



The Impact of Family and Society on Personality Formation

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In our research, we tried to find a quantitative answer to the question about the role of society and family in the individual development. As part of the review, the prevailing views on this matter have been singled out. The question was also narrowed down to the relationship of family policy and child development using the methodology of grounded theory. We have formulated the hypothesis that state and society intervention into intrafamily relations can be monitored by the percentage of children's time spent in the family and outside the family, as well as by the government incentives offered to families with children. Based on the literature review, it was hypothesized that society would not benefit from large-scale public intervention into the affairs of families with young children. The hypothesis was later confirmed however, it remains implicit. At the same time, the effect becomes more obvious in the historical perspective. The analysis of the family policies of developed countries at the end of the last century showed that the scale of public intervention into family affairs was smaller and the effect was positive. The scale is increasing now and the positive effect of public intervention into intrafamily relationships is being lost.

Key words: *Child welfare, family policy, earlier development, statistics, developmental psychology.*

Introduction

Personality, family, and society are referred to as different elements existing in a common system. It is obvious that despite their interconnected relationship, they are still different. It would be wrong to consider these elements in a simple hierarchical sense as a society is formed by individuals. Family is an intermediary between the individual and society as it is the first step in uniting individuals and a social unit. It is obvious that individuals form society, but



personality is formed by society in the development of an individual. This can be exemplified by the kindergarten system: a child spends a lot of time in the kindergarten studying, sleeping, and playing (while parents stay at work, which is more than 8 hours a day). In kindergartens, children are educated in accordance with the society's moral conceptions. This is an example of the direct societal impact on the individual development. There are also other channels used by society in order to provide the individual with the established rules and ideas about what is right and what is wrong (Saribeyli, 2018). Another difficult issue is related to the degree of linearity in the society additivity. It is not clear whether individuals form or make up a society. It may also be true that there is no influence and ontogenesis is predetermined by archetypes and development is only a mere semblance. It is difficult to solve the issue related to the possibility of social reality construction. Although society phylogenesis determines the ontogenesis of its members, the phylogenesis of individuals can't be influenced. Thus, the whole complexity of the hierarchical relationship of the individual-family-society disintegrates into a linear universal dependence on archetypes. It is difficult to adopt such an opinion. Evidence shows that society can change very quickly. The rate of social change can be tracked by objective indicators. Thus, Howard Zehr (2019) investigates the development of criminal patterns and finds correspondence with the development of society. However, it should be emphasized that the change in criminal patterns demonstrates precisely the qualitative changes in society. Dramatic changes in the revolutions after the First World War can serve as another example. Ancient empires gave rise to many new nations with an obviously different culture, which was reflected in the monuments of material and spiritual culture. In this regard, P. Sorokin could be correct in saying that social transformations are accelerated by disasters (Sorokin & Horowitz, 2017).

Personality formation is a complicated issue. In many publications, it is described as "healthy" and "normal" (Freud, 2018). This is a value-based and evaluative question – what is considered healthy and normal? Everyone agrees that normal personality formation is what every society is interested in (Boyd & Bee, 2015). However, it is very difficult to reach an agreement on the issue related to the "normality". Many scholars agree in supporting the idea that childhood is the time most affected by external impact (McCulloch & Joshi, 2001). Thus, since we are talking about the individual's childhood, the importance of the family becomes apparent.

Modernity sets new challenges for revising the needs of children and their optimal development or prosperity. In the context of the growing understanding of human evolution and the dynamics of early life conditions, we are ready to evaluate how development paths are affected by these early life factors. First, childhood contexts change from generation to generation. For example, today many children in developed countries have less independent play and rarely play outside in general compared to children in the early twentieth century (Sandberg & Hofferth, 1999; Juster et al., 2004). Young children spend more time in front of electronic devices or in institutions without their family (McGroder, 2000; Roberts et al., 2005).



