Maria Theiss

Institute of Social Policy
Warsaw University[1]

Discursive construction of local social citizenship — between claims of universal provision and demands of more civic duties

Abstract

The goal of this article is to analyse the manner in which social citizenship is constructed in local (municipal) political discourse. It analyses how in two Polish municipalities, varying in terms of social policy expenditures level, council members attribute social rights (in a broad meaning) and civic duties to the inhabitants of the city and to local target populations. According to the main research hypothesis, the universalist narrative of social citizenship will dominate in the municipality with a more generous local social policy, whereas in the city with a more stringent social policy, discourse promoting conditionality in social policy will be more visible.

Analysis of council sessions transcripts shows, however, that it is the city with a relatively generous social policy in which universalistic and paternalist narratives, as well as those promoting conditionality, coexist. The conclusion linked to social construction of target populations approach states that the more generous and complex local social policy is, the higher the variety of often contradictory discourse in social citizenship. The conclusion linked to social citizenship theories states that at the local level universalism and conditionality based on the idea of civic contribution coexist in communitarian narratives.

Key words: local social policy, social citizenship, political discourse

[1] Author's address: m.theiss@uw.edu.pl

Introduction

Social construction framework in policy analysis suggests that policies are not bundles of neutral instruments which solve certain social problems. It is assumed they are (also) the mediators of power and meaning attributed to various social groups (Ingram, Schneider and de Leon 2007, Campbell 2012). This is present in two mechanisms. Firstly, the generosity and conditionality of services and benefits addressed to beneficiaries is seen a result of their political power and in particular—collective image (e.g., of people deserving public assistance, having legitimate claims, etc.). Thus, in general, social construction and the political power of, e.g., people with addictions, refugees, or former inmates results in their having weaker access to welfare instruments than in the case of senior citizens or people with disabilities (Ingram, Schneider and de Leon 2007: 104). Secondly, the social construction perspective discusses a "policy feedback" mechanism. It is a causal relation between certain features of social policy instruments (in particular their conditionality and control of recipients) and recipients' political attitudes and behaviours (Pierson 1993). Both financial resources and symbolic messages inhering in services and benefits affect individuals' support for redistribution, trust in public institutions, and propensity to engage in conventional and unconventional forms of political participation.

The constructivist approach highlights the role of symbolic power and the constant process of discursive attributing of certain characteristics and expectations to various social groups. These features are present at the national (Bruzelius et al. 2014, Lister 2005, Dwyer 2000) but also at the local level of social policy formulation and implementation (van Houdt et al. 2011, Nakano Glenn 2011, Staeheli 2010, Schinkel 2010). An insight into the local level of social construction of target populations, which is a subject of this article, may be placed within two intertwined broader research streams. The first is based on *political explanations* of local policies and in particular seeks to explain the characteristics of local social policies with "political colours" of local governments (Stensöta 2011, Jensen & Lolle 2013, Hansen et al. 2001, Swianiewicz 1993), assuming that, e.g., social democratic local government will contribute to a social policy more generous and inclusive than a conservatist one. The second focuses on *cultural explanations*, linking local policy instruments to local collective understanding of political goals, moral ideals, deservingness, etc. (Pfau-Effinger 2005, Trydegard 2010).

The aim of this paper is to deepen our understanding of the relation between the generosity of local social policy and social construction of municipality's citizens in local public discourse. For this sake, a comparative analysis of two Polish localities is presented. The main research questions focused on the manner in which local social citizenship is discursively constructed in a municipality with relatively high social policy expenditures and a municipality with relatively low social policy expenditures (other social and economic features of both cities are as similar as possible). Thus, this article seeks to contextualize the meaning of generous and stringent (in terms of those municipal expenditures which depend on local government) local social policy in both researched cases. Is a relatively low level of expenditures on social policy programmes in the first city accompanied by

a discourse of self-responsibilization of local citizens? Thus, is it assumed that apart from certain social rights, they also have duties, such as: being active on the labour market, being precautious, etc.? Are more generous local benefits and various forms of support in the other municipality associated with the highlighting of social rights? If so, are these rights rather based on need or solely on membership in the local community? Local discourse in this article is limited to the speeches of local policy-makers during council sessions and interviews conducted within a research project. For the sake of analysis, a perspective of local social citizenship is employed—it is assumed that formal social policy regulations as well as discursive patterns of rights and duties attribution coexist and mutually reinforce at the local level, shaping the factual status of citizens and granting them practical access to benefits and services in a broad sense.

In the first part of the article, a theoretical perspective is presented. The intersection of two literature streams—social construction of target populations and social citizenship—is shown. In particular, their local dimension is discussed. The second part of the article deals with the methodology of the study and presents both studied municipalities. In the third part, local social citizenship narratives are presented and compared. In the conclusion two diverse local discourses and two practical variants of local social citizenship are presented.

