

The Social Dynamic of Welfare Gaps: Prolegomena to the Transnationalization of Sociology

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Introduction

The main reasons for the transnationalization of a society are migration, transnationalization of labour markets, foreign investment, and border-crossing environmental pollution. International political science asks how international relations might be influenced by such developments. It mainly analyses patterns of conflicts and conflict solutions between nation-states. From a sociological perspective, one should ask how the development of a relationship between states affect living conditions within states, thus creating direct relations between citizens within different states. The fall of the Iron Curtain in Eastern Europe underlines the importance of these new relationships.

Explanations of social change must be based on *difference-terms*. I define "difference-terms" as terms that describe an institutionalized difference as follows: social actors will perceive this difference; the perceived difference leads to social action; this social action modifies a society, including the difference itself. The paradigm of such a difference-term is "class" in a Marxist sense. The term "class" describes a *difference* (capital/labour), a *perception* of this difference (class-consciousness), and finally a *social action* modifying the society and this difference (expropriation of the expropriators).

At present sociology is unprepared to grasp the importance of such phenomena. Until now sociology has conceptualized its subject "society" mainly as the nation-state. Its field of research is still limited by state-borders

(Vobruba, 1994a, 1997; de Swaan, 1994; Guehen, 1994). The boundaries of the nation-states are tacit preconditions of the building of important sociological terms.

The assumption of stable state boundaries in sociology results in tacit assumptions concerning social stability in the society. This poses few problems so long as one can take for granted that the main sociological fields of research are indeed cut off by the borders of states. As the social importance of border crossing processes increases, this tacit assumption must come into question. If the set of sociological categories are not adapted, they are in danger to becoming outmoded. In this case, real social processes will develop beyond sociological concepts that presume fixed state boundaries. In the context of transnationalization, the conceptualization of new leading sociological concepts is required. In this article I shall contribute to this task.

First I would like to describe what should be understood by "welfare gaps" within the sociological context. Here I introduce *welfare-gap* as a sociological key-term that has the following merits:

1. It does not pattern itself from nation-state boundaries, but — quite the contrary — makes it possible to analyze border-crossing processes.¹
2. Its object of analysis is a difference that has social consequences. Thus, "welfare-gap" can be seen as a difference-term in the sense mentioned above. My assumption is that in the course of the transnationalization of society, the "welfare gap" will become one of the most important sociological terms.

In this paper I would like to analyse the processes that are triggered by welfare gaps: first, the processes of exclusion, and secondly, the processes of inclusion. I conclude optimistically that in the long run inclusion will dominate.

What is a Welfare Gap?

What, exactly, is a welfare gap? The concept cannot be found in any social science encyclopedia that I am aware of. Thus, social scientists must find an applicable definition. If one looks at everyday phenomena that are usually dubbed "welfare-gaps," one will be aware that in Western European — particularly in German — media there is a growing interest in a "classical" welfare gap: the border between the USA and Mexico (see *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15. 1. 1993, supplement; *Der Standard*, 7. 4. 1993, p. 2; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 7. 8. 1993, p. 3; *Tagesspiegel*, 19. 11. 1993, p. 3; Welzmüller 1992; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15. 3. 1996). If one looks at such publications, the essence of the meaning of "welfare gap" becomes clear: A welfare gap is created by two juxtaposed zones separated by a political boundary and characterized by vastly different standards of living. These different standards create processes that have border-crossing effects.

Using this definition, we can now look for welfare gaps in the world. But first we must answer the question of how to conduct an analysis of living standards. This is necessary because the two zones can separate states with not only different incomes, but also different currencies, price levels etc. The international instrument normally used to equalize these differences is the Purchasing Power Parities (PPP) Index. This index measures the real purchasing power of the average income per head. According to the 1994 PPP Index, the richest country in the world was Luxembourg (31,090) and the poorest Ethiopia (410) (see *The World Bank Atlas*, 1996).

If one constructs three categories of "rich," "middle," and "poor" countries, it can be seen in a glance at the map that nowhere in the world are "rich" and "poor" countries neighbours. Nevertheless there are zones where they are relatively close together: Central America, the

Red Sea, and the Persian Gulf.

Let me now introduce an arbitrary criterion in order to identify welfare gaps. I will call a constellation a welfare gap, if the relationship between the PPP-indices of neighbouring countries is at least 3:1, or a difference of PPP 10,000. In order to simplify the question, I shall restrict myself to those constellations where countries are direct neighbours. Where, then, are the welfare gaps?

