

Still Main Breadwinners but Secondary Parents? Parenthood Norms and Policies Shaping Attitudes about Involved Fatherhood in European Post-Socialist Societies

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Abstract

This study investigates the drivers of family policy change in less developed European societies. The main research question is the following: what have been the major societal and policy factors shaping family policy reform trajectories in more fragile societies of Europe (mostly Southern and Eastern European countries)? The research attempts to bring some conceptual, methodological, and empirical novelties as well. While previous studies concentrated on the lived experiences of women related to the perception of family policy ideas, this research has a focus on the lived experiences of men; we consider men not only from the traditional heteronormative as well as male breadwinner perspectives but also remaining open to diversity of masculinities and male roles in paid labour, care, and family settings. In addition, while previous research concentrated on North-Western Europe, this study investigates societal factors driving family policy changes in the less developed European societies. The main method of the empirical research is congruence analysis: first we (re)construct theoretically anchored ideal types of family policy changes and then, by using official documents, legal sources, and publicly available international institutional data we investigate the closeness of the more fragile European societies to the particular ideal types. The preliminary findings of the research underline two indirect factors that might be the drivers of family policy changes and shape the role of men in the change: the relative status and prestige of public education employment and the strength of collaborative governance mechanisms in shaping broader family and gender equality policies.