

Do Central and Eastern European countries fit the “Western” picture?

The example of family policies in Hungary and Poland

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1. Introduction

Central and Eastern European countries and post-Soviet states share a common state-socialist legacy due to which they are considered to have markedly different political and welfare cultures to those of “Western” capitalist democracies. This different historical legacy has led most authors to group these countries into the single category of “post-Soviet states”. At the same time, their differences have rarely been analysed systematically. In this paper, we present three arguments derived from the historical development of Polish and Hungarian welfare arrangements. First, we assert that differences in political and welfare development began, not with state socialism but much earlier, at least around the First World War when these countries began to develop as independent nation-states. Second, partly because of the differences in pre-war development, welfare states in the countries analysed also developed different trajectories under state-socialism. Thus, in addition to important similarities in state-socialist welfare policies, they also display important differences. Third, differences in pre- and post-war development and different political and economic arrangements during the transition led to markedly different welfare outcomes in these two new capitalist democracies.

The three points made above will be illustrated through the analysis of Polish and Hungarian family policies, which we find especially important for understanding the social division of welfare not only across classes (Titmuss, 1958) but also across gender. Under family policies we understand cash-transfers that help families with the task of child-rearing and the provision of childcare services. This latter area is especially under-researched in the Central-Eastern European countries. Under childcare services, we include crèches, kindergartens and childcare provided in primary education. The latter, the so-called “afternoon services” only recently became part of the discourse on the provision of

family welfare and we find that they are very important in measuring welfare outcomes, the well-being of families and women's access to gainful employment (Hagemann, Jarausch *et al.* 2008). In this paper, cash transfers to families are divided into family allowances, tax-credits and paid parental leave. Family allowances are not dependent on previous employment and are paid to families till the children reach adulthood. Paid parental leave, on the other hand, is dependent on the parent's previous employment. Tax credits can be utilized by those families with taxable income above a certain level.

The first part of this paper deals with the question of whether "Western" welfare theories can be applied to state-socialist and post-state-socialist development. We find that some of the questions that mainstream and gendered welfare analysts asked about "Western" welfare regimes in the 1980s and 1990s may also be meaningful for the analysis of state-socialist and post-state-socialist countries. With certain modifications, these can serve as starting points for deconstruction of the welfare histories of Central-Eastern European countries. With the help of existing analytical tools, we provide an analysis of the historical development of childcare in Poland and Hungary until the end of state socialism. This is followed by a description of the changes made since then under the new capitalist democracies. Comparing the rates of female employment and fertility with the level of childcare services and payments, we reach conclusions about different welfare outcomes fostered by different family policies. We find that although both countries show tendencies of falling birth rates and low economic activity among women, this development is more marked in Poland than in Hungary. This might be partly due to the "implicitly familialistic" policies in Poland, which leave the responsibility for childcare mainly with the family. In Hungary, families have more flexibility to choose between different kinds of childcare arrangements, but this "optional familialism" is only available to middle class and better-off families. Poor families are generally excluded from crèches in both countries and they are extensively segregated into low quality kindergarten and primary schools in Hungary. This intersects with ethnic discrimination of the Roma in this country.

2. Theoretical considerations: do CEE countries fit the "Western" welfare picture?

Since the collapse of state socialism and the introduction of market economies in all of the Central and Eastern European and post-Soviet states, the former sharp East-West division of countries can no longer be upheld when analysing public policies (Wahl 2008). This constructed division, which crystallized during the Cold War, was to come to an end with the accession of former state-socialist countries to the European Union. "Western" European and North-American scholars, and especially feminists, have done intensive research into welfare and gender in the former state socialist countries (Funk and Mueller 1993; Pailhe 2000; Saxonberg 2000; Fodor, Glass *et al.* 2002; Haney 2002; Heinen 2002; Haney and Pollard 2003; Pascall and Lewis 2004; Schilde and Schulte 2005; Bicskei 2006; Fodor 2006). At the same time, both "Eastern" and "Western" scholars of welfare history have struggled with the question of whether and to what extent former state-socialist countries can be analysed using existing frameworks (See for example: Saxonberg 2000; Haney 2002; Pascall and Lewis 2004). Sonya Michel argued recently that the greatest challenges to the existing conceptual frameworks "come from the former Eastern bloc cases" (Michel 2006: 146).

"For one, Marxism's commitment to absolute gender equality and (in its extreme form) the 'withering-away of the family' places it beyond the ideological pale of even social democracy, and thus outside the scope of Esping-Andersen's typology as well as its feminist variants." (Michel 2006: 146)

At the same time, it is true that "communist regimes themselves found it difficult to realise their ideals" (Michel 2006: 146); thus, it is of central importance to distinguish between theory and practice. Although, in theory, existing conceptual frameworks may not be suited to the analysis of state-socialist welfare, this has been sporadically tested in practice. For this reason, we will provide a brief overview of possibilities for applying "Western" welfare theories to "Eastern", including Hungarian and Polish, welfare development. We find that it is worth testing mainstream and gendered theories against state-socialist and post-state-socialist child welfare practices and use them as analytical tools for comparing Polish and Hungarian childcare arrangements.

2.1. The Marshall citizenship theory upside down

T. H. Marshall's fundamental work on the historical development of the rights and obligations of citizenship in England claims that there are three major forms of citizenship rights: civil and economic rights, political rights, and social rights (Marshall 1950). These are developed over time and build "upon" each other. Feminist critique of Marshall's concept is based on the fact that "for much of history, ancient and modern, women were denied the formal status and rights of citizens" (Hobson and Lister 2002: 25). Women were sometimes accorded social rights earlier and in different forms to men. Civil, social and political rights, including the possibility of gainful employment, were often based on women's abilities and obligations as mothers, and thus "keeping up" the nation (Skocpol 1992).

In countries that became part of the Soviet block later, economic and political rights were generally provided on a much more limited scale, and usually later than in Britain and the "Western" European countries. For example, the level of suffrage in Hungary at the end of the 1920s was 26 per cent of the population whereas in England, Austria and Germany it was above 60 per cent (Romsics 2004). In the "Eastern" part of Europe, large parts of the population (overwhelmingly agricultural workers) were left without any citizenship rights until the end of World War II. After a very short period of democracy, the Communist Party won the pseudo-elections with the help of the Soviet Union, and thus a new totalitarian dictatorship began. In Marshallian terms, this meant that civil and political rights that had not become widespread throughout history were completely banned after the Communist takeover. What must be stressed here is that the long history of banned civil and political rights did not start with state socialism, but much earlier.

