, I argue that

maintaining the binary is necessary; what is unnecessary is to map onto this divide the concepts highlighted by Apffel-Marglin and Simon, namely civility and emancipation, and oppression and backwardness.

Furthermore, my analysis has used the North-South division to indicate an important aspect of EU social policy, namely its ability to cross those divides, which I have identified as the phenomenon of “lengthening the policy reach” of EU member states. Apffel-Marglin and Simon’s argument indicates yet another way of reading this phenomenon, namely as a means of accessing analytically “the historical interplay between the processes of integration and changes in attitude toward and practices concerning women” (ibid.). In other words, Apffel-Marglin and Simon’s argument suggests that we interpret EU social policy not only as a process of lengthening state policy reach, but also as a process of imbuing heretofore unreachable realms of governance with a particular cultural view. I have argued throughout this dissertation that EU social policy represents attempts to institute market exchange relations in erstwhile non-market-mediated social relations. I have also argued that this process involves a North-South dynamic, to varying degree, in all three social policies I have examined. But Apffel-Marglin and Simon’s argument highlights the cultural dimension of this dynamic and its effects on women, in particular. These issues are surely worthy of more exploration.

A few caveats remain. First, while it is useful to recognize the problems with EU social policy, “we should beware of being over-pessimistic and seeing no role for the West, industrialization or modernity” – and, I would argue, for the EU or even

economic development (Harcourt, 1994b: 17). Harcourt suggests we explore ways in which modernization projects such as development projects open opportunities for new practices, rather than simple repetitions of older dominations and subordinations. Furthermore, she insists that we recognize the ways in which “nature and tradition have taken on new meanings” in development discourse, and that “We are all part of a complex set of transitional interplays between many positions,” for example, “we are all in some way part of the computerized highly technical world” (op. cit. 17-18).

I believe EU social policy highlights these last points well. Specifically, EU social exclusion policy illuminates the transitional nature of people’s geographical, occupational, cultural, and political position. And the analysis I have conducted above indicates the transitional nature of political discourses. Certainly EU employment policy has indicated ways in which development projects open opportunities for new practices. Further, the effects of these policies are not easily understood, as my analysis in this chapter indicates. Thus, these caveats are well taken.

Harcourt suggests that the next order of business, particularly for “intellectuals” (a position, I argue, that places her argument firmly in modernist methodology), is to “address the issue of culture and development in relation to the modernization process” (op. cit. 18). She argues this because “Economic development, in focusing on industrial growth as the quickest form of wealth creation, has filtered out non-economic concerns and in so doing eventually confirmed that culture does not matter” (ibid.).

The analysis I have conducted in the present and previous chapters indicates that I believe culture does matter to the process of European integration, and that European integration matters to culture. Thus, I believe my project fits nicely “In the critique of development as economic growth” in which “a number of writers influenced by anthropology and sociology enter the critique of industrialization and modernity with an examination of the relationship between culture, economics and modernization” (ibid.). Where I hope to have added to the debate, specifically in this chapter, is to incorporate a greater sensitivity to levels of governance and their importance – in addition to geographical and sociological concerns – to EU social policy and the process of European integration. In the concluding chapter to this dissertation, I review my argument with an eye to evaluating whether I have succeeded in this task.

Conclusion

Toward a Reconciliation of European Post-Statism and Critical Theory

In this dissertation, I have attempted to do several things. I have attempted to analyze contemporary EU social policy through sociological and critical theoretical approaches. I have attempted to bridge those approaches with mainstream European integration theory. Additionally, I have brought new research to bear on both mainstream integration theory and to critical theory. Finally, I have attempted to demonstrate the meaning of this new research, as well as the meaning of secondary source material, for our understanding of European integration. In brief, I have argued that European integration is process whereby European-level institutions, at the behest of member states, enlist state, regional, and local authorities, business and labor representatives, and non-state actors such as NGOs in a project of development defined as economic growth.

