

However, we can only partly agree with the explanation of this situation put forward with reference to Poland. It is difficult to subscribe to the view that the low level of FDI inflow into Poland resulted from the country's distinct national, inward-oriented strategy. Foreign investors avoided Poland because it lacked favourable investment conditions (e.g. inadequate transport and telecommunication infrastructure, border crossings), and investment in other parts of the world was more attractive. In other words, it was not the lack of a comprador service sector (whose role Drahekoupil overestimates), but basic problems with the material infrastructure, broadly understood, that caused a small FDI inflow in the early 1990s. This comment seems to be true not only of Poland. Third, it seems that the convergence, aptly identified by Drahekoupil, of economic policies on FDI in CEE is part of a more general process. After all, competitive state behaviour is typical of a large number of countries across practically all continents that are dynamically joining the global economy, and it is not unique to CEE. We hold the view that the observed tendency for economic policies on FDI to converge is determined more by external (worldwide) factors than by internal circumstances within particular CEE countries. Finally, the Polish reader can clearly see the inconsistency with which Drahekoupil describes the nature of the Polish transformation. On page 15 he refers to it as a 'gradual transformation' and on page 36 as Jeffrey Sachs's 'shock therapy'.

Overall, this innovative and inspiring analysis of the politics of foreign direct investment of the Visegrad Four countries may serve as an expert advice from a respected and critical scholar not only for students of international relations, international business and economics, but also and perhaps primarily for politicians and parliamentarians. It is a valuable contribution to the body of knowledge maintains

its unique strategic-relation approach to the state theory and neo-Gramscian international political economy on transition countries.

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Manuela Sofia Stănculescu and Tine Stanovnik (eds.): *Activity, Incomes and Social Welfare*

Aldershot and Vienna 2009: Ashgate and European Centre for Social Welfare Policy and Research, 286 pp.

This book compares four new EU member states, Slovenia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, from the point of view of activity and income distribution, based on a comparative analysis of macro-economic data and data from the Household Budget Surveys. It is well known that during the first years of the transition process all transition countries experienced increasing inequality [Flemming and Micklewright 2000; World Bank 2000; Rutkowski 2001]. This book describes movements in labour market activity, social protection and income distribution that occurred after the first phase of transition. The period analysed, largely from 1993 to 2003, contains the 'bottom' of the transformational recession, followed by a phase of economic recovery in all of these countries, with differences of course in the depth of recession and pace of

the recovery. After the introduction written by Michael Förster, the book consists of two comparative chapters followed by four chapters describing changes in each of the countries in more detail. The first comparative chapter (by Manuela Sofia Stănculescu) describes movements in economic activity, employment and population structure and discusses the consequences of transition and also of social processes independent of transition, like the ageing of the population or the increasing participation in higher education. In terms of GDP growth, Slovenia and Hungary recovered faster than Bulgaria or Romania. After the massive decline in employment during the first years of transition, employment rates started to increase with economic recovery in Slovenia and Bulgaria, while Hungary and especially Romania were characterised by 'job-less' growth. By the early 2000s Slovenia ended up having an employment rate near the EU-15 average, while the other three countries had, and continue to have, the lowest employment rates in the EU. A common problem is the high share of long-term unemployed. Another important population change was the increasing share of pensioners, which is partly a result of the ageing process, but more importantly a result of the massive inflow into early retirement during the period of recession [see Vanhuyse 2006, 2009].

The second comparative chapter (by Tine Stanovnik and Nataša Kump) compares countries in terms of income structure, coverage of social benefits, income inequality and income poverty. In all countries wages constitute the most important source of household income. The share of wages declined in the case of Bulgaria and Romania during the 1992–2003 period and remained stable in the other two countries. In Romania and Bulgaria income from agriculture is also important, almost equaling the share of pensions in household incomes. The typical form of agricultural activity was, however, different. In Romania it was mainly subsistence farming, espe-

cially in case of poor rural households, while in Bulgaria agriculture was a secondary activity frequent in all strata of society. In Hungary, agriculture was a less important income source and originated mainly from market-oriented activity, while in Slovenia the role of income from agriculture proved to be negligible. In the case of the elderly population, the dominant income source was pensions. In Hungary and Romania, the share of pensions followed an inverted U-shape over income distribution: pension income was most important in the middle deciles. In Bulgaria and Slovenia, the share of pensions was somewhat higher in lower deciles. The chapter also compares performance of the social protection system in the four countries. Social protection systems were under severe pressure during the early years of transition: the number of beneficiaries increased substantially, while that of the contributors decreased as employment rates were falling [see also Vanhuyse 2006]. All countries had to adapt their systems and cut back allocations in order to ensure the financial viability of the system. In Hungary and Romania, pension to wage ratios were falling. Unemployment benefits were also cut back: in Hungary this happened mainly by the reduction of replacement rates, while in the other countries coverage decreased substantially during this period. The coverage of family benefits remained relatively high. In Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania, family benefits covered almost all families with children already in the beginning of this period. In Slovenia, the substantial increase in coverage was the result of the introduction of universal childcare allowance during this period. On the other hand, Bulgaria introduced means-testing in its family benefit system. After the large increase in inequality in the first years of the transition process, inequality changed moderately during the period analysed in the book. In Hungary and Bulgaria a slight increase has been observed, while in Romania the Gini index remained stable and

Slovenia even recorded decreasing inequality. Poverty rates also showed stability in Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia, while they were increasing in Hungary. An important change in the structure of poverty was the increasing poverty rate of children in Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. In these countries the poverty rates of children are higher than the poverty rates of the elderly, while the opposite is true in the case of Slovenia.