The first period of state socialism was very controversial in terms of welfare rights. Although the long-awaited land reform was an important and very popular measure in Hungary, other welfare arrangements can hardly be found in the early 1950s. Bicskei, for instance, shows how the responsibility for building kindergartens was left to municipalities and families. The return from economic development was overwhelmingly invested in heavy industry and only a very small, privileged part of the society benefited from its merits. In Hungary, the lack of welfare development and the unequal and unjust distribution of wealth was an important reason for the 1956 Revolution. Poland, on the other hand, was

the only country in the soviet block where private property was still permitted for farmers. This social group was not covered by social insurance until the mid-1970s.

The 1960s were marked by a new, forced "compromise" between the state and the citizens, in which the citizens had to give up all "revolutionary" political activity and, "received" welfare under state socialism in return. This can be interpreted as a trade-off between social and political rights: Social rights were provided "in return for" political rights and were introduced as a means of pacifying the population.

In Poland in 1956, some serious acts of social protest were followed by the period referred to as "our small stabilisation", where political and civil repression was relaxed and new welfare policies were introduced. However, just as the wave of social protest had nothing like the massive impact of the Hungarian revolution, the new welfare policies in Poland never developed to the scale achieved in Hungary.

Marshall's theory of citizenship is thus turned upside-down when talking about state socialism: These systems, especially those of the 1960s, provided extensive social rights partly *in return for* excluding citizens from the practice of civil and political rights.²¹

After the fall of state socialism, the citizens were provided with political and civil rights and an extensive growth of non-governmental organizations was also experienced in all countries. Nevertheless, there are still shortcomings in the Central-Eastern European democratic systems. Corruption is a very important factor, undermining not only the rule of law but also economic development and thus the financing of the welfare systems (Kósa and Alexa 2007). The exclusion of the poor and the masses of Roma citizens in Hungary from the possibility of taking part in activities that are commonly accepted in the society means that social rights are not uniformly distributed. This, in turn, contributes to the indirect deprivation of the poor and prevents the majority of the Roma from exercising civil and political rights, leading to a vicious circle where they are too weak to push politicians towards providing more social rights. Although economic rights are provided for everyone, in an

21. It is important to note that social rights here were not real "rights" in the sense that there was no civil control over welfare arrangements. Also, the state perceived welfare provisions as "gifts" to the population and not as "rights" of citizens.

increasingly unequal society not everyone can exercise them. Social rights are mainly based on employment, and those who are not gainfully employed are left with local social assistance. The exception, as we will show, is provided by some of the child-related welfare arrangements where social rights are linked to citizenship and thus are *de jure* available to all the citizens.

2.2. Mainstream welfare typologies: Esping-Andersen and state-socialist development

Post-state-socialist countries were built on different pre- and post-World War II experiences that persisted through their systemic changes and became mixed with different state-socialist experiences. This sometimes makes these welfare systems more diverse and mixed than their “Western” counterparts, making it difficult to categorise them as “conservative-corporatist”, “liberal” or “social democratic”. Deacon included state-socialist regimes in the existing power-resources framework, describing them as “bureaucratic state collectivist systems of welfare” where the heritage of Bismarckian social insurance prevailed throughout state socialism (Deacon 1992b). Because of the constantly changing features of the welfare regime, historian Bela Tomka talks about “institutionalized volatility” and Szikra describes the current system of Hungarian family policies as fitting into a “mixed welfare regime” (Szikra 2005; Tomka 2005). In her recent work, Julia Szalai describes Hungary as a “corporatist-liberal” welfare regime that contributes to the dual structure of the society (Szalai 2006). The problem of placing certain countries into the categories of Esping-Andersen is, of course, not new: This classification system was widely criticized for not being able to grasp the real differences in welfare states right after its birth (Leibfried 1991). Because of all these difficulties, we think that instead of “forcing” Central and Eastern European countries into one or another category, the best way to utilize mainstream theories is to take their analytical dimensions and start to “re-construct” welfare histories alongside them.

The central dimension of the analysis of power resources, that of “class” and especially “working-class”, has to be re-interpreted for the analysis of state-socialist welfare. Although state-socialist propaganda claimed the end of class-conflict and class-division, this certainly was not achieved in reality. Most importantly, there remained large differences between the industrial and the non-industrial and especially the rural agricultural

workers' chances to politically mobilise for more welfare. Agricultural workers and their families were negatively discriminated in such "universal" payments and services as (in Hungary) family allowance and free access to health care. Moreover, an often hidden discrimination of the Roma in Hungary persisted throughout state socialism, not least through measures of social policy and employment (Kemeny 1976; Varsa 2005).

Parties and party-coalitions obviously cannot be analysed for state socialism the way they are for capitalist democracies. Instead, the political analysis might include the ever-changing roles of semi-independent trade unions, political sub-groups within the ruling party, illegal civil movements, such as the *Solidarnosc* in Poland and the *SZETA* social movement in Hungary, and the churches, especially the Catholic Church in Poland. An analysis of the realities of class-conflicts (contrary to propaganda), power-struggles between trade-unions and the Party, and also the role of alternative and illegal movements could lead us to understand the political forces that lead to different decisions about welfare policies in these countries.

Coming back to Esping-Andersen's analytical framework, we find that re-interpretation of his three main explanatory variables would also lead to further valuable analyses of welfare under and after state-socialism. It would be important to conduct further research to answer the question of whether and to what extent women and men were commodified under and after state socialism and to what extent welfare payments and services could serve as de-commodifying tools. Careful research should also show whether social policy "enhances or diminishes existing status or class differences" (Esping-Andersen 1990: 4) under different periods of socialist rule. The relationship between the state, the market and the family, as the third dimension of Esping-Andersen's famous theory, is no doubt a central one for both state-socialist and post-state-socialist welfare analysis and already includes gendered elements.

3. Gendered typologies

The outcome of feminist research on welfare points toward the role of social policy in shaping the public and private life of women and men, the division of paid and unpaid labour within and outside of the family and its consequences for well-being, employment, fertility etc.

Consequently, the narrow view that focused solely on social insurance has had to shift and family policies, including family services have become central to welfare analysis.

One strong group of works distinguished between different breadwinner models, the most important of which are the weak/moderate/strong breadwinner models of Jane Lewis (1992) and Diane Sainsbury's (1994) male-breadwinner (alternatively accompanied by its 'separate gender roles' version) vs. individual (or 'dual earner-carer') model. Recent feminist debates contest the typology for being too simplistic and one-dimensional. They also present alternatives, such as the 'one-and-a-half-earner' (Mahon 2002; Morgan and Zippel 2003), or 'two-x-three-quarter' model (Pascall and Lewis 2004). The latter analysis proposes a very complex model for gender equality policy, which includes the criteria of voice, paid work, income, care work, and time. These variables are analysed at the following levels of policy intervention: individual, household, civil society, and social/collective (cf. Pascall and Kwak in this volume).