According to recent studies, these shifts do not foster the well-being of children. But what theoretical basis is used for evaluating early processes that affect human potential? We believe that the conditions for children should be developed based on evolutionary views on their needs and development paths. This includes selective pressure that was experienced by our hominid and primates ancestors –, and caused specific social, emotional and physical needs. If these needs are satisfied, children have an opportunity to fully develop. Morss (2017) discusses the evolutionary approach to the development of the individual in childhood. However, the authors accept that such criticism of developmental psychology is due to the fact that this approach has been used for a long time. In fact, in the works of Darwin, there were some grounds for the approach that later became known as developmental psychology. However, it cannot be said that neither psychobiology nor ethology applied a fresh and modern biological approach to the phenomena of developmental psychology. The work by J. Piaget (1973) can be regarded as a stronger social focus on the development of an individual in the outline of “social construction”. The approach of developmental psychology to the issues related to child care (Singer, 2017) and the prevention of antisocial behavior (Patterson et al., 2017) is actualized in a number of relatively new works. Bjorklund et al. (2015) present an up-to-date review of evolutionary ideas in developmental psychology.

Although the postulates underlying this research might seem controversial, they can be backed by the fact that the indicators of child well-being, even in developed countries such as the United States, are not encouraging (UNICEF, 2007). This can be explained by care practices that do not meet children's optimal development needs. Special attention should be paid to the practices of personality formation in childhood as it can significantly contribute to societal reformation. Even in developed countries, the situation of children is far from trouble-free. The latter is a topic of the present work (as a marker of an unacceptable situation), and an area of a common concern. This is because social practices regarding the development of children have the greatest chance to change the society. Undoubtedly, the United States is not the only country with poor child welfare indicators, but we will focus on the data provided by a reputable organization of UNICEF and properly documented. We believe that the situation may be changed through a wider application of ethology, neurology, and recent advances in the science of the human brain and consciousness in the matter of a qualitatively better upbringing of individuals in the new society through the efforts of society to educate parents. In this research, we discuss the results of the studies that include the attempts of directive social intervention into the family policy, child development through the early development of the child’s brain, and an early intervention program as part of a longer-term “parenting education” program. The main focus is on the use of neuroscience discourse in family policy to create the basis for a new state control over parents. An assessment tool to determine the success rate of such practices is also offered. This work empirically traces family policy trends in high-income countries since the 1980s.



The data concerning the income of families with children, family-related leave, pre-school education and care have been collected and analyzed. According to the results, the family policy was developed in several stages in terms of both content and time period. The “Emergence Phase” (Lohmann & Zagel, 2016) is characterized by cash and tax incentives for families and maternity leave. The “Consolidation Phase” (Lohmann & Zagel, 2016) provides state contributes to the family policy portfolio. This is achieved by diversifying family-related leave and increasing child care services through increased overall spending on family policies and the provision of financial support to families through the tax system. However, there is no implacable development both within and between countries. This is encouraging as the role of the family does not decrease and the role of society does not universally increase. These trends are different in different countries and this creates favorable conditions for the analysis and the selection of optimal strategies for the intervention of society into individual development. The multilevel development model of any phenomenon suggests that the analysis of family policy should be focused on the study of both succession and changes. The literature analysis given in the introduction allows concluding that there are many fruitful directions for further research. The hypothesis of our research is that the child and society as a whole will not benefit from minimizing the family role in the triune relationship “family-child-society”.

Materials and Methods

The insufficiently developed family policy is undoubtedly associated with a limited conceptual and methodological cross-fertilization between the areas of comparative study of wellbeing and family policy. According to the vast amount of comparative literature on other social policy areas, it could be possible to evaluate the evolution of the family policy components from at least two methodological aspects. First, through an in-depth historical analysis of a small number of cases characterized by different or similar characteristics. Secondly, through the consideration of a large number of countries with the use of quantitative data and a secondary analysis of historical and socio-economic elements. A research design with a large sample (with a large number of nations in the sample) can follow a regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990) or a trend (Wilensky, 1975) approach. There is no agreement on the best approach in this area. The comparative literature devoted to different states is characterized by long-held debates between scholars offering taxonomies and varieties and those who are primarily interested in global long-term trends and patterns. Today, scientists are refocusing on major trends, trying to pinpoint the elements of continuity and change, rather than relying on the types of regimes. In the literature, this development reflects extensive liberalization processes that lead socially-oriented states in similar directions, thereby blurring some of the differences between different models of well-being standards (Streeck & Thelen, 2005; Hay & Wincott, 2012). We use the approach of describing and determining general trends in a large sample. We do not carry out an in-depth historical analysis of several cases or attach countries to standards or types. The approach chosen is consistent with our goal as our intention is to see how a specific country’s



