

Gender and welfare in Hungary and Poland: A comparison of family policy regimes

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Research question

General: What type of welfare state is emerging in post-socialist societies?

Specifically: Are there differences across Hungary and Poland in family policies and what is the consequence of this for women's poverty and gender inequality?

Starting from observed similarities...

Lowest employment rate for women (15-64 yrs old) in CEE (2008)

EU-27: 58.3%

Hungary: 50.9%

Poland: 50.6%

Small % of kids below 3 in daycare

EU-27: 26%

Hungary: 8%

Poland: 2%

What explains these similarities?

One important factor: possible similarities in how states supports parents in paid work?

Background

- The classics: establishing welfare regimes
 - Gosta Esping-Andersen (1990): conditions under which de-commodification of labor is possible
- Adding gender issues
 - neglect the role of the family/ state policies targeting families; focuses on class inequalities
 - “breadwinner ideology” (Lewis and Ostner 1991)
 - focus on people’s capacity to form independent households (Orloff 1993)
 - Esping-Andersen (1999) de-familiarization -familialism
 - neo-familialism, new types of familial regimes (Misra 2007, Mahon 2002, etc.)

Welfare states/ family policies in CEE

- State socialist legacy: innovations
 - high rates of women in paid work
 - childcare after age 3
 - state supported generous maternity/parental leaves
- After 1989- some of the same pressures...
 - cuts in spending, reduction in real value of most family subsidies
 - ongoing changes

Two research questions

- Where do we fit in? Is CEE a “region”? Is it homogeneous?
- What are the consequences of the types of family policies that exist in the different countries?

1. Where do we fit in? Homogeneity?

- Pascall and Kwak (2005) argue for homogeneity and re-familialization
- Szelewa and Polakowski (2008) – differences 4 regimes
- Glass and Fodor (2007) differences with consequences

2. Consequences of welfare regimes?

Recent research:

Lengthy parental leave policies, typical of CEE and some western European countries- state supported familialism- is problematic for gender equality in labor market/ poverty/ exacerbation of gender inequality in division of domestic labor

Our goal

Explore differences between family policies and their conditions between Hungary and Poland in order to learn about how gender/social inequalities are reconstituted

1. Parental and family benefits

	Hungary	Poland
Family benefit eligibility	Universal	Means tested
Parental benefit/leave		
eligibility	Universal	Means tested and insurance based
coverage	high	low
Consequence	Inclusive Minimal stigma Level of benefit low, yet state support significant in budget	Highly restrictive Potentially stigmatizing Encourages full dependence on family

2. Support for paid work?

	Hungary	Poland
Leave allows paid work?	YES	NO
Leave counts towards pension?	YES	YES
% kids in care over 3	85%	33%
	Enables but does not encourage balance/ division of labor	Encourages specialization

3. Differentiation inscribed?

	Hungary	Poland
Tax credit for children	YES- at the time, mostly abolished since	NO
Multiple tiers leave?	Three tier system	Single tier system
Multiple tiers benefits	Three tier benefit system	Single tier
Distinctions	Class/ ethnicity	Class/ employment status

So what does this all tell us?

Different family policies may lead to similar outcomes in terms of social/gender inequality.

Polish family policy

- Neo-familialism or “private maternalism”
- Care is left to family/ market; state withdraws and interferes in times of dire need.
- Conservative countries in Europe with similar Catholic tradition

Hungary: differentiation or “public maternalism”

- Looks like de-familialism, as state provides support for care.
- In practice: differentiation.
 - One small group uses high tier leave and gets back to work
 - Larger group: long leave, has trouble returning, gets inferior work due to responsibilities for kids. Weak state support for this group.

Indeed some differences in outcomes do exist...

Proportion of female MP's

EU-27: 23%

Hungary: 9%

Poland: 20%

Wage gap

EU-27: 17.4%

Hungary: 16.3%

Poland: 7.5%

In sum

- Different family policy systems
- Outcome regarding women's participation in paid work is similar on macro level
- At closer look, there is difference in the outcome in HOW inequality is generated: specialization in Poland, differentiation in Hungary
- State policies in CEE vary and are consequential