In the context of Central and Eastern Europe, the male-breadwinner model also appears too simplistic. During the first period of state-socialism, family policies were aimed at encouraging women to work in order to mobilise the labour force for industrial development. Although masses of women entered full-time employment, the division of labour at home remained more or less unchanged and thus led to a double burden on women. Finally, even the most recent developments (such as the work of Pascall and Lewis 2004) do not encompass the variety of outcomes: the breadth of childcare policies in this region of Europe.

A specific response to these works was Birgit Pfau-Effinger's concept of gender culture, gender order and gender arrangement (Pfau-Effinger 2000). The idea of gender cultures touches on what is commonly perceived as natural in relation to the division of labour between men and women. In other words, the author rejects the automatism of the relationship between policy and individual choices and puts the emphasis on differences in (national) cultures as the impulse for different care regimes. This concept also seems problematic when applied to the cases of Eastern Europe, where different outcomes in policies, trends in female employment and demographic development can only be partly explained by differences in culture or attitudes. For example, when compared to most of the Western countries, the countries of the Visegrad Group (the

Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland), share very similar attitudes towards gender and family roles (ISSP 1994; 2002), which does not allow for the explanation of differences in national policies on the basis of different national gender cultures. As table 1 shows, Hungarians and Poles tend to have similar views on gender roles within the family and towards paid employment, though Hungarians seem to be more 'conservative' than Poles. At the same time, according to the ISSP survey, Hungarian and Polish familialistic social policy measures seem to be in line with the public perception of male and female roles.

Table 1 Attitudes towards the family and the professional roles of women in Hungary and Poland

Questions	% Agreement	Poland		Hungary	
		1994	2002	1994	2002
A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works		69.7	56.8	73.7	66.1
All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job		54.8	42.2	63.7	53.9
A job is all right, but what most women really want is a home and children		65.2	51	70.5	61.7
Most women have to work to support their families*		92.3	74.1	92.1	80.4
A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family		67	45.7	56.3	39.2

*in 2002 this question was reformulated as: 'Both the man and woman should contribute to the household income'

Source: D. Szelewa's own calculations based on ISSP 1994 and 2002

Familialism and the analysis framework

Familialistic policies locate the responsibility for care overwhelmingly within the family. In contrast, de-familialisation means the socialisation of care, the involvement of public institutions and/or public financing of care work. (Lewis 1992; Esping-Andersen 1999; Leitner 2003; Hantrais 2004). However, as demonstrated by Lynne Haney (2003) and Sigrid Leitner (2003), this is not a bipolar dimension. Rather, different faces or types of familialism display different *degrees* and *kinds* of state activity. In other words, different kinds of familialistic (or de-familialising) policies can be distinguished on the basis of the questions: How much

family support is provided by the state and what *kind* of support is provided? Therefore, de-familialisation and familialism are not just two sides of the same coin.

Familialism, thus, takes different forms and can drive different sets of policies depending primarily on the historical institutional context. In this paper, we have used the framework of familialism developed by Leitner (2003), and further applied by Szelewa and Polakowski (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008) for Central and Eastern European countries. There were several reasons for this choice. Firstly, concept of familialism is not only about policies but also about shaping public discourse about the “ideal family”. It builds on evidence that throughout history “states have attempted to mobilize families and deploy familial images for a variety of political ends” (Haney and Pollard 2003: 1-14). This may be through the use of propaganda or other means of shaping public and private discourse. Secondly, in contrast to the breadwinner models, the concept of familialism and its variations are more open to modification, allowing it to be applied to the case of Central and Eastern Europe, where neither the male-breadwinner nor the individual or dual earner/carer models existed in a clear form during the last half century. Finally, as familialism can have different faces or forms (Szelewa and Polakowski 2008), it best captures the most important *common* – familialistic – policy trends in the countries of the region, as well as the *differences* between them.

Leitner differentiates between four types of policy mix based on the combination of familialistic and de-familialising elements in the policy mix. The first one is ‘implicit familialism’, where the state does not provide any significant support for families in their task of providing care. Entitlements are usually based on the principle of means-testing, the level of allowances (if any) is very low, and the state does not provide readily available and accessible childcare or elderly care services. Here, the family remains responsible for care and can turn to the market. However, the de-familialisation of care is strongly related to the availability of care services on the market as well as the financial capacity of the family. As women are still perceived as the primary carers, implicit familialism firmly places the burden of care on women. The second, ‘explicit’ type of familialism is a ‘richer’ version of the previous one, as here the state pays for care. In this combination of policies, the state provides payments for longer periods of parental leave but refrains from supporting families through the provision of care services. Consequently, the caring function of the family is explicitly supported. Women are also perceived through

their role as carers –there are incentives for exercising the task of care at home and families are supported for a long time even when maternity leave has ended. Though fathers might be formally entitled to parental leave, there are no special incentives for sharing the leave with the mother so that the take-up level for paternity leave is close to zero.

The choice of using public care services and/or generous payments for home-based care is found in the third type of familialism –‘optional’ familialism. The periods of leave are longer and there are more ways in which leave can be used, e.g. it can be shared and divided into smaller parts. There is the alternative option of using day-care services, which are more affordable due to state support. Entitlements are universal and income-related, with flat-rate benefits that are also provided to the uninsured. Such family support arrangements give the family the ‘choice’ of using different kinds of schemes or services. This model ‘the right to care’ is somehow respected, but the option of longer leave can also be regarded as an incentive for (mostly) women to take a break from employment. Moreover, childcare services are often considered a ‘lesser evil’ here, since the quality is sometimes poor, encouraging parents (mainly women) to stay at home with younger children.

The other pole is “de-familialisation”, where the element of payments for family-delivered care is weaker and families are encouraged to use public care services rather than staying at home with the family member requiring care. In this last regime, the responsibility for care is thus shifted away from the family. The periods of the leave are shorter, with lots of part-time options. Most importantly, extensive childcare services are provided and are of good quality (e.g. fewer children per group). An important element of the system is also individual taxation: for example, families are not shown preferential treatment over single households. There are also special incentives for fathers to share the leave (withdrawal of the benefit if part of the leave not used by the second parent).

Table 2 presents the four types of familialism proposed by Leitner.