My approach has been inspired by critical theory, but it has not been a strict critical theoretical argument; rather, I have attempted to use the language that most precisely describes what we see in European social policy. Thus, I have used the phrase “market exchange relations” rather than referring to “neo-liberal” social relations or forms of thought. While this approach might prove cumbersome to some readers, it has enabled me to illustrate the ways in which at least one critical theoretical model of late-capitalist political culture needs refinement. Where possible, I have attempted to draw on as many types of voices or discourses heard or attempting to be

heard in the design, implementation, and enactment of EU social policy. Listening to them and deciphering them has shown that if we are to understand EU politics as the struggle over the interpretation of needs, we must also understand the myriad ways those voices partake in the struggle. Thus, this approach demonstrates the ways in which these voices become “complicit” in the process of European integration, as I have defined it.

How are we to understand European integration as it moves forward? I suggest that we understand it as a late-capitalist project performed through post-statist means. I say “post-statist” because I believe that neo-functionalists have been successful in demonstrating the ways in which statehood in the EU has become something other than interests defined within national boundaries. Indeed, our examination of EU social policy shows new ways in which this occurs, specifically in the process of framing erstwhile state social-cohesion interests as Community interests, by “transmuting” state labor practices to the European level, and through the EU Structural Funds, which fund each form of EU social policy discussed herein, and which actually make the social-policy interests of one state the interest of all EU member states, insofar as they reflect on fellow member states. I say the EU is a late-capitalist project because its purpose reflects efforts to expand the range of market exchange relationships throughout European societies.

There are several implications to understanding European integration in this manner. On a theoretical level, the next order of business is indeed, as Harcourt suggests, to “address the issue of culture and development in relation to the

modernization process" (1994: 18). The argument I have developed, particularly in Chapter 5, demonstrates my concern for returning to cultural considerations, which I have also termed "tradition," particularly as they are affected by and affect projects of economic development. Of course, my argument throughout this dissertation has suggested that culture or tradition, insofar as it can be understood as separate from market exchange, is the victim of the European project.

But this approach does not seem particularly fruitful. First, it seems overly simplistic: just as with the critical theoretical concepts of oppositional, expert, or reprivatizing discourse, a story of EU-as-market machine, culture-as-victim, does not seem to map well onto the European project. I have argued that the project is enacted through post-statist means, which suggests that we need to look at post-statist critical approaches, though I do not wish to propose relativism as an alternative. One theorist who has attempted to reconcile these concerns – and specifically, concerns about the irreconcilability of critical feminist approaches and post-modern approaches – is Susan Bordo (1990).

In this essay, Bordo argues against adopting a postmodern epistemology for feminist purposes: "The programmatic appropriation of poststructuralist insight...in shifting the focus of crucial feminist concerns about the representation of cultural diversity from practical contexts to questions of adequate theory, is highly problematic for feminism" (op. cit. 136). Tracing the development feminism to the current dilemma between asserting a feminist position and embracing the diversity of identity, Bordo argues that ultimately, feminists must take a stand as feminists, and indeed that not

doing so plays into the hands of the same kinds of forces that pushed women from the center of attention in past eras, and that the call for attention to difference has turned to dogma. She demands, “just how many axes *can* one include and still preserve analytical focus or argument?” (Op. cit. 139).

Most pertinent to my project, however, is Bordo’s attempt to regain footing in specific geographical and physical (corporal) locations. Expressing frustration with “the spirit of [postmodern] epistemological *jouissance* which is suggested by the images of Cyborg, Trickster, the metaphors of dance, and so forth,” Bordo argues for reclaiming “the located, limited, inescapably partial, and *always* personally invested nature of human ‘story making’” (op. cit. 144). This resonates, I believe, with the attempt I have made to highlight the ways in which European integration challenges local politics and local social relations. Furthermore, I am highly sympathetic with Bordo’s request that scholars recognize their responsibility as scholars, by resting ultimately on a human form as subject (rather than a Cyborg or multi-faceted, impressionistic subject). Bordo says, “Recognition of this responsibility...forces one to take a more humble approach to the project of embracing heterogeneity” (ibid.).