trends define and fit into a common international structure. A “trend” encompasses both temporary changes and the components or package of (family) policy at different time periods. The presented analysis is based on the extensive evidence base of anatomy and the details of family policy spending, as well as their time and place characteristics. It was a challenging task to collect the evidence base due to the volume of data and the lack of coverage for some countries in existing sources. The UNICEF statistical reports provide valuable information (UNICEF, 2007) and consider the United States in many different dimensions of children's well-being compared to other developed countries. Studies devoted to developing countries are also based on UNICEF reports (Whetten et al., 2009). Data for all European and many other countries can be found on the Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences (2019). World Bank data and other data from the open knowledge repository was used.

We supplemented this data with data from two other sources: the Comparative Family Policy Database (Gauthier, 2011) and the child benefit dataset (UNICEF annual report 2018, 2018). As for child benefits, we rely on child benefit dataset that compares the value of different types of benefits (cash benefits and benefits paid through the tax system). This is measured in terms of the average production worker's wage (APW) for a single-parent family, two-parent family and two-child family (children aged 2-7) models from 1960 to 2010. The evolution of early childhood education and care (ECEC) is measured by two indicators: spending on ECEC of children under 5 years old as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP), and the percentage of children under 3 years old who are enrolled in state child care institutions as a percentage of their age cohort. In each case, global trends are analyzed by calculating the average value of each indicator for developed countries at different time periods. The following countries are included into the analysis: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Great Britain and the USA. Unfortunately, the Eastern European countries and a number of other countries including Chile, Israel, Korea, Mexico, Turkey were excluded due to the lack of available information. There is a number of limitations in the data that reflect major insufficiency of data in the comparative family policy (Lohmann & Zagel, 2016) and the compromises related to global indicators. Firstly, since the data are taken from different sources, the compared periods do not always coincide. Let us take just one example: it turned out to be impossible to obtain reliable and comparable international information on the enrollment in ECEC before 1988. The latest dates with available data also differ. This means that parts of the analysis end at different points, although in all cases the most up-to-date information available at the time of writing was used (November 2018). Secondly, spending has changed since 1997. Consequently, the UN ECEC data on spending are comparable only in two blocks – between 1980 and 1997, as well as between 1998 and 2013.



Results and Discussion

With due regard to the limitations of our standardization and generalization system, it should be noted that there are no better alternatives. The data standardized with the use of the APW model, as well as the data on spending are not perfect for assessing the liberality of political developments (as it is recognized in the literature, e.g., Clasen & Siegel, 2007; Van Mechelen & Bradshaw, 2013). Despite the fact that they provide useful information about the trends, they should be interpreted with caution. Moreover, since the data are global, our indicators do not take into account demographic or other background changes and probable functional pressure. We know that family policy, as a social policy area, appeared in the early 20th century. It is also clear that financial transfers to families played a key role in the emerging policy. The first measure consisted of support programs for needy mothers and children, which were introduced in Europe and elsewhere in the first decade of the 20th century (Gauthier, 2011). The health and well-being of children was the major issue, especially in the context of high child mortality rates and their interpretation as related to maternal health and potential mothers' ignorance of the needs and care of children. However, there was little organized economic support for families until 1930. But within a decade after the end of World War II, state economic support for families in the form of cash incentives became a generalized characteristic of the most advanced market democracies around the world (Montanari, 2000).

Until 1960, income support for families with children was provided mainly through increased wages (usually paid to fathers), especially in continental Europe, namely Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. According to the available data, in 1960 18 countries provided financial support to families with children. Countries varied depending on the tool they selected. Between 1960 and 1980, there was a noticeable increase in the use of universal child benefits (accompanied by a smaller increase in the use of child tax benefits) and a steady decrease in the prevalence of additional child benefits related to employment. The universal transfer approach was especially favored by the Anglo-Saxon countries (Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom), as well as the countries of Northern Europe (except Denmark). In other countries, child benefits were usually directed through the tax system, or example, in Germany and the United States, or as a continuation of employment-based subsidies (Austria, Belgium, Italy, and the Netherlands). It was the latter countries that offered the most generous financial support to families. Having tracked the pattern over the next 50 years, two notable trends were identified: support for families with children became more generous and the form of support shifted towards child tax benefits. By 2010, the average replacement rate for all child benefits in the countries included in the sample was 12.1 percent of the APW (compared to 7.2 percent in 1960). However, the lists of the most and least generous countries changed significantly. Some countries of continental Europe remained relatively generous (for example, Austria, Belgium and Italy), but it was the Anglo-Saxon countries (especially Ireland, New Zealand and the UK and Germany) that significantly