Table 2 The four types of policies distinguished by Leitner

Familialisation of care (State pays for care provided the by family)	De-familialisation of care (State pays for care provided outside the home: Childcare services)	
	Strong	Weak
Strong	<i>optional familialism</i>	<i>explicit familialism</i>
Weak	<i>de-familialistion</i>	<i>implicit familialism</i>

Source: Leitner 2003: 358

To summarise, familialism takes different forms and can drive different sets of policies depending on the historical, institutional context. We argue that Hungary and Poland represent two different types of familialism as a result of the historical development of their family policies, more generally, the different relationship between the state, the market and the family. We would classify the Polish version of familialism as ‘implicit’ due to its general low support for the family on all fronts. This contrasts with the Hungarian version of familialism, where different elements of family support allow us to call this policy mix ‘optional familialism’. In the following sections, we will first analyse the historical evolution of family policies in Poland and Hungary, and how the two types of familialism developed gradually through different policy mixes. This will be followed by a more detailed analysis of the transition period, which leads us to the present situation. Here, we apply the framework of familialism to the description of current family policies and draw some conclusions about policy outcomes. We show how familialistic policies are shaped around different lines of exclusion: class, gender and ethnicity. This leads us to the question of (social) citizenship and stratification in present-day Poland and Hungary.

4. Hungary and Poland: legacies of the past

The historical origins of family policies in Hungary and Poland are both examples of familialist policies driven by the project of nation-state building, although in different forms in the two countries. Compared to Poland, services for families with children were introduced rather early in Hungary. State-run public kindergartens for needy children whose mothers worked were set up under legislation as early as 1891 and urban areas with large industrial populations soon provided such services either through factories or through the local or central government. Paid maternity leave (later called TGYÁS) for a few weeks before and after the

birth of a child was introduced in industry as early as 1884. After-school services were also set up around the turn of the century and serviced 30 per cent of children by the mid 1930s (Szikra 2006). In contrast, Poland was split between three countries prior to 1918 (Austrian-Hungarian Empire, Germany and Russia), treated as these countries' peripheries and suffered from continuous under-investment. Childcare was organised from below, by the churches and within the rural communities (Langier 1903).

The trauma of the First World War and the loss of territories, together with the fear of the "disappearance of the nation" led to a new approach to social policy that concentrated on the family in Hungary in the 1930s and 1940s. Family allowance was introduced for factory workers in 1938, and an extensive means and behaviour-tested loan was provided for poor agricultural families with many children (Szikra 2008). In Poland, with its traditional commitment to Catholicism, family life was treated as 'sacred' and therefore as a private matter. Family policies were not developed, mostly due to the weakness of the state: The new state had to organise its basic functions from scratch and deal with the devastating legacies of the partition.

The new state-socialist regime was driven by the project of building a new kind of society with the formal goal of achieving not only class but also gender equality and diminishing the negative discrimination of ethnic minorities. Socialist leaders soon had to face the fact that pushing more women into the labour market might come at the cost of slowing down population growth. Measures introduced in most of the state-socialist countries in the late 1960s were a sign of great concern for demographic development. The most important goal of these "maternalist" measures was to increase the birth-rate. In Hungary, the introduction of long paid maternity leave (GYES) in 1967 and another income-related form (GYED) in 1985 meant that the state withdrew from the aim of the forced commodification of all women, and thus left room for women with children between the ages of 0-3 to choose whether to stay at home or to work.²² (Szikra 2005) Prior to this, there was only the 24-week paid maternity leave (TGYÁS). The new extended forms of paid maternity leave were introduced "on top of" the existing maternity leave. Choice was provided through the growing number of crèches and kindergartens

22. Importantly, there was also a desire to "hide" any labour surplus and GYES was an ideal means of doing this.

and the widely-used option of afternoon care at schools (Szikra 2009). From the mid-1970s, family allowance was provided for all parents in full-time employment as a means of income compensation for families with children and also as a reward for having more children.

It is evident that these two tendencies were somehow contradictory. While the provision of childcare services was aimed at increasing the scope of the labour force, establishing long periods of paid maternity leave was to restrict women's participation in paid employment. These conflicting policies: de-familialising (childcare services) and familialistic (longer paid leave) created an 'optional' familialism in Hungary. Though the socialist governments did not have the vision or intention of introducing such a policy model, it came about as the *by-product* of their strategy and as the product of gradual institutional development. In terms of institutional development, there were different policy layers that came from two different tendencies and ultimately produced this policy mix as an unintended consequence.

In Poland, where the enrolment rates for children in kindergarten have never exceeded 50 per cent, the situation of families (and therefore of women) has always been harder. In contrast to Hungary, the system of family allowances was not introduced in Poland before WWII but following the establishment of the communist regime – in 1948. Extended parental leave was introduced in 1968²³, just one year later than in Hungary. There was no financial compensation for the interruption to employment until 1981, when the extended leave allowance was introduced. It was means tested from the beginning, while in Hungary the extended leave introduced during this period was not means-tested.

The emancipation of women occurred only in the field of paid employment, where they could gain higher positions than in some of the capitalist democracies (Fodor 2003). At the same time, traditional gender-roles and patriarchy within the family prevailed so that it was overwhelmingly women who cared for family members. Apart from some propaganda in the Soviet Union, the communist regimes did not encourage men to share the burden of domestic work. As we have shown

23. In Western Europe, this division is not viable: However, in all the post-communist countries even the legislation still describes 'maternity leave' as different from 'parental leave'. The latter is an additional form of leave that was introduced to most of these countries in late 1960s.

above, the most important difference between Poland and Hungary before and under state socialism was the degree of state support for care work. This was much greater in Hungary.

In the following sections, we illustrate how past legacies interact with the new conditions of the market economy and political pluralism to produce two different versions of familialism: The optional and more complex form found in Hungary, and the rudimentary or implicit familialism found in Poland.

5. The transition period

After the fall of communism, these countries gained full independence and entered the global economy. The need to reform the welfare systems emerged with the introduction of market economies. Although both countries were highly indebted, experienced a sharp fall of their GDP and had to contend with new social problems such as mass-unemployment, they faced these challenges in different ways: the so-called 'shock therapy' of Leszek Balcerowicz in Poland contrasts strongly with the gradualist approach followed in Hungary. One of the consequences for economic reform was that Hungary postponed privatisation and/or restructuring processes that were implemented more radically in Poland and thus increased the social costs of the overall reform. Far-reaching cuts in social spending were introduced in Poland, and access to benefits was restricted to the very poorest. Childcare services also deteriorated (Ksiezopolski 1999).

