

The background of the slide features a light beige, textured surface with faint, organic patterns. On the left side, a dark brown branch extends upwards, bearing a large, dried, translucent leaf. On the right side, another dark brown branch extends horizontally, ending in a smaller, dried leaf. The overall aesthetic is natural and scholarly.

Gender, Family and Social Policy in Transition: The Case of BiH

**Prof. Dr. Sanela Bašić
University of Sarajevo
Faculty of Political Sciences**



Theoretical Perspectives On Family, Family Policy, Gender & (Their) Interceptions



What is Family?

- By sex/gender and generation differentiated small group
- with specific self-understanding/identification
- whose relations are characterized by cooperation and solidarity
- whose establishment/inauguration is of ceremonial character and
- which fulfills certain functions of biological and social reproduction (Milić, 2002., Segelan, 2009.)



Family as a key dimension of political intervention in modern time

- “Until then (since late 1960s), state policies dealt mainly with demographic and epidemiological problems: birth rates and public health. But with the increasing number of divorces, illegitimate children born, and the increasing incidence of infertility, researchers from various fields were invited to rally around the bed on which the family was allegedly in danger. It was thus decided that from now on private life would have to be monitored and observed to a much greater extent. So, instead of listening and trying to understand, we began to give expert opinions on psychological and mental life, mental states, norms and deviations. In short, we have tried to control the banality of everyday life” (Rudinesko, 2010:15)



Form (social) control to welfare/wellbeing

- (New) legitimization basis for public intervention in private/family life: welfare/wellbeing
- Different welfare regimes, but ONE shared feature: private/public divide
- Feminist critique (Pateman, 1989., Fraser 1987)
- “Silent Revolution of Women“ (Goldin, 2006)



What is Family Policy?

- “State interventions towards family resources aimed at improvement position/status of families (at risk) and influence on family structure“ (Puljiz, 2002)
- Ambiguity and controversies with regard to motives, typologies, focus and content of family policy/policies



Motives and Goals of Family Policy

- Kaufmann (2007): seven arguments in favour of/for Family Policy
 - die familieninstitutionelle Argumentation (family as a *sue generis* value)
 - die Bevölkerungspolitische Argumentation (**demographic**)
 - Die wirtschaftspolitische Argumentation (**economic-political**)
 - Die gesellschaftspolitische Argumentation (**socio-political**)
 - Die sozialpolitische Argumentation (**social policy**)
 - Die frauenpolitische Argumentation (**gender-political**)
 - Die kinderpolitische Argumentation (**child-political**)



Family Policy Models

- Esping Anderson (1990)- three types of welfare state
- Lewis (1992): three types of family policy regimes
- Mishra et al. (2007): four key strategies for developing family policy
 - **the carer strategy, the earner strategy, the choice strategy and the earner-carer strategy**
 - +
- Concept of **Defamilisation**: degree to which adult individuals can maintain socially acceptable standard of living INDEPENDANTLY from family relationships
- **Family as an institution** or family as a **group of individuals** (Maetzke and Ostner, 2010)



Content of Family Policy

- Concept of **NEEDS**: a life-cycle perspective—needs of
 - minor child in childhood
 - parents in reconciling work and life
 - adult family members in old age
- Concept of **SOCIAL PROBLEMS**
 - *Behaviour (neglect and abuse, alcoholism, etc.)*
 - Circumstances (poverty, unemployment)



Family Policy Content

- Kaufmann (2007):
 - legal interventions,
 - economic interventions,
 - ecological interventions
 - interventions directed at improvement or rehabilitation of specific capacities of family members



(Dis)Continuity Family Policy in BiH



Socialist Heritage: socio-economic context

- New (communist) society: industrialization, + socialist social policy
- Change in the position of women through incorporation into working force: raising levels of qualifications, raising levels of working women (industrijske radnice) in hand with vertical and horizontal segregation in the area of work/employment (Blagojević, 1991., Klevicki, 1996.)