Europe

Norway : Russian Fed. = 21,120 : 5,260 (4,0:1) Diff.: 15,860
 Germany : Poland = 19,890 : 5,380 (3,7:1) Diff.: 14,510
 Austria : Slovak Republic = 20,230 : 6,600 (3,1:1) Diff.: 13,630
 Austria : Hungary = 20,230 : 6,310 (3,2:1) Diff.: 13,920
 Germany : Czech Republic = 19,890 : 7,910 (2,5:1) Diff.: 11,980
 Finland : Russian Fed. = 16,390 : 5,260 (3,1:1) Diff.: 11,130

Africa and Asia (Examples)

Algeria : Mali = 5,330 : 520 (10,3:1) Diff.: 4,810
 Algeria : Niger = 5,330 : 800 (6,7:1) Diff.: 4,530
 Israel : Jordan = 15,690 : 4,290 (3,7:1) Diff.: 11,400

America

USA : Mexico = 25,860 : 7,050 (3,7:1) Diff.: 18,810
 Venezuela : Guyana = 7,890 : 2,000 (3,9:1) Diff.: 5,890
 Costa Rica : Nicaragua = 5,760 : 1,850 (3,1:1) Diff.: 3,910
 Chile : Bolivia = 9,060 : 2,520 (3,6:1) Diff.: 6,540
 Argentina : Bolivia = 8,920 : 2,520 (3,5:1) Diff.: 6,400

(Source: *The World Bank Atlas* 1996: 18,19).

One can either look at the PPP ratios of bordering states or the real purchasing power difference between the indices. Depending on which figure we look at, we may reach dramatically different conclusions. Looking only at the ratios, some of the welfare gaps in Africa are the greatest. But if we compare the difference between the PPP indices, the biggest welfare gaps exist between the United States and Mexico, followed by Norway and the Russian Federation, and Germany and Poland.

Obviously, the term "welfare gap" fits within the first requirement of a difference-term: it represents a remarkable objective difference. The next step is to analyze the social perception of this difference.

Practical Comparisons

By using two different measuring devices, we can arrive at two completely different conclusions. But do we really have a choice?

Over the last few decades social research has developed increasingly complex indicators to grasp the reality of living conditions as objectively as possible. All in all, one might describe its development as abandoning the simple assumption that the Gross Net Product (GNP) per capita is a useful indicator of welfare. Other components of welfare, such as the degree of literacy, life expectancy, and leisure time have been integrated. This is necessary in order to get a realistic image of development in various countries. It is particularly important in the context of international organizations for decisions concerning Third World aid, etc. However, like all economic and social facts welfare gaps have no impact per se (Bohmann and Vobruba, 1992). They only develop a social dynamic when those who live in the gaps recognize their situation and react to it. In other words, the investigation of the social dynamic of welfare gaps cannot be based on objective criteria of well-being. The investigation must focus on the criteria applied by the actors who are living in areas with welfare gaps. Here, my aim is not to make comparisons, but to analyze comparisons that are already made in practice.

Logically, the next question should be: how do people living in the welfare-gap areas perceive their situations? The interpretations of welfare gaps by people are by no means accidental. They are based on information and assessment. Let us first assume that there is similar information available in both neighboring countries about the welfare gap. The question then is: how do their assessments differ? At this point, two arguments can be combined. On the one hand, we have seen that there are various "objective" indicators of well-being. On the other, we must stress that, in order to explain the social dynamic of welfare gaps, one should take into account peoples' own criteria of well-being. This said, we have to try to discover what kind such criteria are. The main motivation among Hungarians, for instance, to immigrate and to work abroad in 1993-1994 was to improve their living standards, while the most

preferred countries for them to immigrate were Germany and Austria (Berencsi and Sik, 1995). Investigations of this kind, however, remain scarce. As most of research focuses on the characteristics and qualifications of asylum-seekers but not with their expectations (see, for instance, Hulshof and Krooneman, 1992; Bustamante, 1995), I have to restrict myself to a theoretical argument that solves this problem indirectly.

The argument starts with the insight that each interpretation of a welfare gap varies in two respects, depending on the position of the interpreting individual. First, it depends on where the individual himself stands within the gap, and secondly, on where the gap lies. This said, the social dynamic of welfare gaps is not dependent only on the PPP-difference, but on the PPP-level as well.