Hungary, on the other hand, introduced a generous unemployment scheme in 1991 (the duration and level of payment were later cut) and made family allowance universally accessible. Withdrawal from the labour market through easy access to disability pensions cushioned the hardships of economic transformation. Importantly, universally available GYES and the employment-based GYED were kept in place by the first conservative government. Mothers who were employed prior to giving birth remained eligible for TGYÁS, which has been paid at the level of 70 per cent of the mother's previous income for the first 24 weeks after childbirth with no ceiling of the payment. They could opt for GYED for the following two years as "extended" maternity leave, also at the level of 70 per cent of their previous income, although with a limit at the gross minimum income. Moreover, a new type of maternity leave called GYET

was also established. This was made available to parents with at least three children, who could stay at home with their children until the youngest reached the age of 8. This scheme was established in 1993 and the level of allowance was equal to the minimum old-age pension, the same amount as GYES.

At the same time, social assistance was introduced for the poorest and income-tests and home visits were used increasingly when making discretionary decisions. The first democratic government put many responsibilities in the hands of local authorities, leading to great regional differences in welfare outcomes in Hungary (Ferge and Tausz 2002).

The decentralization of the responsibility of providing welfare has also been an important feature of the Polish welfare state. Means-testing became more widespread and as the number of those entitled to social assistance grew due to increasing poverty, the income threshold had to become even more stringent (Ksiezopolski 1999).

Both countries experienced a general drop in living standards, growing unemployment and poverty. At the same time, important differences could be observed. In the early 1990s, the unemployment rate was around 10 per cent (9.8 per cent in 1992, 10.2 per cent in 1995) in Hungary, but rose to 13 per cent in Poland (Nemzetközi Statisztikai Évkönyv. 2001). This rate represents the peak in Hungary as unemployment then gradually decreased, whereas in Poland it continued to increase till the late 1990s. A marked difference was also observed between male and female unemployment rates in these countries. In Hungary, the unemployment rate for women (8.7 per cent) was lower than that of men. In Poland, the female unemployment rate (14.7 per cent both for 1992 and 1995) was higher than that of men. This fact contributed to female poverty in Poland, whereas such gender differences did not occur in Hungary (Fodor 2006). The fact that family policies were kept in place or were even extended offered a “lifeline” for women of lower social status with little chance of entering the labour market.

The population, which had already borne the social costs incurred under Hungarian gradualism, strongly opposed when the second social-democratic and liberal government began to introduce the austerity measures of the Lajos Bokros reform package. Family allowance and GYES (the universal entitlement) were subjected to means-tests, and GYED (employment based) was abolished altogether. Several authors describe social mobilisation aimed at reversing these changes as one of

the very few successful grass-roots initiatives to be supported by the media (Toth 1993; Goven 2000; Szalai 2000; Haney and Pollard 2003; Petho 2003; Szikra 2005). The usual rhetoric centred around the welfare of mother and child, and the child's need of a mother's care (Goven 2000). Thus, Hungarian women organised under the slogans of maternalism and were able to achieve the retention of a universally available family allowance system that remained in place in 1998 under the new, conservative government. This government introduced family tax allowances and re-introduced the higher paid, employment-related maternity leave, GYED. Through the establishment of income-tested social assistance for poor families and the deterioration of the real value of universally available GYES and family allowance, the conservative government explicitly created a "two-track" family policy which favoured the better-off between 1998 and 2002. The rhetoric of this government was to "help those who have children and work", thus blaming the unemployed for their "laziness". The next two elections (2002 and 2006) were won by the Socialist Party, which again formed a coalition with the liberals. The new system they established – which is the current family policy system in Hungary – will be described in the next section.

The new democratic governments in Poland were not very concerned with the issues of family policy, regardless of their ideological affiliation. Until the late 1990s, family policy did not seem to be an important issue to them and no serious transformation occurred. The reason for this was the prevailing liberal profile of the first governments after 1989. Although the traditional vision of women's role within the family and society was very popular among the new political elite, the policies did not correspond with the politician's declarations. The situation changed only slightly in 1993, when the left wing Social-Democratic Alliance (SLD) came to power. They declared that one of their goals was the achievement of more gender equality and social cohesion. However, their actual policy remained liberal. The legislation regulating the extended version of parental leave was amended to make it equally accessible to men and women, but its significance was rather small since even women were deciding to take the leave less and less often (Nowakowska 2000; Balcerzak-Paradowska 2004).

The biggest change in the area of to cash benefits concerned the system of family allowances. In 1989, their level was set at a flat-rate. In 1995, under the social-democratic coalition, access to family allowance was limited through income-testing (Klos and Szymanczak 1997). At the same

time, the right to paid extended leave (at the end of the period of maternity leave) remained restricted to the poorest, though the entitlement threshold was changed several times.

The post-Solidarity coalition (AWS), which came to power in 1997, was formed by the very divided right-wing political parties. Here, declarations promoting a traditional vision of the family were summarised in the 'State's Pro-family Policy' program, accepted in 1999. This frequently stressed traditional values and a positive attitude towards the Catholic Church.²⁴ The document actually utilised the most important points of Catholic social thought, such as the principle of subsidiarity. This government extended the duration of maternity leave in 2000.

The new social-democratic coalition of 2001 brought back the previous, shorter periods of maternity leave. The real value of family benefits was reduced and the government abrogated the birth grant. Interestingly, after the right-wing, conservative coalition took power in 2005, it was again the extension of maternity leaves that became their priority.

6. Family policies today

When comparing their long-term tendencies, we find that family policies in the two countries can be classified into two different forms of "familialism" on the basis of their historical legacies and present situation. We will first describe child support payments and then childcare institutions. We will briefly compare the level of female employment, birth rates and social inclusion/exclusion under the two forms of familialism to evaluate the possible impact of these policies.

Family support payments

In Hungary, the socialist-liberal coalition that was re-elected in 2006 soon began to reform the family support system. It followed the social-democratic vision of extended universalism and thus abolished the means-tested childcare assistance and also severely curtailed the family

24. *Raport o sytuacji polskich rodzin*, Kancelaria Prezesa Rady Ministrów, Biuro Pełnomocnika do Spraw Rodziny, Warszawa 1998, for instance p. 158, pp. 183-186, p. 200.

tax allowance. In fact, both were "included" in the former system of universal family allowance. This was an important step in the direction of abolishing the "two-track" system of family support. Poor families did not have to apply for this assistance, but received it automatically as a family allowance. Better-off families only received a tax allowance in addition to the family allowance if they had 3 or more children. Further, the highest tax-allowance was significantly reduced (4000 HUF/child/month, approx. 16 Euros).