Social citizenship constructed at the local level—a research perspective

In its classical notion, citizenship is a status bestowed on all members of a community who are equal in their civil, political and social rights (Marshall 1950). In a somewhat simplified notion, *social* citizenship is regarded as a form of universal provision of benefits and services, typical for social democratic welfare states. In this understanding, it is solely citizenship which is a requirement for access to welfare state instruments (Powell 2008). Rather than regarding social citizenship as a form of equality (also given that such a notion has already been widely criticized in a scientific literature (Young 1989, Lister 2005, Powell 2009), in this article, I propose regarding social citizenship as an emerging status of political community members which depends on their actual possibilities to enjoy social rights. Such an understanding is well embedded in citizenship scholarship which highlights the threat of obscuring social inequalities under the veil of equal formal rights (Young 1989, Lister 2005, Isin & Nyers 2014). Thus, one needs to rather focus on the emerging status of a person than formal social rights when analysing social citizenship. This is because, as Powell and others stress (Powell 2008, Theiss 2015), the various benefits and services a person may obtain from a broadly understood welfare state are not always anchored in her/his subjective social rights. Simultaneously, as already noted, despite formal rights to some welfare state instruments, features such as gender, class, disability, or ethnicity may significantly hinder access to these welfare instruments.

The proposed notion of social citizenship allows one to speak of its local level. By local social citizenship I understand the emerging status of an individual which is bestowed with local community membership (of e.g. a municipality's inhabitants) and results from access

to services and benefits granted at the local level. It needs to be noticed that in the classical Marshallian conception, citizenship, including social citizenship, was, by definition, related to the national level. The borders of a political community, the scope of people who have civil, political and social rights, as well as their identity, was clearly related to the national state. In this meaning, "citizens" are the citizens of a country who may vote in national elections, are rooted in and loyal to their national state, and are protected by a sovereign state. A construction of citizenship so coherent and uniform across the country is different, as T. Marshall claimed, from the medieval system of various rights and duties in various jurisdictions in the country. However, as noted, this Marshallian vision of homogeneous national citizenship has been widely criticized in scholarly literature, which led, i.e., to the notion of local (social) citizenship (Powell & Boyne 2001, Cochrane 2001, Staeheli 2010, Theiss 2015, see also: Sassen 2003, Benhabib 2007, Ong 1999).

Out of the various arguments for local citizenship, one strand of literature is particularly relevant to the goal of this article. Its underlying arguments are highlighted by Lister, who stresses that citizenship is a *practice* as well as a status (Lister 2001, see also Isin & Nyers 2014). In a similar vein, Turner notes that citizenship is *a set of processes for the allocation of entitlements, obligations and immunities within a political community, these entitlements are themselves based a number of principles that describe and evaluate the specific contributions that individuals have made to society* (Turner 2001, p. 192). It needs to be emphasized that the important part of these practices are local discursive practices. As Nakano Glenn emphasizes, the discursive construction of citizenship means a *focus on the social processes by which citizenship and its boundaries are formed (…) through place-specific practices* (Nakano Glenn 2011, p. 2).

Existing studies point to at least three aspects of social citizenship which may be shaped by discursive practices (Isin & Turner 2002). The first one is the *scope of citizenship*—the borders of political community upon whose members social rights are bestowed. Thus, formal and discursive defining of a community results with some division into "us"—the (local) citizens—and the aliens. The second is the *citizenship's content in regard to the range of instruments and generosity* of a local social policy; local narratives of what kind of services and benefits local social policies should offer to inhabitants. The third dimension is the *citizenship's content in regard to conditionality*—assumptions and opinions on prerequisites to obtain services or benefits. They may reveal an egalitarian vision of citizenship at the local level or promote obligations contributing to the stratification into first-class and second-class citizens at the local level.

Following the relations between the discursive and formal aspect of social citizenship may be pointed to. Firstly, local narrative-based attributions or rights and responsibilities may be regarded as an *element* of social citizenship. Thus, for example, a single mother who obtained social housing may be requested to: work hard, teach her children to obey the rules of the neighbourhood, not to engage in short-term relationships, etc. The aforementioned ascriptions help one understand how local narratives give an important context to the local social policies and may help to understand the meaning of local formal regulations or social policy expenditures.

Secondly, the discursive constructions of citizens or target populations may partially *explain* formal regulations, granting e.g., some groups of local citizens (priority) access to welfare instruments. A notion of (local) social citizenship resulting from certain social constructions clearly has linkages to the perspective of social construction of target populations. In the cornerstone descriptions of this methodological approach, Ingram, Schneider and de Leon emphasize that it *can be used to generate empirical, testable propositions that are intimately connected to important normative concerns about justice, citizenship, effective problem solving and democracy* (Ingram, Schneider and de Leon 2007, p. 94). The mentioned link between collective images present in a public discourse and formal (local) policies is precisely conceptualized within the social construction framework. The allocation of benefits and burdens in social policy (which are parallel to the categories of rights and obligations present in citizenship theories) depends on the social construction of social groups. Thus, the allocation of benefits is primarily to the advantaged (having high political power and positive image, as in the case of small businesses), burdens are distributed to the deviants (lacking political power and having a bad image in public discourse, as in the case of criminals and terrorist), "hidden benefits and empty burdens" go to contenders (e.g., labour unions), whereas dependents receive inadequate help (ibid., p. 104).