Socialist Heritage: Socia/Family Policy

- Gendered social/family policy to ease/support women in combining dual roles (as mothers/care givers and workers)
 - Child benefits, maternity leave, child care
- Men not adressed as workers and fathers
- Specific gender regime = combination of economic emancipation (in public sphere) and traditional, patriarchal relations (in private sphere)

Post-Socialist Family Policy





Monetary/Financial Benefits: Child Benefit/Allowance

- **Accessibility**: universality principle (for families that qualify under specific conditions)
- **Targeted populations**: (employed and unemployed) parents, children without parental care and families with children with disabilities, single parents
- **General Conditions**: residence status
- **Specific Conditions**: age limit and income/property census



Monetary/Financial Benefits:

Maternity Benefits- Working Mothers

- FBiH: Labor Law stipulates the right to income compensation during maternity leave, but within social assistance/help scheme and at levels set arbitrary (as decided by cantonal regulations)
 - the level of maternity benefits varies 50-90% of earned monthly income in last 6 months prior to child birth
- RS/BD: Labor Law stipulates the right to income compensation during maternity leave
 - the level of benefit defined as average wage in last 12 months prior to child birth



Monetary/Financial Benefits:

Maternity Benefits- Unemployed Mothers

- F BiH: not available in all cantons, duration: six months, level 10-35% of average salary in the given canton
- RS: since 2017, unemployed mother for 12/18 months, benefit level: 405 KM
- BD: three months, 15% of average salary in BD (cca 100 KM)



Evaluation of Monetary Benefits: Is the system efficient?

- Adequacy Criteria: UN definition of adequate living standard : living standard that enables individual/family physical, psychological and social NEEDS to be met
 - Minimal needs for nutrition/food, clothing, housing, education, health and social care, communication and participation in society
 - Minimal needs of children are not absolute and universal, but rather fluctuate during childhood



Problematic points

- 1. Access limited to the most deprived families: university principle compromised by tiding benefits to property census
- 2. Level of property census & level of benefits arbitrarily defined with no reference to any official indicator of living standard (including poverty line) – poverty rate among families with three+ children 43,02% (Bašić, 2013)




Problematic points

- 3. Monetary benefits for natalist Goals-pronatalist family policy (RS)
- 4. Systemic discrimination through irregular payments (FBiH)
- 5. Maternity benefit as social assistance not as right from employment/work (FBiH)



(Maternity/Parental) Leave

- Maternity leave for biological/foster care/adopted parents + non-full time working scheme up to child`s first/third year, protection of breastfeeding mothers
- FBH: during pregnancy, child birth and child care womam has a right to maternity leave up to 12 months in continuity. Father might exersize this right, starting from 42 day after child birth
- RS: + 18 months for twins, third and any next child. Father might exersize this right, starting from 60 day after child brith
- BD: parental leave, but targets mothers and only in special cicrumstances fathers



(Maternity/Parental) Leave: is system gender sensitive?

- (New) Familialism: child care as female responsibility
- Move towards gender egalitarian approach to parenting leave symbolic



Child Care Services

- Contemporary discourse on institutionalized childcare determined by gender equality (work-life balance) and pedagogical needs of children (child's life chances)



Child Care Services

- 320 preschool/childcare institutions – 22.900 children – 6.815 employees – cca 4.000 children not admitted due to insufficient capacities – less than **10%** of children covered by pre-school EDU
- If children who attend compulsory pre-school programs (last preschool year) added, **15%** coverage rate
- Childcare used primarily by two breadwinners families/employed, just 2% of children of unemployed parents



Child Care Services

- Affordable, high quality childcare as a system crucial in enabling women to participate on labor market, reduction of risk of poverty and raising life quality
- The state gave up the responsibility to provide, responsibility transferred to family/privatized
- (New)Familism: strenghtening rather than weakening relations of family dependancy which can be harmful for autonomy and freedom for women



Instead of Conclusion

- Family Policy system shall be understood in the context of mainstream ideology of gender relations
- Community ideology promoted maternalistic model of family policy (women as care givers and wage workers)
- Liberal ideology of post-socialist period declaratively favors gender equality, but in effect strenghtens new familism



Moving Forward...

- Pillars of Female-Friendly Family Policy:
- **High quality early childhood education and care**
- **Paid leave for both women and men**
- **Monetary benefits**



Thank you.

sanela.basic@fpn.unsa.ba