increased their support for families with children over the period. In 2010, France, Japan, and Norway provided support that was significantly below average (Figure 2). The second trend shows tax system preference, which Ferrarini et al. (Ferrarini, 2006) called "child support fiscalization". This reflects a shift from universalism in child cash benefits.

Universalism was a strong and early impetus. The countries tried to create common financial support systems for families with children and eventually switched to supporting all children rather than second and/or subsequent children which was typical of early cash benefits in many countries. However, there was a significant shift within the countries over time. This represented a different pressure and disputes around the financial support for families with children in connection with the changing economic situation for families and the rediscovery of poverty. Recently, tax benefits have been approved, especially in the Anglo-Saxon countries, as well as in some countries of continental Europe (for example, in Austria, Belgium, Germany and Italy). This is connected with the reduction of the value of universal child benefits. The opposite trend is observed only in Denmark, Ireland, and Japan.

The research objectives will be achieved by comparing statistical data on the level of state influence on intrafamily relationships: direct and indirect investments in children's education, parental leave, etc. This methodology was chosen because similar statistics is available for a wide range of countries. Next, we will look for the correlations between state investments in children and the level of human capital development. If our research hypothesis is true, the correlation will not be direct, and in some countries it will be inverse.

Figure 1. Spending on early childhood education and care (ECEC), 1980–2014 measured as percentage of GDP

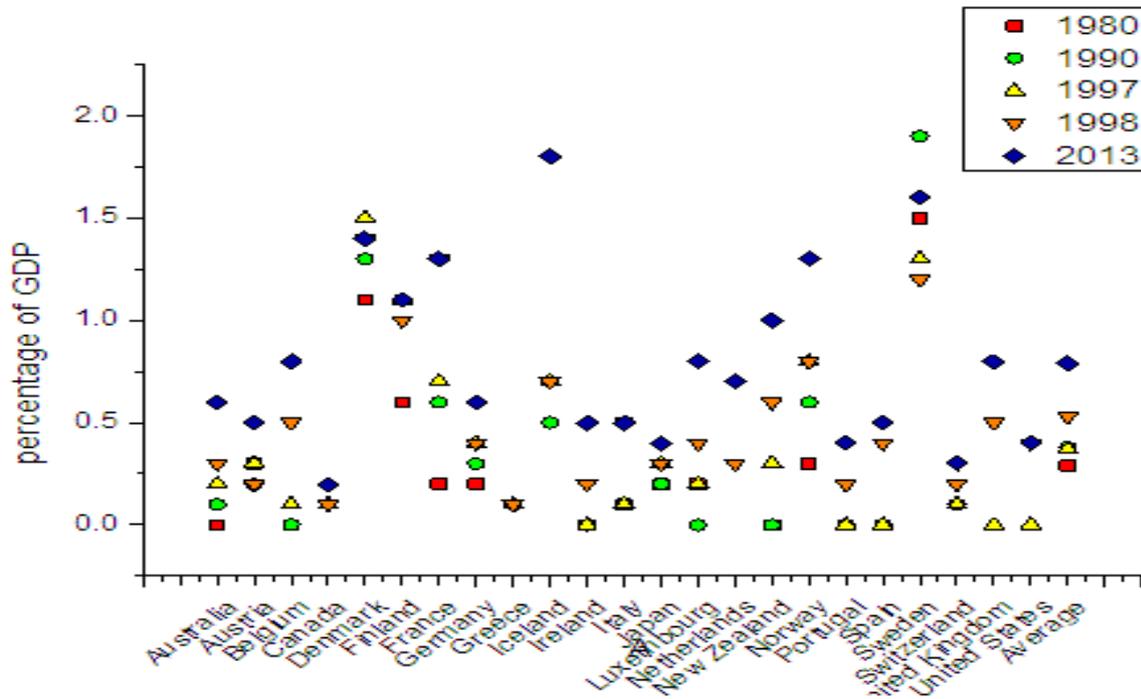


Figure 2. Percentage of children enrolled in formal childcare and preschool institutions (aged 0–2), 1980–2014, percentage of the total age cohort.