Facing the multitude of criteria affecting practical comparisons and their variability according to the standpoint within the welfare gap, the question must be raised: Can one realistically speak of a generalized pattern of variations in these criteria, particularly about the preconditions of the dominance of the importance of material wealth? My understanding is that two factors are crucial in explaining the dominance of the importance of material wealth: first, one has much less than others, but, second, one lives under the conditions of modernity (with basically unlimited material demands).

Taking this for granted, one might conceptualize differing perceptions of wealth within different countries through the distinction between "materialism" and "postmaterialism." This leads to a four-part typology, simply represented in the following form:

<i>Perception by the</i>	<i>Perception of wealth in the</i>	
	<i>rich country</i>	<i>poor country</i>
<i>rich country</i>	I	III
<i>poor country</i>	II	IV

- I — The inhabitants of the rich country enjoy their wealth, but are sensitive to postmaterialistic values (environment, leisure time etc.)
- II — In the eyes of the inhabitants of the poor country, the wealth in the rich country is extremely desirable; yet they cannot

understand the importance of postmaterial values on the other side of the gap.

III — The inhabitants of the rich country perceive the situation in the poor country as a problem, yet they might, perhaps, see some immaterial values possessed by the inhabitants of the poor countries that they themselves cannot recognize at all.

IV — The inhabitants of the poor country perceive their poverty as a major problem.

To summarize, the assessments of people vary depending on different situations as well as the different criteria used by them in the rich and in the poor country.

My starting point for the following argument is the assumption that the inhabitants of rich countries are interested in their wealth and willing to defend it, whereas in poor countries, people are interested in gaining it. Under these conditions, welfare gaps might result in social consequences.

This leads to three basic hypotheses. A welfare gap is likely to trigger off social dynamics under the following circumstances:

1. the larger the gap is,
- 2.1. the lower the PPP level is,
- 2.2. the higher the PPP level is.

Hypothesis 1 is obvious. Hypothesis 2.1 is supported by the fact that the differences in income become even more important as the gap's inhabitants reach a certain level of need. The argument against this hypothesis, however, is that under a certain level of resources there can be no migration processes. Poor people in the poor zone of the gap are unable to leave their home country due to lack of the necessary resources even to cross the border into the other zone. Mobility requires resources. As Berencsi and Sik (1995: 132) observe, "The socio-demographic ideal migrant type is similar world-wide: young, male, urban and well educated." The migration patterns in many of the world's poor countries support this assertion (see Cornelius, 1981; Bustamante, 1994; Santel, 1995). Another case in point is that production in the poorest countries of the world is on such a low level that it can hardly generate bordercrossing environmental pollution. Only epidemics emerge from the poorest countries to present transnational dilemmas. Thus, welfare gaps in the Third World are out of question.

Accordingly, we can provide a preliminary answer to the question regarding the adequate measurement of the difference of a welfare gap: the social dynamic of a welfare gap is more dependent on its absolute than its relative size. Thus, hypothesis 2.2 seems to be the most plausible one. It might be differentiated in two respects:

- (1) The higher the PPP level of a welfare gap, the higher the variety of bordercrossing processes. This seems to be plausible, because in richer countries there are more complex connotations of wealth. Thus a greater variety of bordercrossing processes (from "poor" to "rich") will be seen as a problem and will spur bordercrossing politics (from "rich" to "poor").
- (2) The higher the PPP level of a welfare gap, the greater the number of bordercrossing processes in both directions. This latter aspect of the hypothesis is especially important. If true, the social dynamic of welfare gaps may have balancing effects.

Bordercrossing Processes

A welfare gap matters especially when we see it as the cause of bordercrossing processes that would not take place without it. These bordercrossing processes can work in two directions.

1. *From the poor country to the rich — migration* (Ronge, 1991; Brym, 1992; Münz and Faßmann, 1994), *bordercrossing environmental pollution* (Schwarzer, 1990; Strübel, 1992; Huber, 1993).
2. *From the rich country to the poor — investments* (Jungnickel, 1995), *transnational social policy* (de Swaan, 1994; Vobruba, 1994b; Geißler, 1995).

