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**Title:** Reforming Familialisms? Family policies in Europe East-West

**Abstract of a proposed paper:**

For more than a decade one could observe the raising interest in family policies among Western scholars. It has been raised both due to the demographic changes, as well as because of the challenge of globalisation. Researchers started to analyse how the countries differ in their institutional arrangement of family policies and how they adapt to the new situation. Most generally, countries in the West were observed to depart from the male-breadwinner model, as the countries are trying to mobilise potential labour force, and women are one of the biggest potential group to mobilize

At the same time, post-communist countries do not follow the trend of (what Ann Orloff has named) "Farewell to Maternalism", but pursue the policies of re-familialisation. Though several authors already gave their attention to this problem, they – again – tended to treat this region as a monolith. However, if one takes a closer look at the shape of childcare policies in the Central and Eastern Europe, it turns out they are different to a considerable extent. Several recent studies have suggested that variety of family policy mixes can be observed in the Eastern Europe. The next step would be to check, thus, if the internal variety of the former communist block would be confirmed when confronting them with the Western Europe. Put differently, maybe the internal variety within the Eastern Europe would disappear if comparison is extended to the Western countries. After more than twenty years since the fall of communism it is time to overcome the usual West-East division.

The main question is therefore, what would be the picture of family policies in the wider Europe? Can we cluster the countries from the enlarged European Union in some more defined policy models? If the whole Europe is faced with similar challenges with regard to population ageing and general demographic pressures, can we talk about convergence (both in the East and the West)? If we can distinguish models of family policies *beyond* East-West comparison, are the modes of reforms also similar *within* the particular family policy regime?

In order to answer these questions my idea is to propose a comparison between and within the three pairs of countries: each pair would consist of one country from the former communist block and the Western European country. For comparative reasons, I would use the framework of *varieties of familialism*. Therefore, the first pair would comprise Poland and Italy (both representing implicit familialism), the second one: Hungary and Sweden (optional familialism) and the third pair: the Czech Republic and Germany (explicit familialism).

My hypothesis is that there are more similarities within these pairs than between the countries from the Western and the Eastern block with regard to the constitutive and substantial characteristics of 2 particular policy regimes. However, *within* each pair of countries the East/West division was clear with regard to the *direction* of recent family policy *reforms*: while the West European countries (each within the pair, with different dynamics) tend to reform their policies into the direction of de-familialisation/individualization, the post-communist countries perform the politics of re-

familialisation. The basic reason for that lays in the discursive legacy of state-socialism that brings negative connotations for the goals of gender equality and feminism. Therefore, while the post-communist countries are distributed to various family policy clusters beyond East/West division (and this confirms the variety of policy mixes), it is direction of recent family policy reforms, where we can observe difference between East and West European countries.