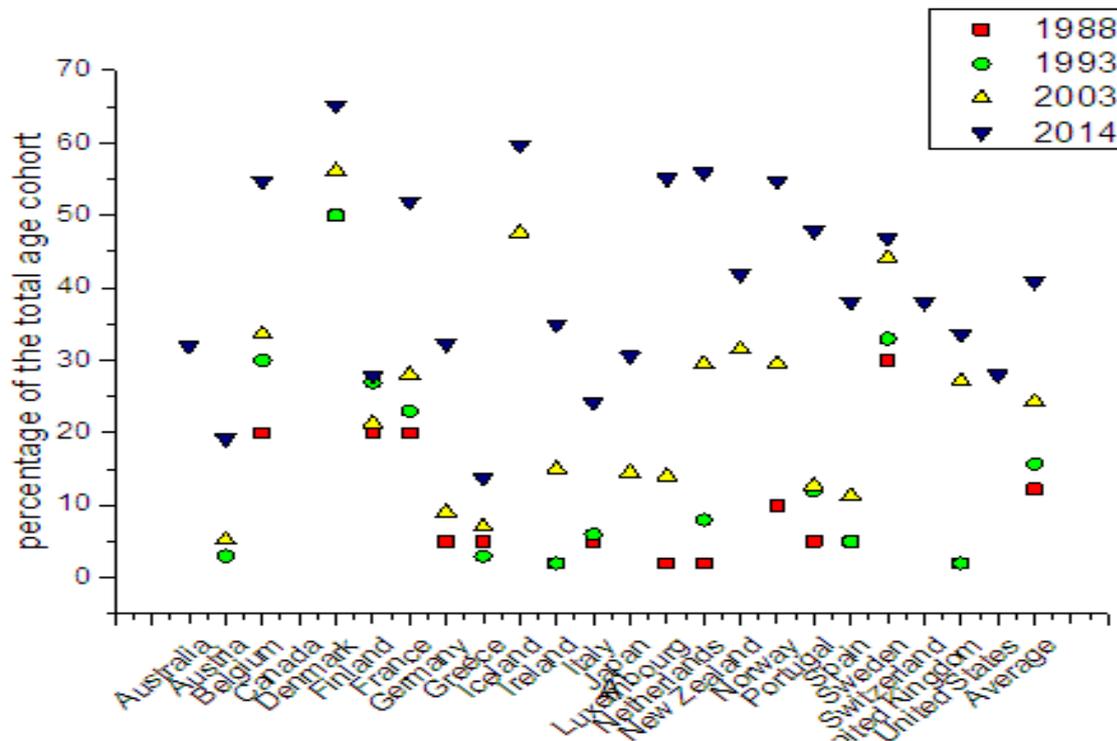


Table 1: Correlation of human capital development with different indicators of the state social policy for different time periods

	Percentage of children enrolled in formal childcare and preschool institutions				Spending on early childhood education and care (ECEC)				
	2014	2003	1993	1988	2013	1998	1997	1990	1980
Spearman's correlation	-0,25421	-0,02231	-0,01664	-0,04176	-0,2391	-0,17483	0,14867	0,25998	0,20006
	Low	No correlation	No correlation	No correlation	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

According to the research results presented in Table 1, there is no strong correlation. There was no correlation at all or it was low and inverse. The research hypothesis postulated a negative correlation which is observed in individual cases. However, there is a question here: why did state and society intervention into the family-child relations have a positive effect in the last century and a negative effect closer to the present? This may be explained by the fact that the intervention used to be insignificant, but it increased historically. This means that insignificant society intervention into the family-child relations has a beneficial effect on the development of each individual forming and constituting the society. However, when the intervention increases, its positive effect on the individual development decreases and becomes negative. The attention should also be paid to the quality of this intervention: cash benefits usually give a positive correlation. However, the enrollment of young children in preschool institutions has a slightly expressed negative impact. In this case, the conclusions of ethological and neuropsychological works should be mentioned. It is stated that children are extremely open to learning at an early age (Boyd & Bee, 2015; Macvarish et al., 2015). The academic study of human behavioral changes will bring successful results if it takes into account the data of psychology that studies human behavior. Scientific ideas regarding human psychology allow us to mention the existence of critical periods and turning points in human life. According to modern concepts, personality development is usually completed in the first five years (Gündoğdu & Turan, 2018).