Thirdly, the concept of "policy feedback" (Pierson 1993) needs to be added to the aforementioned two interlinkages of citizenship and a discursive construction of target population. According to this concept, the design of social policy instruments *affects and reinforces* the normative attributions of beneficiaries' rights and obligations and thus—the beneficiaries' political behaviours. In other words, e.g., the far-reaching control over a single mother obtaining social assistance offers herself and other policy subjects a symbolic message of the doubt of her deserving help and being prone to make advantage of the system.

The literature on the discursive dimension of local social citizenship is relatively scarce. Theoretical analyses and empirical works may rather serve as a source of general hypotheses on the relation between the generosity of local social policy and local discursive construction of social citizenship. Both these bulks of literature suggest coherence between the two aforementioned spheres. As presented, social construction of the target population perspective points to the mutual reinforcement of policy design and collectively shared norms of, e.g., deservingness. Thus, in general, the more generous and universalist the social policy, the higher the tendency to perceive citizens as generally deserving an access to public welfare. Local social policy scholars suggest this coherence is additionally supported by both political and cultural features of the local political community. Thus, Trydegård and Thorslund (2010), for instance, show how municipalities in Sweden develop local social policies of care for elderly persons in accordance with local traditions and historical continuity. In a similar vein, with regard to the emergence of protective social security systems in Norway, Hanssen et al. (2001) prove that with regards to establishing local social security programmes, it was the local political parties who have the decisive role. In general, scholars point to the interplay of culture, institutions, and governance

structures at the local level that contribute to shaping relatively coherent local social policy arrangements as shown by Pfau-Effinger (2010) in the case of elderly care in Germany or in the concept of "local welfare systems" by Andreotti et al. (2012).

Simultaneously, the research strand on the changes in discursive and formal aspects of local social policy and local citizenship show how neoliberal changes affect both these dimensions, not rarely under the guise of "active citizenship" (Marinetto 2003). Thus, Guentner et al. (2016), for instance, present the emergence of bordering in local housing policies in England, focused on suppressing of the scope of social citizenship. A similar conclusion may be drawn from the study by Schinkel (2010), who gives evidence of how local immigration policy in Hague gradually turns into virtualization of citizenship, shifting focus from real access to services to the discursively coined civic duties. This bulk of the literature suggests that at the local level austere social policies have might be accompanied by narratives promoting both conditionality and exclusivity in access to social policy instruments.

Research methodology

The aim of the research is to investigate the connection between generosity and complexity of local social policy and a discursive construction of social citizenship at the local level. An insight into this link allows one to understand what is the normative meaning of local social policy: should it promote the rights of all inhabitants equally, should it help some groups in particular, or should it be based on any form of conditionality? It is worth noting that an interconnection between local narratives and social policy programmes or expenditures is assumed here. As social construction of target populations framework suggests, I assume that a generous local social policy may be both a result and a source of, e.g. universalistic understanding of social citizenship.

The research is a comparative analysis conducted in two small Polish municipalities in the Mazovia region—hereafter called Steelcity and Oakcity. The comparative design was based on the scheme of the most diverse cases in terms of local social policy expenditures level and as similar cases as possible in terms of socioeconomic conditions (with indicators such as the number of inhabitants or local economy being taken into account). However, as shown in table 1, in general terms, Steelcity has a higher budget and better labour market situation. Moreover, there are significant political differences between the researched municipalities. Oakcity has been governed by a social-conservative mayor (a member of Law and Justice party), whereas the mayor of Steelcity represented a liberal political approach (formally independent).

Graph 1 presents the relation between own income and social policy expenditures. On the second graph the structure of expenditures is presented. It is worth noting that regarding Oakcity as "generous" and Steelcity as "stringent" in terms of social policy expenditures simplifies the variety of social policy expenditures on specific programmes, instruments and target populations. However, investigating the structure of local social policy spending is beyond the scope of this article. For calculations presented in pictures 1

and 2 only those expenditures fully within the local autonomy of municipal level in Poland were taken into account. These included, i.a,. welfare benefits which are locally funded, social work and social assistance, local public health programmes, locally funded support for primary schools, including local fringe benefits offered to teachers and other local social policy programmes. The general decision on the level and structure of mentioned expenditures is made by local councils (when accepting local budgets), and councillors are elected in general local election every four years.