At the same time, the rather complex system of TGYÁS, GYED for employed parents, and GYES and GYET for those without employment remained in place. The former system clearly privileged better-off families. However, the universally available GYES and GYET were both set at the level of the minimum pension (27.130 HUF, approx. 108 Euros in 2008) so that even with the help of family allowance (11.700 HUF, 46 Euros for the first child and increasing with the number of children), it was more on par with social assistance than an income sufficient to maintain a family. In the following table, we summarize the system of family support in Hungary. In order to "activate" women with children, this government also made it possible to work full-time when receiving GYES, and part-time under GYET.

In Poland, the most recent reform (2006) prolonged the basic duration of maternity leave to 18 months. However, the two weeks added to maternity leave do not change the situation much. The extended part of the leave would have to be universally available or at least available on the basis of insurance if it is not to remain far less generous than the same systems in Hungary, especially since most families are no longer entitled to family allowances. However, compared to the previous governments, the one formed by PiS (Law and Justice) in 2005 was the most dynamic in reforming family policy. In addition to extending the maternity allowance, a new birth grant (so-called 'becikowe') was introduced.²⁵ Finally, it also introduced tax deductions for families with children just at the end of its term in office. The biggest increase in overall family support since the beginning of transformation took place with the rhetoric of pro-natalism under the Kaczynski brothers.

25. Ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 2005 r. o zmianie ustawy o świadczeniach rodzinnych [Act of 29 December 2005 amending the Act on Family Allowances].

Table 3 Maternity and parental leave systems in Hungary and Poland in 2007^{*}

Name of payment,	Eligible person	Length of payment	Amount as % of gross average income ^{**}	Eligibility criteria	Possibility of employment
HUNGARY					
Maternity leave (TGYÁS)	Mother	24 weeks	70% of previous income	180 days of employment	No
Extended employment based parental leave (GYED)	Mother or father	2 years (after TGYÁS)	70% of previous income with ceiling of 50.85%	180 days of employment	No
Extended universal parental leave (GYES)	Mother or father or grandparent	3 years	Minimum pension = 15.04%	None	Yes, when the child reaches one year of age, up to 8 hours/day.
Parental leave for large families (GYET)	Mother or father	From the 3 rd until the 8 th birthday of the youngest child	Minimum pension = 15.04%	At least three children, youngest under 8.	Yes, up to 4 hours/day.
POLAND					
Maternity leave	Mother and father. 14 weeks are compulsory for mother, father can take the rest	18 – 28 weeks depending on number of children	100% of previous salary	180 days of previous employment	No
Extended parental leave	Mother or father	2 years	16.15%	180 days of previous employment	No

^{*} Welfare transfer payments are usually calculated as a per cent of the minimum pension in Hungary. This amounted to HUF 27130, which is equivalent to EUR 108.52 at an exchange rate of 250 Hungarian Forints (HUF) to 1 Euro.

^{**} Gross average income in Hungary in 2007 was HUF 180300, which is equivalent to EUR 721.20 calculated at an exchange rate of 1 Euro to 250 HUF.

6.2. Child support services

As mentioned above, the beginning of the 1990s saw the decentralisation of responsibility for social services in both countries. However, while in Poland local authorities became responsible for financing kindergartens and crèches, in Hungary local governments have to bear the cost of maintaining and repairing the buildings but care work is financed from the central budget. In Poland, municipalities facing financial difficulties

Table 4 Family allowances and additional parental payments in Poland and Hungary in 2007 (with income percentages)

Name of payment,	Eligible person	Duration of payment	Amount as % of average gross income	Eligibility criteria	Possibility of employment
HUNGARY					
Maternity grant	Mother	One-off payment after birth	33.85% (= 225% of minimum pension)	Mother has to see district nurse 4 times during pregnancy	No
Family allowance	Mother or father	From birth to the age of 18 (if studying until the 25 th birthday)	6% / child increases progressively with the number of children	For handicapped children and slightly higher for sole parents	Yes
Tax allowance	Mother or father	Same as family allowance	2.21% /child	Income from employment	Yes
POLAND					
Birth allowance ('becikowe')	Mother or father	One-off payment after birth	40.37% per child	No	Yes
Birth allowance (additional)	Mother, or father under certain circumstances	One-off payment after birth	40.37% per child	Income under 20.2 % of average gross wage	Yes
Family allowance	Mother or father	From birth to the age of 18, if studying until the 24 th birthday	1.9% per child, increases with the age and number of children	Income under 20.2% of average gross wage	Yes
Tax deductions	Paid per child: for mother or father	Per child from birth up to 18 years (up to 25 if the child studies)	46.2% per child per year	Paying taxes	Yes

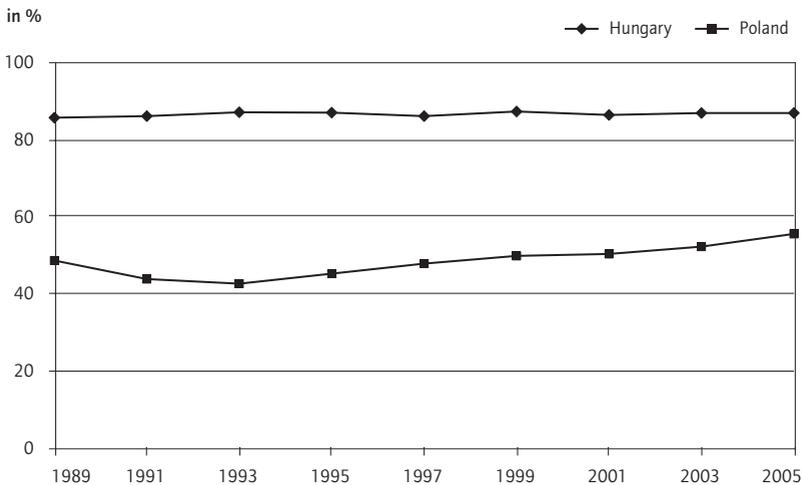
either introduced high fees or restricted, or liquidated their crèches. In Hungary there is a discrepancy between the capacity of rich and poor municipalities to maintain crèches and kindergartens.

In both countries, these reforms resulted in a decrease in the percentage of children attending crèches. In Poland the percentage dropped from about 5 per cent in 1985 to just below 2 per cent in 2001 (GUS 1986; GUS

2002). In Hungary, the percentage decreased to around 9 per cent, compared to 13.7 per cent at the beginning of the 1990s (Fodor 2004; OECD 2004). Thus, while in Hungary the ratio shows little change, in Poland this service can be described as almost non-existent.