Bordo’s ultimate argument is to command a stance of “gender-scepticism” that listens to diversity, but remains committed to understanding the male/female dichotomy as a persistent and foundational dichotomy in social practices. One result of this stance is to remain attentive to “the changing meanings of female Otherness...within our still largely masculinist public institutions” (op. cit. 148). I find this point particularly important, for it suggests that we understand European social

policies as masculinist. This helps get at another dimension to my argument, namely the suggestion that the prioritization of market exchange relations through EU social policy comes at the expense of other kinds of social relations. Bordo's approach suggests we consider these other kinds of social relations as "Other" social relations – that is, as feminine relations. I believe that if we pursue the study of European social policy – and other European policies, for that matter – we will find an interesting dynamic to them, namely a dynamic in which "relational, holistic, and nurturant attitudes continue to be marked as flabby, feminine, and soft" (ibid.). In fact, I believe EU social policy demonstrates not simply a *continuation* of this characteristic of the masculinist institutions Bordo speaks of, but in fact an *expansion* of this dynamic. From the perspective suggested by Bordo, we see European social policy not simply as a process that prioritizes masculinist market exchange relations, but rather as a process that invades other social relations and renders them soft, yielding, and potentially incapable of resistance. Whether this becomes the case is certainly worthy of further investigation.

Areas for Further Research

Bordo's approach suggests other lines of inquiry, as well. In particular, it raises the question, What avenues of resistance are available to those actors that defend "feminized" social practices? In the face of such forces as state, regional, and local policies encouraging economic growth, what tools are left to those who would preserve some forms of relationships outside the market sphere? Further, is it possible

to talk of relationships outside this sphere, or should we speak instead of relationships that include but do not prioritize market exchange, such as some family relationships? Do the tools of resistance lie in the hands of particular groups, and if so, which ones are they, and where are they – the groups or the tools – located geographically?

Analysis could inquire into the general trends in the actions of policy “saboteurs,” as I have called them, as well as whether the Commission or the member states exhibit an awareness of those forms and aims of resistance, and what forms that counter-resistance takes. This will contribute to our understanding of trends in international-level policy formation and its abilities to subvert or reinforce various social movements.

Along these lines, what relationship do NGOs have to different populations in Europe? NGOs are one of the most important actors in EU social policy, but their actions, because they are by definition not state actions, are little explored in EU scholarship, or in mainstream US international relations scholarship. Insofar as they are explored, their actions are often interpreted uncritically, as in some scholarship on civil society. It therefore bears investigation what kinds of relationships NGOs and their sub-types (e.g., quangos – quasi-governmental organizations) establish with different populations, including different socio-economic classes, different political movements, and different geographical regions. How do these movements perceive and affect European integration as experienced in different policy areas, including social policy, but also environmental policy or labor policy? Further, is there a parallel but unofficial movement of NGOs and other actors outside the highly “networked”

web of social policy experts, NGOs, and authorities, and if so, what are its characteristics, and how does it relate to European integration?

In a less institution-oriented vein, what is the relationship of culture to processes of economic integration? This dissertation has touched various times on the issue of culture, but the issue deserves more concentrated attention. This includes the problem of defining culture and cultural forms in the context of the EU. Many lines of inquiry are available under this rubric, including investigation of other attempts, like the Trashumancia project, at preserving cultural forms within the context of economic development.

Finally, my inquiry raises the question, Are there any non-market exchange-mediate social relationships, and if so, how are they affected by European integration? Feminist analysis of the split between public and private spheres could prove one method of answering this question; feminists have theorized the split and its meanings for societies for some time. Another line of analysis might be post-colonial scholarship, which has documented the effects of trade colonization processes on different cultural practices.

All of these areas, as well as others not covered here, deserve further investigation. The European Union is just one region where these questions hold relevance.

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