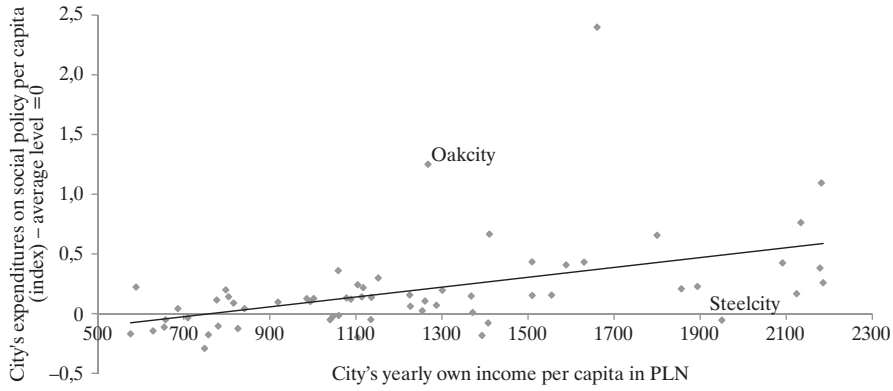
Table 1. Main social and economic characteristics of Oakcity and Steelcity (2013)

	Inhabitants	**Age structure** aged 60 (f)/65 (m) per 100 of aged 18–60/65	**Unemployment** unemployed per 100 people aged 18–60/65	**Economy** companies per 10 000 inhabitants	**City's financial capacity** "own income" in PLN per capita	**Poverty*** % of inhabitants receiving social assistance of any kind
Oakcity	50 708	23.5	24.9	1246	1267.7	15
Steelcity	56 741	28.9	12.7	1473	2124.1	3.9

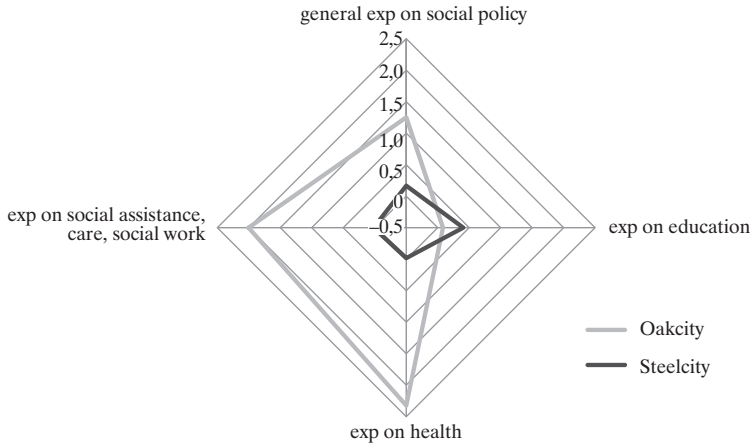
* This indicator is used due to its accessibility. However, it is strongly influenced by a city's policy of social assistance.

Source: Local Data Bank, Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy (formerly, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy)

Graph 1. Social policy expenditures and city's own income in Oakcity and Steelcity — the cities' position in the group of researched municipalities



Graph 2. City's expenditures per capita on social policy and subcategories: education, health and social assistance in relation to average (0) in the sample (N=365)



In regard to the two presented municipalities, the following specific research question and hypotheses have been formulated:

1) What are the differences in discursive construction of local social citizenship in both cities in regard to its scope and content?
2) Hypothesis 1: The discursive construction of local social citizenship in Oakcity (the city with a more generous social policy) will be based on relatively universalistic ideals (unconditional social rights to all inhabitants of municipality, no specific target populations emphasised).
3) Hypothesis 2: Discursive construction of local social citizenship in Oakcity (the city with a more generous social policy) will be of a broader scope (no construction of the "others" including people living in surrounding municipalities will be present in a local discourse).

The discursive construction of local social citizenship was operationalized in regard to narratives present in the local political discourse—during local council sessions (in 2013) and my interviews with local policy makers (N=20 in Oakcity, N=34 in Steelcity). Local policy documents analysis and my participatory observation in the budgetary planning sessions of the council in both cities helped me broaden and contextualize my findings. An inductive qualitative coding of transcripts sessions allowed me to distinguish various narratives present in discursive construction of local social citizenship. I focused on two categories: local citizens and inhabitants in general, as well as specific collective "target populations". Assuming rights and duties in a broad sense constitute social citizenship, I coded the attributions of rights and duties to inhabitants or their sub groups which occurred during local council sessions. In operational terms I interpreted these parts of text where a "citizen" or "inhabitant" was associated with such lexical indicators as "social right" as: "has a right

to…", "has/should have an access to…", "something/someone allows [a citizen] to [do…]", "it is proposed/suggested/vital (etc.) to do/to take into account doing something for the [citizens], sth. is a problem [of citizens which] needs to be solved" were coded with use of Maxqda 11 software. At the second stage, the abovementioned text segments in which explicit justification or reasoning for the "social right" occurred were inductively coded. At the third stage, they were grouped into narratives of local social citizenship.