A similar difference, albeit with higher enrolment rates, can be observed in the case of kindergartens. Figure 1 shows the long-term trend in Hungary with more than 80 per cent of children between the ages of 3 and 6 years enrolled in kindergarten, while in Poland enrolments have never exceeded 60 per cent.

Figure 1 Net enrolment rates for children aged 3-6, 1989-2005



Source: TransMONEE database

Together with the development of crèches and kindergartens, the childcare services provided in primary schools became an important means of helping mothers to work full time under state-socialism. In Hungary, 30 per cent of children were using the afternoon services provided by schools by the 1980s (Szikra 2008). After the transition period, this number increased to 35 per cent and is now stable at 40 per cent. Schools compete with each other in the provision of various afternoon activities. These are only partly financed by the central state. Most resources are provided by the municipalities and the parents. This creates big differences in the quality of afternoon services offered by schools, often even within one town or area (Szikra 2008).

In Poland, afternoon childcare services became very rare following the collapse of communism. Although there is no reliable data on the dynamics of change that occurred here, it is common knowledge that municipalities relieved their financial problems by liquidating the afternoon care services for school children. Although no statistics exist on the afternoon services, it is quite usual that children would be cared for by their grandparents or other family members. Private nannies are still only available to those with high incomes.

The most important reason for the significant difference in childcare is that in Poland municipalities are not obliged to provide such services for children under 3 years of age. In Hungary, it is obligatory for cities to set up crèches and for all local governments to provide kindergartens and schools with afternoon care. Thus, although there are major regional differences, Hungarian municipalities fulfil this task. Because the central state completely cut their funding, municipalities in Poland rarely run crèches and afternoon services. This became more prominent in the public debate on family issues during the last right-wing coalition's term in office. However, the debate was more concerned with extending the availability of care centres for children of 3-6 years of age as there is still much to be done in this area. Finally, as extending the availability of publicly provided childcare has always been postulated by feminist NGOs, this was overshadowed by the heated debate over reproduction laws in Poland and therefore seldom prioritised.

Given the fact that less than 40 percent of the families in Poland receive financial support following the expiry of maternity leave²⁶, we can conclude that the state implicitly locates not only the responsibility but also the financing of childcare within the family. We can thus label Polish family policies as representing the ideal-type of "implicit familialism", that 'neither offers de-familialisation nor actively supports the caring function of the family through any kind of familialistic policy [and where] (...) the family will be the primary caretaker since there are no alternatives at hand' (Leitner 2003: 359).

Hungary, in contrast, offers multi-layered support for families with children. Access to kindergarten and afternoon-care at schools is essentially available to all children, and crèches are also more available

26. Our calculations are based on the statistics of Balcerczak-Paradowska 2004.

than in Poland. The different forms of extended maternity leave make it possible to stay at home with children for a longer period. Because of this choice between paid maternity leave and/or services, we can call the Hungarian system “optional familialism”. However, as we will show in the next section, the possibility of choice is not equally accessible to all strata of society.

Hungary and Poland both pursue familialistic policies. In both these countries, the state sees families as the primary carers of children, the disabled and the elderly. This care is overwhelmingly provided by women and there is no policy to encourage men to share such responsibilities. The major difference is that in Hungary the state provides financial support for parents who stay at home with small children, whereas in Poland such support only exists for families with infants. As demonstrated above, both types of familialism already existed under state-socialism. In Poland, the rapid economic transition and general withdrawal of the state strengthened this situation, whereas in Hungary family policies remained more or less in place. Although the level of universal payments deteriorated after 1990, no sharp fall was experienced in the access to services. While in Hungary society mobilised for the restoration of more generous family policies, in Poland nobody protested, at least not as massively and effectively as in Hungary, when the short-lived improvements were discontinued.

7. Possible policy consequences and the role of the EU

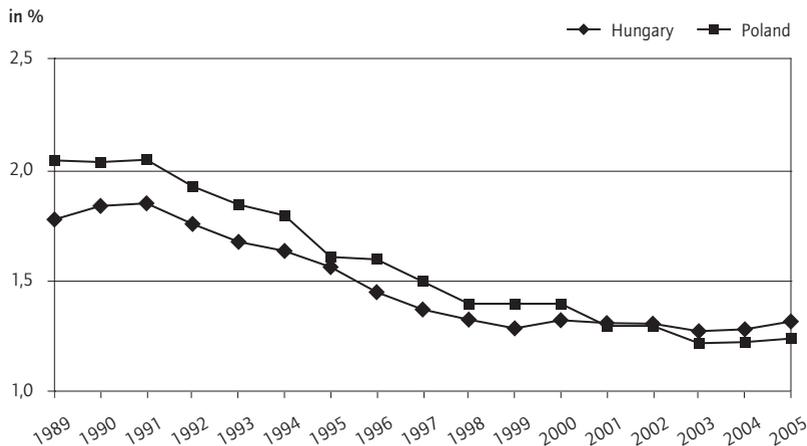
Familialistic policies are often said to contribute to the low female labour market participation rates and to a drop in fertility rates in the Western part of Europe, where the countries that already had a well developed system of care support did better in this new situation (Lewis 1992; 1993; Folbre 1996; Leira 2002; Hantrais 2004). In Hungary, long maternity leave is clearly an “escape” from unemployment for less educated women. This is partly why we find a low economic activity rate for women (53.8 per cent) in Hungary coupled with a relatively low female unemployment rate (5.4 per cent in 2004).²⁷ Here, it is true that different types of provisions help to create different ‘maternity tracks’ (Fodor 2005). In

²⁷ Economic activity is calculated as the number of employed and unemployed. Source: Hungarian Statistical Office, Employment Survey, 2004 and Polish Statistical Office, Employment Survey 2004, LABOURSTA.

Poland women were more affected by persistent high unemployment rates (about 20 per cent) than men (a difference of about 2 percentage points for 2003). The weakness of family services and low family allowances contributed to the development of female poverty. In other words, faced by the lack of support on all fronts, women in Poland seemed to be more heavily burdened with the provision of care. It must be stressed that these countries had no systematic policies aimed at increasing female participation in paid labour and family policies were far from consistent in this respect.

A dramatic drop in fertility rates has been observed in the region during the last decade, and Poland and Hungary are no exceptions. While Poland had one of the highest birth rates in the region at the beginning of the 1990s, it had the lowest rate in 2005. In other words, the implicitly familialistic policy, coupled with the dramatic economic and political changes that occurred, contributed to a serious fall in demographic growth. In contrast, Hungary experienced less dramatic changes, but this country had lower fertility rates at the beginning of the period. The decline here was not as steep as in Poland.