We have learned from the history of existing welfare gaps (especially that of USA/Mexico) that short and long term political efforts to deal with these developments evolve in two directions. In the short run, we find that the richer countries attempt to close their borders to the poorer countries. I call this a process of *exclusion*. Exclusion means restriction of migration from neighbouring countries as well as — perhaps even more importantly — the hindrance of "transients" from even poorer

states. But in the long run, political efforts are underway to integrate poorer states into blocks of wealthier states. I call this process *inclusion*. The aim of both strategies is the same: to defend the wealth of rich countries by building a "buffer-zone" between rich and poor. I shall now analyze these two options: First, exclusion through closing borders and then inclusion through the extension of the area of affluence.

Exclusion: The Shift of Borders

The Iron Curtain was a historical peculiarity in that the poorer states used it as a means to restrict the westward flow of people. In contrast to normal welfare gaps, it was not an entrance-control but an exit-control. In other words, the regimes in the poorer region had unintentionally defended the interests of the people in the richer country. I will not discuss the reasons for this unique situation here.² But it is necessary to note that the Iron Curtain and its emigration controls became a worldwide political scandal. This fact was of utmost importance at the moment that the Iron Curtain fell and the poorer states no longer undertook the task of closing their borders in the indirect interest of richer states. After years of ideological dominance over the question of open or closed borders, the richer states were politically unable to restrict their shared borders. The technical "rearmament" of the Eastern frontier only began some years after the fall of the Iron Curtain (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 9.11.1993). Parallel to this development is the extension in what had previously constituted the outer border of the Western zone of influence.

Since there are no law permitting immigration in Western European countries, asylum laws assumed the function of regulating migration flows. At the heart of this process is the concept of the "secure land of first admission" ("sicheres Erstaufnahmeland"), that obliges countries that take up refugees to care for them. This principle is founded in the treaties of Schengen and Dublin. As compensation for opening interior boundaries, the core countries are demanding stronger controls on exterior ones. Thus, Spain acts as a buffer zone for France, while both have successfully pressured Morocco to contain the flow of emigration.

Meanwhile, Italy is the buffer zone of Switzerland, France and Germany. And Germany, in turn, has shielded other EU-countries from Eastern European migration with a new law that seeks to transfer the asylum problem to its Southern and Eastern neighbours (see Thränhardt, 1994). Meanwhile, the German Supreme Court has reviewed (May 14, 1996) the concept of the "*sicheres Erstaufnahmeland*" and has confirmed its constitutionality. Between the first and the second half of 1993 the number of asylum-seekers in the FRG already decreased from 224,342 to 98,500. This trend continues. In particular the number of applicants from Romania and Bulgaria has dropped sharply. According to the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, this fact is caused by the rules of the "*sichere Erstaufnahmeland*." In April 1993 there have been 12,586 applicants from Rumania. In December of the same year there were only 784. During the same time the number of Bulgarians decreased from 3,157 to 254 (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 7. 1. 1994, p. 6). Between 1992 and 1993 the number of asylum seekers in the Czech Republic doubled, starting from a relatively low level (1993: 1,700) (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2. 1. 1994, p. 5). One already can see that Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland are working with their Eastern neighbours in an effort to deal with the refugee problem (Thränhardt 1994; Schoenemann 1994). And even though former President Lech Walesa of Poland defiantly claimed that "the Polish people 'would form a lane and let refugees pass into Germany,' this has not been the case. In retaliation, Bonn openly threatened the Poles with the reinstatement of visa requirements should their government continue to hinder the Europeanization of the refugee problem. In addition, German emissaries let it be known that they did not necessarily have to put in a good word for Poland at the EU headquarters in Brussels" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6/7. 2.1993). In March 1994, a Treaty for the Return of Illegal Immigrants ("*Rückführungsabkommen für illegale Zuwanderer*") between the FRG and the Czech Republic has initiated an analogous mechanism.³

The general pattern of exclusion looks like this: the burden of migration is transferred from

the rich countries to poorer neighbouring ones, which have to close their borders shared with even needier third-party states. This has been supported by Western financial aid. Measures like these have resulted in a "cordon sanitaire" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6/7.2.1993, p. 4) that buffers Germany and the EU against migration from the East. To curb refugee flows from the South, the EU signed bilateral agreements with twelve of the fourteen states surrounding the Mediterranean Sea and, in 1992, created a program to take "positive steps to counteract the problem of immigration from the Mediterranean region" (Degen, 1994: 169). Still, this EU program has a budget of only two million ECU and thus remains financially weak.