Who should get what and why—the narratives of local social citizenship

Universalistic narratives

On the contrary to the hypothesis that discursive construction of local social citizenship in the city with a more generous social policy will be based on relatively universalistic, it was observed that there are small differences between the researched cities in this regard. It was striking that in both municipalities a narrative was present during the council sessions, in which the citizens were perceived as generally entitled to an equal access to local social policy instruments. This does not mean that local politicians claimed that e.g., means--tested or addressed measures should be replaced with universalist instruments. However, irrespective of the specific social services or cash-transfers one may be permitted to, in local discourse, all inhabitants were regarded as a group which should equally benefit from local social policy. In fact, it was observed that, in general terms, local political discourse in both cities is very close to the classical universalistic and egalitarian notion of social citizenship attributed to Marshall.

In practical terms, such a *general universalistic narrative* means that in both cities a discursive attribution of rights or benefits to the inhabitants had a following logic: each resident should have access to local social policy instruments equal to those which other inhabitants also have. Many externally induced social policy changes or local infrastructure investments were thus assessed during council sessions on whether they do not privilege or exclude some social group at the local level. This means that the significant share of political argumentation in local social policy debate was framed in the categories of equality or equal access.

Three dimensions were present in a local political discourse, upon which equal access has been evaluated. The first was *socioeconomic situation of a recipient*. For instance in Steelcity concerns were raised during a council session that the reorganization of a regional hospital may limit its accessibility to some citizens. Council members were afraid that in practice poorer inhabitants would be excluded from access to the hospital. The second equality dimension discussed, particularly visible in Oakcity, was *age*. For example, a council member in Oakcity argued that since there are obligatory swimming pool classes for children aged 10, the city should also organize them for older children, who missed the classes when the pool was being built. A similar argument was raised that only after installing a lift in a public library would elderly people have equal access to the building.

The third dimension of equal access to local social policy, or more broadly—to public policy instruments—was most salient in local discourse, compared to material status and age. It referred to the *spatial aspect of local policy* and took two different forms. The first one, *a narrative of spatial accessibility,* was strongly associated with local construction of social citizenship. In local political debates, a connection between physical and spatial barriers and the sense of citizens' rights violation was visible. Its discussed manifestations were: closed gates, fences, lack of paths and bridges, exclusionary terms of use for public places. Local councillors and citizens joining the sessions perceived these barriers as undermining local citizens' equality. Such concerns are present, e.g., in the following quotation from Oakcity's council session: *"a city mayor obliged Ms.* [school's head] *to introduce measures in order to grant the inhabitants access to the school's playground as long and as frequently as possible — so that the children from the neighbourhood don't look at the playground through the fence."* (q 16, 2753).

Similar arguments were presented in Steelcity, with the problem discussed most often was being the city's spatial division by the railway. As said, it is noteworthy that in the local discourse this very issue was perceived as a matter of social rights and a source of "spatial exclusion" and not solely an infrastructural issue: *"a citizen (…) said she has been living in this district* [name] *for 27 years (…) and asked the mayor what he can do in order to reintroduce the pedestrian crossings over the railway that were removed during its restoration. Without them the inhabitants have a much harder life (…) it is now that the citizens are deprived of the access to the bus stop, the medical clinic, the church, spring water, the nursery, the school and the post office."* (p 24, 447).

The second subgroup of arguments on spatial equality may be labelled as *spatial justice narrative*. It was present in both cities, but in Oakcity it was particularly often used to justify the local social policy decisions. According to this reasoning, if an investment in social infrastructure (a playground, or a nursery) was made or social service is already easily accessible in one part of the municipality (a district or neighbourhood), an analogous service needs to be implemented in other neighbourhoods of municipality, too. Generally speaking, a relatively often discussed aspect of the budgetary planning discussions in Oakcity was the spatially equal distribution of the budget. Such reasoning is visible in the following passage: *"she thanked all the council members for accepting the plan of investments, in which an investment in* [certain neighbourhood—the one in which a speaker lives—M.T.] *was included (…). This is the realization of the claims of those inhabitants who have felt for many years forgotten by their gmina* [the Polish name for the local government level]*"* (q 22, 710).

In both municipalities, an universalistic construction of social citizenship was fuelled by a *modernization-for-all narrative*. The rationale for certain investments or improvements in local social policy was often the fact that surrounding municipalities do have this very facility, but "we" (e.g. Oakcity)—do not. Thus, during council sessions, local politicians claimed that certain instruments or investments needed to be offered to all local inhabitants in order to provide them with a modern living environment. Such an argument is present in the following passage from a council session in Oakcity: *"in* [a neighbouring municipality] *they organized a canoe trip down the river, which is not much bigger than ours*

(…). They set up a horse stable and formed a slope to ski. Thus, we must organize a park in [Oakcity], *so that the citizens will benefit, and we have to convince them about great development opportunities. The* [suburban part of the Oakcity] *may flourish"* (q 20, 3036).