Figure 2 Birth rates in Poland and Hungary, 1989 - 2005



Source: TransMONEE database

To sum up, while the fertility rates and economic activity rates of women seemed to be negatively affected in both familialistic policy types, the process that took place in the case of Hungary is more ambiguous. While

in Poland women generally responded by postponing having children or decided to have fewer or no children, in Hungary this decision is highly dependent on social class and labour market prospects. In both countries, the situation of poor families is hindered by limited access to childcare services, especially crèches, and in Hungary this is coupled with the segregation of the poor and the Roma in childcare services and primary education.

The European Union has become a new ‘actor’ in domestic politics in the post-state-socialist countries. Disparities can be observed in respect to the issue of gender mainstreaming, which is often perceived as one of the few successful areas of pan-European cooperation in the area of social policy. A common conviction seems to underline the benefits of adopting the existing legal framework for gender equality (including important family laws, e.g. parental leave for both parents). However, many studies raise the problem of the relatively little attention paid to these issues in the accession process (Bretherton 2001; Petho 2003), which partially results from the general EU trend of treating gender equality issues as ‘low politics’ (Bretherton 2001). In other words, while the legal systems of the new EU members have been amended in line with the EU gender equality legislation, the practical consequences of such a step are hardly observable and the everyday practice of gender inequality has not diminished significantly (Nowakowska 2000).

In the future, the EU can assert its influence through structural funds, which often provide active support for various forms of equal treatment, including equal treatment in the workplace. Finally, the Lisbon Strategy and its childcare services targets are more and more frequently used as an argument for increasing the availability and affordability of childcare services in these two countries. As this is often related to the objective of increasing the general economic activity of these populations, it may eventually improve the position of women in terms of equality in the labour market, even if this was not the policy-makers explicit objective.

8. Conclusions

Following the collapse of state socialism, the new wave of research on social and economic development in these countries tended to underline how they differ from the long-established capitalist democracies. As the dissemination of knowledge progresses, the formerly sharp East-West

divide is clearly weakening. This allows us to consider how former state-socialist countries could be included in comparative research that has been conducted in capitalist societies since the 1970s. After reviewing the most important concepts of this work, the most significant elements were selected to further analyse the development of family policies in two post-state socialist countries: Hungary and Poland. We found that both the concept of citizenship and the analysis of power-resources are essential tools for comparing welfare arrangements under state socialism. These assumptions are based on considerations of social and class stratification. We believe that these should be extended to include the analysis of gender-relations and the important issue of ethnic minorities, especially the situation of the Roma in Hungary. We found familialism the most comprehensive tool for grasping the state-family relationship in a gender-sensitive analysis. We demonstrated how different familialistic regimes developed in Hungary and Poland during the 20th century and how they crystallised during the period of transformation and in the recent past. The notion of familialism was found to be successful at identifying a variety of family policy mixes and the common familialising trend in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. In other words, it makes more sense to talk about different paths of the familialisation of policy in the CEEC. These paths are more the product of the historical development of family policy in these countries than of a one-sided process of 're-traditionalisation'. We focussed on parental leave schemes, different kinds of family benefits and childcare services. Our most significant conclusions can be summarised in three basic points.

First, we observed that the two countries, though coming from the same state-socialist path, have very different family policies. In Hungary, families are supported not only by the multi-tiered system of cash benefits, but are also offered relatively readily available and affordable, public childcare services. In Poland, in contrast, the system of financial support is aimed only at the poorest part of society, and the provision of care services is meagre. In the interests of systematic analysis and following theoretical considerations, we labelled these two versions of familialism: 'optional familialism' referring to the 'richer' Hungarian family policies and 'implicit familialism' to characterise the implicit nexus of responsibility for care within the family in Poland. This is not without important limitations, especially for the analysis of the stratification dimension. In Hungary, for example, the everyday practice of using childcare centres and the bifurcated system of parental leave payments favour the wealthier part of society and exclude the poor, including the

Roma population. In Poland, in contrast, only the lower-income groups have received (marginal) support, however, the recent introduction of tax deductions might lead to further divisions within society.

Second, we argue that the roots of these differences can be traced in the history of welfare policies of the two countries. The sources of ‘implicit familism’ in Poland and ‘optional familism’ in Hungary can be observed in the history of welfare institutions in these countries prior to World War II. These characteristics did not disappear with state socialism. Indeed, some features crystallised during this period. Moreover, just as the pre-war welfare institutions that communist regimes had to deal with after World War II were at different stages of development, the new neo-liberal elites had to acknowledge the state of development of post-state-socialist family policies (Szikra 2006). Thus, even when the reformers tried to introduce more serious changes, they were often unsuccessful. One example of this was the attempt to restrict access to parental leave allowances in Hungary in the 1990s. The mobilisation of society, especially of those who lost access to the benefits (middle class women), was successful enough to contribute to the abrogation of the principle of means-testing in the late 1990s (Goven 2000).

Third, this study touches on the possible effects of particular types of policies. The most general conclusion was that most families in these countries cannot afford to have only one breadwinner, so the decision to forego having a child would prevail over giving up employment. In other words, faced with the choice, whether to have a child or resign from professional carrier, women tend to delay having a child. Consequently, when we compared the dynamics of changes in demographic trends and employment, the decrease in fertility rates appeared more dynamic than negative changes in labour market. The main difference between the two countries was that Poland experienced a more dynamic decrease in its fertility rate than Hungary during the 1990s. Changes in the labour market were also less disruptive for Hungary than for Poland, mainly due to the widespread unemployment in the latter country. Finally, in contrast to the Hungarian case, Poland demonstrated higher unemployment among women than among men. This could be related to the marginal state support for the family caring function in Poland, though such a conclusion requires further research. All in all, the economic activity rates are very low in these two countries partly as a consequence of familialistic character of policies. As has often been stated in “Western” countries, familialistic policies do not mobilise or support

entry, re-entry, or the retention of persons in the labour market.

Conclusions of this nature require the substantiation of further research, which could also lead to formulating a thesis on the possible impact of particular types of policies in the future. This kind of research necessitates a multidimensional, and therefore demanding analysis in which the family and welfare policy of new EU members with a communist past requires more attention. Importantly, following theoretical consideration of the main approaches to the analysis of welfare institutions, we argue that the former state-socialist countries and the "Western" countries should be studied together. Overcoming the East-West division should be the next step in the development of comparative social policy.

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