The social dynamic that results from welfare gaps can be managed by outward boundary shifts of political borders. The pressure of immigration is not removed, but, in effect, filtered. The graduated permeability of the borders has led to both exclusion and a broader distribution of the immigration (Wallace and Palyanitsya, 1995). A closer look at exclusionary measures, however, shows that they are applied in combination with financial aid to those states charged with building the "cordon sanitaire." The process of extending the frontier and controlling it is supported monetarily because trying to seal borders is expensive.⁴ In addition, the financial aid acts as a kind of payment for the political acceptance of the shift in borders. Those states that do not cooperate in this process are menaced with sanctions. I repeat: In the course of German-Polish repatriation negotiations the German emissaries let it be known that they "did not necessarily have to put in a good word for Poland" at the EU (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 6/7.2.1993).

This connection between the exclusion-interest of the rich country and economic interests of the poor country can already be taken as an indication that pure exclusion is ineffective (Blahusch, 1994; Sassen, 1995). The history of the border between the US and Mexico (cf. Rodríguez, 1997) as well as between the FRG and the GDR shows that it is impossible to seal up borders completely even at great expense. Between the end of 1949 and the end of 1989 approximately 4,4 millions of people left the GDR

in direction of the FRG; among them nearly 850,000 left between the construction of the wall (August 1961) and November 9, 1989 when the borders of the GDR opened (Santel, 1995). In addition, all serious planning papers start with the assumption that borders especially in the attractive western democracies, cannot be closed effectively. It is the general approach of the EC-ministers responsible for migration-affairs that "due to technical, economic, and political development migration has to be considered as a 'normal' part of the social situation in Europe; there is no way of prohibiting it, ignoring it or taking it only as a temporary phenomenon..." (Einem, 1996: 1).

The regulation of bordercrossing processes thus requires not only (technical) exclusion but also financial aid. Exclusion fails in the event that bordercrossing processes cannot be stopped by technical measures. This is true for all forms of bordercrossing environmental pollution (Schwarzer, 1990; Gleick, 1993). In this case, there is no alternative to interventions in the country where the process starts in order to cut off bordercrossing processes. This is the reason why bordercrossing pollution is suitable to evoke "selfinterested aid" (Vobruba, 1996) from richer to poorer countries better than migration processes. Here we find an important connection: bordercrossing environmental pollution is more likely to be recognized on a higher than on a lower level of welfare. For technical reasons, it cannot be fought by exclusion. It thus triggers external help and in the longer run process of inclusion.

The limited effectiveness of exclusion leads to the second strategy for coping with the social dynamic of welfare gaps: inclusion by the extension of the region of affluence.

Inclusion: Extending the Area of Affluence

Border crossing problems in welfare gaps can only be solved once the living conditions in the poorer states improve (Vobruba, 1996). I would like to propose two types of extensions that differ with respect to their sustainability.

- (A) Transnational social policy as "self-interested aid." The time needed for the implementation of this aid is relatively short, but the targeted problems cannot

be solved permanently.

- (B) Free trade and foreign investment. The implementation of this form of assistance requires a long-term commitment, but poverty problems would be permanently solved.

Transnational social policy as "self-interested aid"

The interweaving pattern of people's interests from both sides of a welfare gap can be described as follows: the problems of poor people are the problems of the rich. There is an infinite number of examples of the political usage of this argument. Poor countries use this pattern to claim transnational help. "The whole world must be interested in the democratic transformation of Russia. Thus Western help for Russia basically is a support of peace — and thus a help for the West" (Karawajew and Kuprijanow, 1994: 3). Governments in rich countries use it, in order to legitimate costly transnational aid to their electorate. "The West cannot prosper in the long run if the East suffers over the long term" (Former Foreign Minister H.D. Genscher in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11.2.1992).

Based on complex patterns of interwoven interests of countries in the West-East welfare gap, institutionalized "selfinterested aid" has developed (Deakon, 1994; Geißler, 1995; Vobruba, 1996). Of course, it is very difficult to distinguish between real help and political rhetoric, but it looks as if the aid granted at the "highest political levels" of government has not yet been distributed. This is because of the Western perception that Eastern governments lack the necessary structures for receiving and distributing aid. Beyond these widely known difficulties one should not overlook the fact that a relatively stable mechanism of inclusion results from the development of transnational social policy. This "self-interested aid" is leading to the development of programmes and institutions that specialise in the distribution and implementation of foreign aid.