The four country chapters by Silviya Nikolova (Bulgaria), György Molnár and Viktória Galla (Hungary), Manuela Sofia Stănculescu and Lucian Pop (Romania), and Tine Stanovnik and Mitja Čok (Slovenia) follow a similar structure. Based on macroeconomic data, they describe the evolution of real wages, pensions, the wage share and social expenditure. Then data from the Household Budget Surveys are used to describe changes in income structure (with special emphasis on the coverage of social benefits), changes in household structure, income inequality and poverty. These chapters add important details on the characteristics of income inequality, demonstrating, for example, the important role of education in shaping inequalities. The specificities and changes in the social protection system are analysed in more detail, along with the issue of targeting social benefits. An important dimension of poverty, the ethnic dimension, is also treated in the case of Bulgaria, for example.

The book carries out comparative analysis and country-level analysis following a common methodological framework. This approach offers the possibility of more in-depth analysis of country specificities than pure comparative analysis (e.g. World Bank 2000). The book thus presents a rich collection of comparative and country-specific investigations. The common methodological framework is certainly useful for the sake of comparative analysis. It would even be suitable for answering explanatory questions, for example, to investigate factors explain-

ing stability of income inequality after the initial increase. On the other hand, the case studies would have probably benefited from more frequent departure from this common framework, by using data from other sources than the HBS and adding other information relevant for a deep understanding of what has happened in each of the countries. For example, the regional aspect of labour markets and income inequality could have been analysed, or the ethnic dimension of poverty could have been presented in more detail [see, e.g., Vanhuysse 2009].

Using HBS data has certain advantages in terms of comparability, but on the other hand, the quality of income data should be considered too. Survey non-response might be higher in the case of budget surveys, which require more time and attention from participants than income surveys. For example, in the case of Hungary – as mentioned in Flemming and Micklewright [2000] and also in the country chapter – income surveys show greater inequality than the HBS, probably because of the better representation of higher income groups. Trends in inequality are similar in the two types of surveys, but levels are consistently different. According to data from the HBS, in 2002 the levels of inequality in Hungary and Slovenia are similar (Gini index equals 0.24 in both countries), while based on the EU-SILC 2005, Hungary (0.27) is significantly more unequal than Slovenia (0.24) [European Observatory on the Social Situation 2007]. This highlights the importance of comparing levels and trends in inequality based on data from different sources. The comparative advantage of HBS in inequality research would be the study of consumption inequality, but this aspect is not explored here, except in the chapter on Bulgaria.

To sum up, this book is a useful complement to such comparative analyses as that by the OECD [2008], which largely covers the same period, but looks at only one of the four countries studied here (Hunga-

ry). Most interested readers will be social scientists involved in the research of income distribution and social protection in EU member countries and those studying the effect of economic transition on labour markets, income distribution and social welfare. As the book is not technical, it is also accessible to the non-academic audience, such as policy experts or the general public.

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- Georgina Waylen: *Engendering Transitions: Women's Mobilization, Institutions, and Gender Outcomes***
Oxford and New York 2007: Oxford University Press, 241 pp.

This book introduces the reader to an apparent paradox of democratic transition regarding gender rights: 'why is it that some of the most active women's movements were unable to translate the importance of their pre-transition activism into greater gains in the immediate post-transition period?' (p. 1) In her attempts to get to the bottom of this paradox, Waylen thematically investigates the process of transition in both state socialist and in, as she qualifies, 'some forms of authoritarian regimes'. The first group comprises the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland while the second has Argentina, Brazil, Chile and El Salvador in it. Waylen also uses the USSR as a comparator case for the first group and Peru for the second (p. 43). In order to qualify how pre-transition activism translates into gains in the post-transition period, Waylen uses themes such as 'women organising during the different stages of transitions to democracy', 'the electoral arena', and 'the state and policy outcomes'. While discussing the process of translation, *Engendering Transitions* also shows how gender is profoundly implicated in the democratic transition process from authoritarian regimes of different colours. The book's most original contribution is to frame democratic transitions using gender activism and to trace whether such gender activism could enhance the position of women in the aftermath of democratic transitions or not. This is a laudable effort of the book given the comprehensive list of countries, which the author studies.

The book offers an extensive discussion of gender and politics and of the democratisation literature. Inevitably a discussion of democratisation as lengthy as Waylen's falls into the trap of repeating what has been covered elsewhere, while