The link between modernization and universalist social citizenship at the local level was often made during council sessions by pointing to the need of attracting new inhabitants and business to the cities. In local politicians' opinion, making the city a better and more modern place to live will invite new residents who will pay local taxes and thus will subsidise education, culture, sport, and social infrastructure for all. Whereas more equality-focused narrative prevailed in Oakcity, this modernization-focused narrative was dominant in Steelcity.

Both narratives mentioned revealed a universalistic and communitarian notion of local social citizenship. At least in official political discourse, local citizens were primarily constructed as a group entitled to equally generous instruments of local social policy, in which politically-induced divisions or exclusions should be avoided. Local politicians highlighted the assumption that irrespective of material status, age and living place within a municipality, local citizens should have an equal access to local services and infrastructure. Although, as described in the subsequent parts of this article, some target populations *within* the local community are also defined in the local discourse in Oakcity and Steelcity, above all it is a notion of egalitarian citizenship which is discursively constructed at the local level. It may be hypothesized that at least some local politicians' strategy is to present themselves as guardians of the equality of all social groups in their municipality and in particular—to be alert if, e.g., his/her neighbourhood could be neglected in the local decision-making process.

Narratives that differentiate groups of citizens

On the contrary to the research hypothesis, it turned out that local construction of specific target populations which are differentiated within the population of inhabitants is present predominantly in Oakcity — the municipality with a more "generous" social policy. In local council's debates in Oakcity the necessity of helping *the needy/dependent inhabitants* was often brought up. It was not rare during Oakcity's council sessions for the council members to argue that the city needs to "take care of" some groups of citizens. Sometimes the help was presented as what all inhabitants need from the local government. For instance, when a reorganization of the regional railway was discussed, it was claimed that the city "has to help all inhabitants" because the railway company is going to give an advantage to the city.

However, three specific groups were often pointed to in Oakcity as being in need. Firstly, these were the *young adults with significant disabilities* who live with their elderly parents. It was said that the city needs to fill the institutional gap in social assistance structures, as no support for this group is foreseen at national level regulations. Council members argued that a municipal daycare for them should be organized, because these families have "help from nowhere" or "they are left to themselves by the state." In a similar manner the city's inhabitants who *lost their houses* in fire were described. Such a justification also appeared at the council session in regard to *the veterans* living in the municipality: *"it was also discussed (…) about the issues of cooperation with veterans*

during the anniversary of 'August the 15th' [date of victorious battle against Russia near Oakcity in 1920]. *There are very few of these veterans left, so in the cooperation with [city's social assistance centre] we should help them, so that they could participate, because such celebrations are of utmost importance to them."* (q 17, 1007).

Apart from constructing specific target populations or groups of inhabitants, a narrative that differentiated local citizens was present in Oakcity, in which some desired attitudes and behaviours were attributed to the residents. It is worth noticing that in this case it is not a factual group of inhabitants, but the specific *citizenship ideal* which is constructed. Such a construct appeared in Oakcity in regard to *large families* and *politically engaged youth*. "The large families bill"[2] was an innovative bottom-up social policy programme supporting families in Oakcity with three and more children. Justification of this programme was presented during council session in a following way: *This bill has the intention of supporting the process of bringing up children and youth from large families and to provide access to sport and culture to all members of these families. The aim of this bill is to promote a positive image of a large family, irrespective of its financial situation, as a social value.* (q 2584).

In a similar vein, in Oakcity the mayor's initiative to set up a "youth council" was implemented. It was argued that a young citizens' advisory body, granted its own budget, is aimed at: *activation of youth, showing them certain values, giving them an instrument thanks to which they will be able to pursue own hobbies and fulfil as citizens of this city. Simultaneously youth may be taught the democratic, social and citizen attitudes* (q 12, 3068).

Both having many children and being actively engaged in local politics are examples of virtues attributed to a hypothetical "good citizen" of a municipality in local political discourse. They bear similarities to the concept of active citizenship and Turner's notion of "route to entitlement"—that is, a certain behaviour—a form of a civic duty which justifies or balances certain social rights.

Whereas the mentioned moral obligations were general and depicted a civic or social ideal a local social policy should promote, a factual attitude was highlighted during council sessions in both cities. It is a *citizen's or target group's contribution to the local common good***,** taking the form of some activity or financial backing, that justifies municipal assistance or denial of support. Such reciprocal commitments were presented at Oakcity's council session as a rationale for offering the municipality's help to a local entrepreneur (!). It was argued that: *"this company takes care of its surroundings and does not disturb inhabitants living nearby. Mrs Anna* (…) [a company's owner] *has been a member of the school council for many years whereas Mr Bogdan (…)* [her husband] *has always supported local civil society organizations with his pastry products. He has never denied help to anyone (…). If someone helps the citizens, it's the council's role to help him"* (q 12, 2765).