Free Trade and Foreign Investment

Free trade and foreign investment are of utmost socio-political importance in developing economies because of their positive effect

on the standard of living. The majority of the poorer countries must be interested in having transnational investors see them as attractive places for investments. "We wish to export products and not social problems," emphasized the former Mexican President Echeverria in 1972 (Belssasso, 1981: 144). Eastern European states are interested in selling their goods and services to their affluent Western neighbours, and foreign investors are looking for attractive business opportunities in the East. The positive effects of these developments were emphasized by the Hungarian President Arpad Göncz. "As far as I am concerned," he said, "I would be very glad if German capital would use its influence in Hungary more aggressively" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2.5.1991). And Bimal Gosh, a consultant for the International Organisation of Migration, argued in favour of less protectionism in an article titled, "When Trade flows Freely, Migration Slows Down":

"Most East European countries, not only the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland, but also Bulgaria and Romania, are vigorously trying to expand their trade with Western Europe. Recent studies indicate that in a liberal trade environment, they should eventually be able to export about 20 per cent of their GNP to European Community nations, compared to an average of 3.2 per cent in 1988 under Communist rule. This, it can reasonably be assumed, would create employment for an additional 8 per cent of the workforce, keeping perhaps 15 million Easterners (including some in the former Soviet Union) from feeling compelled to migrate to the West" (International Herald Tribune, 19.11.1993, p. 4).

Processes of transnational integration can be understood as processes of modernization involving two peculiarities. First, they are characterized by a high speed, and secondly they appear as the result of political will. Both peculiarities lead to the consequence that they are visible, that they can cause conflicts, and that they require legitimation. The case of NAFTA as well as the integration of the EU shows the typical pattern of distributional conflicts in processes of integration (Holz et al., 1994; Ros, 1994;

Vobruba, 1995). Since integration depends mainly on the decisions of the rich countries, the constellation of conflicts in the rich country is crucial for the success of integration-processes. There are winners and losers⁵ of integration in the rich country. The losers are employers and employees in economically weak and ecologically outdated sectors. Because they have to fear competition from newly integrated countries, they are likely to oppose integration processes. Thus, one can expect opposition in sectors producing simple products with low-skilled and low-paid workers. NAFTA is a case in point; low tech industries have been seen as "job losers" (Bolle, 1993; Herzog, 1994). The majority of those who reject the NAFTA comes from urban areas: low-educated and low-paid people (*International Herald Tribune*, 20. 11. 1993). Their fears are the starting point for a certain kind of literature of resentment (see Nelson 1994). In addition, some employers and trade unions were anxious that the low degree and poor implementation of environmental legislation in Mexico will lead to "dirty competition" and to an exodus of manufactures to Mexico (Tiemann, 1993; Milner, 1995).

Political representatives of integration-winners fight against immigration restrictions — for instance against the restrictions President Clinton has proposed to the Commission of Immigration Reform.⁶ On the other side, the European Union's opposition to free trade shows the same pattern. In its first "transition report" the EBRD (European Bank for Recovery and Development) has praised the advancement of the new reform countries and scathingly criticized the EU: "The main threat to Eastern European exports and investment comes from actual, threatened and 'latent' trade remedy action employed for purposes of managing trade to support industrial policy objectives in the EU" (*Financial Times*, 20. 10. 1994).

Until the end of May 1994, the EU has enacted 19 anti-dumping-measures and 12 other restrictions on trade with the reforming countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Such measures in order to protect capital and labour in old and less competitive parts of industry are likely to hinder the new reform countries from entering exactly into those Western markets,

where they could presently offer something (Hedri, 1993; Stadler, 1994).

To summarize from the above discussion, in integration processes the interests of the weaker part of the stronger economy conflict with the interests of the stronger part of the weaker economy. In the long run, the winners of integration will dominate, first, because the advantages of integration will spread as integration proceeds and the number of winners increases, secondly, because the losers of integration will leave the market, losing the possibility of being a politically effective opposition. All in all, welfare gaps that occur on a high level, imply mechanisms of equalization.⁷ Bordercrossing problems from poor into rich countries cannot be managed enduringly but through a partial inclusion into the realm of wealth. Thus welfare gaps on a high level tend to abolish themselves. The social dynamic that leads in this direction, will trigger conflicts that will decisively influence society in the future.