The most noticeable influence of upbringing can be observed in the first five years of life. Later, the individual is less and less susceptible to the external environment. It is obvious that this result can be interpreted as a great benefit for the individual development in the family



rather than in the kindergarten. Why should we oppose them? They should complement each other. However, the scientific method does not allow the identity of such different influences to be postulated. Moreover, the purpose of our research was to find out the nature and the scale of the “individual-family-society” relationship. The inverse correlations we found are weakly expressed. However, according to the statistics, this trend is increasing and may continue to increase in the coming years. Thus, the correlations we found may be an early warning about the need to adjust the family policy of developed states and continue to monitor the influence of early state intervention into the individual development. It may be objected that there are not enough facts for this statement. The correlations we found are definitely weak, but since the trend is negative, it is our duty to inform the scientific community about this. The next decades will obviously show whether our forecast is right or wrong. However, if the scientific community does not hear our warning and it turns out to be correct, the quality of life and human capital will decrease.

There is undoubtedly a contradiction. There are cases when government subsidies for families with children and the expansion of the network of preschool institutions have a negative impact on the human capital development of the nation. The correlation is not the same as causality, however, the authors found a negative correlation and this is a fact that needs to be understood. The authors have stated their hypothesis above. The results obtained by other authors are also discussed below.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is possible to observe an unusually broad international consensus on the importance of good experience in early childhood for the well-being and subsequent success of individuals and for society. Many countries make concerted efforts to shift towards more child-friendly policies and practices, as well as towards more transforming social changes in modern societies. After all, it is children who usually suffer most from the great ills of society including war, poverty, exploitation of human and natural resources, repressions and social isolation. The examples of new political initiatives and programs aimed at children can be found in various countries and cultures. They give us hope that the twenty-first century can become the “century of the child”. For example, the work of Trevarthen et al. (2018) can be mentioned here. However, despite the optimism of the work, it is noted that the importance of ECEC poses some risks. These include: inflated expectations from the development of children which lead to increased pressure when certain development stages are reached, as well as to the comparison of their results with the early development norms, tightening control over the behavior of children and their families, or reducing the assessment of the intrinsic value of children due to the narrow focus on cognitive development. The combination of neurobiological data on brain development in young children and economic calculations of costs and benefits in the current political debates has oversimplified the positive relationship between ECEC and children’s results (Cantillon, 2011).

Public policy is focused on children. However, the policies, practices and discourses developed for children are also important. Not all policies regarding young children are child-friendly or are designed to truly improve the well-being of children. (Beddoe & Joy, 2017). Nowadays, there is a strong trend towards commodification of children (White & Wastell, 2013). The impact of state family policy on the labor market is also important. Morrissey (2017) shows that a decrease in child benefits increases the value of work for parents, which encourages some parents to return to work faster and others to increase their working hours.

Another important factor is the fact that a modern family is “vulnerable” in the context of state subsidies to families with children. In 1960, only 5% of all births were to unmarried parents while today this figure exceeds 40% (Child Trends, 2012). Families or unmarried parents are “vulnerable” due to weak ties between parents. In all developed and rich countries, including the United States, state subsidies include free public education, child care, public housing and vouchers, tax subsidies related to real estate ownership, government health care financing, survivor’s benefit, income tax abatements and public assistance. For example, temporary assistance to needy families in the United States plays an important role in the lives of families with children, especially in the life of the poorest segment of the population (Garfinkel et al., 2010). Subsidies may reduce the value of family ties for the poorest segments of the population contributing to an increase in the percentage of single-parent families. Since a single-parent family with a child is usually a single mother, the problem of the response of single mothers to child benefits is of particular importance. This issue was much discussed in literature. We can recommend the review of Van Lancker (Van Lancker et al., 2015) which shows the inconsistency of the results of state family policy with the evidence of the need to provide support for such families. In the above-mentioned review, there is a valuable conclusion about the need to change state family policies and to shift away from the practice of increasing subsidies towards a different kind of support. In fact, Norway has the most successful scheme for paying child benefits in terms of reducing poverty among single mothers. It spends only an average amount of money on child benefits (1.3% of GDP). The above concludes that targeted subsidies allow single parents to give their children a happy childhood and a foundation for later successes. In addition, targeted subsidies can raise human capital. Apart from monetary assistance, the government may grant other benefits targeting at single parents, e.g., education programs, non-material assistance in launching businesses, and other supportive measures that encourage single parents to work and earn money.