Moreover, at the council's session in Oakcity, it was claimed that these local entrepreneurs, who employ "local citizens", should be supported (q 13, 2440). Analogous

[2] A year later a national programme based on experience of Oakcity and a few other municipalities was launched at the country-level. The programme has a structure of local partnership of various entities, including private service providers who offer reduced prices to large families.

argumentation was used to refuse help to a local association of parents taking care of young adults with disabilities (which was, as already mentioned, a simultaneous narrative to constructing the same group as the "needy"). The council members were unanimous that the parents' attitude was "too demanding" and they were neither contributing enough to the day care they wanted to organize, nor loyal enough to the city: *"a council member answered them that the parents should not walk here and there and ask everyone for help, but they should propose the rules of cooperation (…) they want a place for them and the city to redecorate, it and even the city to pay all the costs (…) a council member asked: but what do they offer instead?"* (q 13, 3355).

In both cities, an idea was discussed to introduce a "local citizen's card" which would give priority access to various services to a "proper" local. Being a "proper citizen" was operationalized in both municipalities as contributing to the local common good by paying local taxes[3]. The rationale behind such a card was described by one of my respondents from Steelcity: *"so at the site I mentioned, a big settlement is being built, for 10 thousand inhabitants (…) It turned out that people buy these flats there because the developer cheated (…) that they will be the citizens of Steelcity (…) But these flats are not within Steelcity borders any more. But they claim access to Steelcity's benefits, like enrolment in kindergarten! (…) So this year we were working on a project for a "Steelcity citizen card", which will be a condition of access to crèches, kindergartens, and reduced prices at a public swimming pool. It will be granted to those who can prove they pay taxes in Steelcity* (p, CM3).

The significance of paying taxes was stressed by many of my respondents. It was also confirmed by a big promotion action in Oakcity—"pay taxes in Oakcity"—where the winner of a lottery (of tax testimonies cast in an urn in a town hall) will be awarded a high class car. The city mayor claimed during the council session the lottery is *"for those who want to prove their local patriotism"* (q 12, 2330).

A comparison of both cities shows significant similarities in the manner in which local social citizenship is discursively constructed during municipal council sessions. In Oakcity as well as in Steelcity a narrative of generally universalist citizenship and as equal access to various social policy instruments as possible was well established. Similarly, and contradictory as it may seem, the narrative of civic contribution was highlighted in both municipalities. These two main features of the *contents* of local social citizenship in a political discourse bear resemblance in Oakcity and Steelcity. Similarly, the *scope* of social citizenship was discursively conceived as linking the borders of the political community to the fact of living in municipality and generally—paying taxes. What differs both cities, as presented in table 2 is, firstly, the fact that only in Oakcity was the differentiation of certain groups of inhabitants and depicting them as "needy" present. People with disabilities, veterans, and fire victims were perceived by the council members as needing care and help from the local

[3] It refers to personal income tax. In both cities, local policy-makers perceive it as a problem that many inhabitants move to the city to work in the capital city, which is nearby, but has lower costs of living. However, relatively often they are still registered as taxpayers in their previous places of living—thus do not contribute to the local budget.

government. Two other groups—or rather—types of behaviours (that is: those with many children and those engaged in local policy-making process) were presented during council sessions as characterizing an "ideal local citizen". These very narratives present in Oakcity have paternalistic features. Thus, the focal points of the local social citizenship discourse in Oakcity may be described as: universalism, paternalism and moralism. Secondly, the universalist narrative of access to social policy for all the inhabitants was very visibly framed as a part of modernization process in Steelcity. As it was previously said, the high quality of local social policy was perceived as a means to attract business and new inhabitants, who would further contribute to the wealth of *all* local citizens. As presented in table 2, the main features of local social citizenship discourse in Steelcity may be labelled as universalism and a "modernization-for-all" narrative.

Table 2. Types of social citizenship narratives in Steelcity and Oakcity

		OAKCITY	**STEELCITY**
	main features of narratives	universalism-paternalism--moralism	universalism-"modernisation-for-all"
Content of citizenship	Universalistic narrative	+++ Evaluation criteria of **equal access** to local social policy instruments: – socioeconomic position, – age, – place of living, but *spatially just distribution of local resources* highlighted.	+ Evaluation criteria of **equal access** to local social policy instruments: – socioeconomic position, – age, – place of living, but *spatial accessibility* highlighted. *"Modernisation-for-all"* narrative.
	Differentiating narratives	**Discursively constructed local target populations — the "needy":** – people with disabilities, – veterans, – fire victims.	–
		Discursively constructed **ideal features of a local citizen:** – having many children – being engaged in policy-making process.	–
		+++ **Narrative of contribution** (employing inhabitants, being active, paying taxes)	+ **Narrative of contribution** (being active, paying taxes)
Scope of citizenship		Rights to **all living in the city and paying local taxes** (paying taxes as "local patriotism" narrative)	Rights to **all living in the city and paying local taxes** (citizen's card proposals)