Conclusions

Progressive increase and intensity of social interdependence is a prominent feature of modernity. This interdependence is primarily triggered by technical innovations, economic development and its social consequences (Elkins, 1995). New technologies of war and information, cheap means of transport and communication, and new technologies of production together with their far reaching external effects and the transnationalization of the economy cause bordercrossing of interests. Policies aimed at coping with these processes of transnationalization result in a new relationship between domestic and foreign politics. "Classical" foreign policy did not affect the living conditions in one country immediately nor was it directly bound to people's political will. Thus foreign policy was a domain of "pure" expert politicians. But as transnational interdependencies increase, processes in one country became immediately important for the living conditions in another country. Poverty, risky atomic plants, organized crime, investment decisions of "multinational companies," farreaching environmental pollution, mega-projects of hydroelectric power or

irrigation plants — all these are processes in one country that affect the living conditions in other countries. Thus, these interdependencies create new relations of interests, stimulating interventions in other countries "domestic" affairs. In sum, a kind of an "outside-oriented" domestic policy appears.

Sociology should soon be able to offer analytical instruments in order to analyse such developments and their consequences. I have tried to introduce the term "welfare gap" as a means for analyzing of processes of transnationalization. It has, I hope, become clear that "welfare gap" is a suitable term to analyze an important pattern of inequality. The term "welfare gap" can guide the sociological reconstruction of our interpretation of this situation. It might lead to hypotheses on the resulting social action and its repercussions on the welfare gap.

It is not my aim to reinvent the international political science. International political science basically deals with the relationship between states and their representatives. The transnationalization of sociology is targeted at direct social relations between people living in different countries. Bordercrossing processes will not liquidate the nation state, nor will transnational sociology replace international political science. In the foreseeable future social development will take place in the tense relationship between the nation state and transnationalization. Accordingly, in the course of its transnationalization, sociology will learn from international political science and will gradually become its complement.

Notes

1. Thus, this term can help to make clear to what degree state borders still matter. That does not mean at all that state borders have no importance at all any more (Vobruba, 1994a).
2. The Berlin wall was built in order to stop the outflow of skilled workers from the GDR into the more attractive FRG. Later on political attacks against the wall as well as its defense became an end in itself.
3. In the middle of 1993 Poland and Rumania, too, agreed on a return treaty. "Polish television reported that Bucharest has agreed to take back all Romanian refugees deported from Germany to Poland. In addition, Poland has the right to send Bulgarian refugees rejected at the Polish-German

border back to their state of origin through Romanian territory" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26.7.1993, p. 2). And "in 1993 and 1994 Poland will receive all in all DM 120 mill. This money is aimed to enable Poland to optimize its border control" (Santel, 1995: 219).

- A comparable, although much more modest agreement of payments exists between the US and Mexico: "For three years Washington paid the Mexican government \$ 350,000 annually to deport immigrants and refugees who tried to enter the USA from third-party countries via Mexico" (*Die Tageszeitung*, 16.7.1993, p. 10).
4. "More than 15 millions DMs support for the police in Eastern Europe" (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2.1.1994, p. 5).
 5. For different views see several contributions in Belous and Lemco, (eds.) 1995.
 6. "Representative Dick Armey, the Texas Republican who is the House majority leader, said: 'The commission fails to tell us why we should so dramatically reduce legal immigration. It is long on recommendations, but short on analysis.' He said the proposals were 'a misguided attempt to make legal immigrants the scapegoats for America's problems'...Phyllis H. Eisen, a policy analyst at the National Association of Manufacturers, said: 'We are distressed at the proposed cutback in legal immigration. It's shortsighted. We got an increase in business visas in 1990 for good reason. Most manufacturing companies are deeply involved in global markets. They need to seek out talent globally. The scientists and technical experts they bring to the United States create jobs. There is no displacement of American workers'" (*New York Times*, 8. 6. 1995). It is the immediate influence of such transnational arrangements on people's living conditions that cause the growing importance and the problems of the ratification of treaties like the NAFTA and the European Monetary Union (Milner, 1995).
 7. From 1960 to 1990 the equalization of incomes in the EU has remarkably decreased (Werner, 1994: 237).

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