On a related note, we would like to mention a remarkable work that is devoted to the problem of female entrepreneurship in modern Kazakhstan (Bui et al., 2018). This study discovers the presence of multiple logics such as nuclear family, bureaucratic government and market in the Kazakhstani context, shaping the entrepreneurial behaviors and activities of women. Furthermore, in this research, most women do not challenge the institutional settings and logics. In contrast, they make use of the traditions and norms in creating their ventures and

overcoming their difficulties creatively. It can be assumed that this is typical behavior for women in patriarchal societies and transition countries. Female entrepreneurial activities are especially significant for the country's transition, as in response to the poor institutional support, they provide necessary services such as childcare and education centers, contributing not only to the economy, but also to the general welfare of the society. The network of such private projects focused on childcare and education will later contribute to the human capital growth. Considering our findings in conjunction with (Bui et al., 2018), transitional countries having a patriarchal culture such as Kazakhstan are recommend to establish family support policy targeted at mothers, especially single mothers. The policy should embrace both monetary and non-material assistance as well as multiple incentives to support female entrepreneurship.

Somewhat paradoxically, countries that spend a lot on child benefits are not necessarily the most effective countries. Belgium is an example of this. The percentage of effort and funds allocated by the state to support children and families should be put into action with an eye on efficiency. Consequently, targeting can be a cost-effective way to reduce poverty if it is accompanied by fairly generous benefits.

Conclusions

The evolution of family policy and its models on an individual and global scale is much more complex than any simple approach to periodization or regime. Thus, the efforts made here were aimed at finding the balance between the development of family policy since the 1960s through the application of the best available data and drawing attention to the combination and stratification of policy components, as well as the timing of the reform. Based on the situation observed in the 23 countries considered, the family policy of the states seems to be developing in the process of multi-level work. The intervention of the state and society into family relations is expressed through monetary support for families with universal orientation and maternity leave. It forms the basis of family policy at the "fundamental stage" between 1960 and 1980. At the "consolidation stage" it provides newer tools, such as maternity leave, wider access to preschool institutions and the use of the tax system to support families, change existing protection, incentives or constraints, as well as the responses to new social needs and orientations. The initial policy package elements are not disassembled or replaced. They are gradually supplemented by new policy tools that sometimes become more important. Although a chronological pattern can be observed, we do not think that it is fixed either in terms of periods or in terms of countries. There are no countries that perfectly follow the established models. However, the Nordic countries seem to be at the forefront of change. It is possible that the countries that lag behind (and the countries that are not familiar with family policies) are accelerating their development towards consolidating or introducing a more diverse family policy portfolio. Consequently, the family policy change should not be regarded as the



inexorable historical development. Continuity and change should be analyzed in the framework open to both parties.

How can the research initiated by this analysis be promoted? We should find out if the models observed in the 23 countries can be applied in other countries and regions (for example, Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa). The macroeconomic data obtained from our analysis can be used to conduct detailed country studies in order to see how they compare with the general or global model presented here. There is also a need for research, especially specific studies devoted to individual countries, to determine the significance of state policy changes regarding the intrafamily matters. The correlations which were identified and presented in this research (Table 1) may be an early warning about the need to adjust the family policy of developed states and continue to monitor the influence of early state intervention into the individual development. The fact that state subsidies and spending on kindergartens has a negative correlation with the human capital level makes it possible to conclude that there is a need for a more thorough approach to state family policy targeting. This conclusion is relevant for many developed countries.

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