Conclusions

The social citizenship narratives which were exposed during local council sessions in both researched municipalities turned out to be complex and often contradictory. I hypothesised that local narratives in the city with a far more generous social policy would be more universalistic (claiming access to services and benefits for all inhabitants), whereas in the city with a more stringent social policy various duties would be discursively attributed to the citizens and thus I would observe discourse promoting conditionality in local social policy. This turned out to be only partially true. Generally speaking, indeed the universalistic narrative, well present in both cities, was even more emphasised in Oakcity (the municipality with higher social policy expenditures). However, paradoxical as it may seem, this universalistic narrative was accompanied in Oakcity by discourse promoting conditional access to local welfare instruments, which was absent in the other city. Thus, I observed the *multiplicity of social citizenship discourses*, including presence of contradictory constructions in Oakcity.

The following interpretations of this finding may be proposed. Firstly, the *universalistic narratives in both cities may be a smokescreen* which is generally present in local political social policy discourse, whereas the *paternalist-moralistic narratives are more meaningful* to local construction of social policy. All target populations mentioned, discursively constructed as poor and needy as well as councillors' assumptions that the city needs to promote the ideal of large families are features of paternalistic social policy, which is absent in the second city. Consequently, in the city with a stringent social policy universalist narrative may be meaningless but showing that neoliberal and promoting conditional access to welfare narratives are not politically popular. Thus, some *liberal features of social policy in this city may be in fact covered behind the modernisation-for-all narratives*.

The second interpretation refers to a political conflict in the city. Given the presence of the narrative of "spatially equal distribution" and local councillors attempts to receive benefits for their neighbourhood in the "generous" Oakcity it may be hypothesised that *both the narrative of equal access and of taking care of the needy have politically similar meaning—of granting access to welfare to the constituencies of strongly antagonised local councillors*. Thirdly, it may be hypothesised that in Oakcity *the variety of local discourses is both a reason and a result of a more generous and complex local social policy in this municipality*. This interpretation is coherent with the assumptions of the social construction of target populations approach: generous social assistance to veterans, a universalist programme for large families, a campaign to pay local taxes, etc., result in a *multitude of local constructions of social citizenship*. Given the high level of political conflict in this city, it seems that the shift from being portrayed as the "needy" to being labelled as "over-demanding", as it was with the parents of the disabled adults, may be rapid and is both a part of the political game in the city and a part of discursive construction of local social citizenship in this city.

The final interpretation, not mutually exclusive with the already mentioned leads to the hypothesis that theoretical categories of social policy and social citizenship in general, *at the national level and at the local level may vary to some extent*. Whereas universalistic

provision and conditionality represent diverse types of citizenship (they are different modes of linking social rights and duties), *it seems that at the local level, both universalism and the ideal of civic duty may coexist and reinforce*. At least in discursive terms, local social citizenship in both cities has communitarian features. The meaning of social citizenship which emerges from local politicians' narratives is membership in a local political community of citizens whose social claims are fully legitimate and simultaneously anchored in their contributing to a local common good.

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Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest analiza konstrukcji obywatelstwa społecznego w lokalnym dyskursie politycznym. Przedmiotem badania jest sposób w jaki radni dwóch polskich miast zróżnicowanych pod względem poziomu wydatków na politykę społeczną postulują szeroko rozumiane prawa społeczne oraz obywatelskie obowiązki mieszkańców miasta. Przyjęta hipoteza zakłada, że w mieście o bardziej hojnej lokalnej polityce społecznej będzie dominowała narracja uniwersalistyczna, a w mieście o niskich wydatkach na zadania własne polityki społecznej — narracja warunkująca dostęp do świadczeń i usług spełnianiem przez mieszkańców określonych kryteriów.

Analiza stenogramów z posiedzeń rady miejskiej pokazuje jednak, że w mieście o wysokich wydatkach znacznie silniej obecne są narracje zarówno uniwersalistyczne, paternalistyczne, jak i postulujące warunkowość. Proponuję wniosek nawiązujący się do koncepcji *social constructions of target populations*, że kompleksowej lokalnej polityce społecznej towarzyszy różnorodność często sprzecznych lokalnych narracji obywatelstwa społecznego. Natomiast odnosząc się do teorii obywatelstwa społecznego formułuję wniosek że na poziomie lokalnym uniwersalizm i warunkowość oparta na spełnianiu „obywatelskich obowiązków" mogą współwystępować w komunitariańskich narracjach polityki społecznej.

Słowa kluczowe: lokalna polityka społeczna, obywatelstwo społeczne, dyskurs polityczny

Cytowanie

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