

**„Quelle(s) famille(s),
pour quelle(s) société(s) en Europe ? ”**



**„Milyen család(ok) milyen
társadalom(ak)nak a mai Európában? ”**

**„Welche Familie(n) für
welche Gesellschaft(en) heute in Europa? “**

**„What family(ies),
for what society(ies) in today's Europe? “**

2021

**Rencontres européennes
Európai Találkozók
European Encounters**

Actes des colloques de la Fondation Joseph Károlyi
A Károlyi József Alapítvány konferenciái
Collected papers of the Joseph Károlyi Foundation's symposiums

Ezt a kiadványt a Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Budapest
és a Fondation Robert Schuman, Paris támogatta

Cet ouvrage a été publié avec le soutien de Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung – Budapest
et de la Fondation Robert Schuman, Paris

Diese Publikation wurde von der Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung – Budapest und
der Fondation Robert Schuman Paris, unterstützt

This volume has been published with the support of the Konrad-Adenauer-
Stiftung – Budapest and the Fondation Robert Schuman, Paris



Konrad
Adenauer
Stiftung



károlyi József alapítvány

**FONDATION ROBERT
SCHUMAN**

Borítótér / Conception graphique de la couverture / Umschlaggestaltung /
Cover graphic design
17mars Sarl, Paris,

Fordítás, lektorálás, összefoglalók / Traductions, Relectures, résumés,
transcriptions / Übersetzungen, Zusammenfassungen, Proofreading / Translations,
Summaries, Transcriptions

Fáber András, Korencsy Ottó, Varga Emese, Fekete Ágnes, Kozári Kristóf,
Angelica Károlyi

ISBN 978-963-414-862-3

A kiadást szerkesztette / Coordination éditoriale / Redaktionelle Koordinierung /
Editorial coordination: L'Harmattan

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FRANCESCO VIOLA

The Family's Role in the Twilight of Political Community

The social history of modernity shows a progressive and accelerated decline of the political importance of the family. At the same time Politics also finds it more and more difficult to recognize itself as a community of life. We have to ask ourselves whether between the political irrelevance of the family and the loss of the community dimension of Politics there is a causal connection, or at least a significant correlation.

It may be doubted that in both cases we are talking about an evil to be avoided. In the time of John Locke, the family was already denied political representativeness and certainly was no longer to be considered "principium urbis et quasi seminarium rei publicae", as Cicero defined it (*De Officiis*, 1.17.54). Nevertheless, even though to a great extent a private entity, the family remains a community of life and the first form of human society. As Cicero again observes: "prima societas in ipso coniugio est." by contrast, in relation to Politics, the loss of the community dimension is often considered as a factor of progress, of emancipation from a tribal conception of Politics, and of the individual's liberation from pre-political constraints to prepare him to become a citizen of the world.

It is believed that the need for community is or can be adequately satisfied by civil society, which certainly, taken as a whole, is not a community but an aggregation of a myriad of associations, of forms of cooperation oriented towards sectorial aims, and of particular unions, among which, obviously, there are families. Politics, instead, as a means or instrument, is identified with the state, with a bureaucratic and legal apparatus, whose task is to guarantee the rights of individuals and to regulate conflicts of rights. The evolution of constitutionalism has made rights the fundamental goods of Politics and the political goals par excellence. Rights are the common good. Nevertheless, there has prevailed a libertarian conception of rights in relation to a liberating and emancipatory

conception, as can easily be ascertained from the scarce attention to social rights in comparison to the rights of liberty. Rights, practiced under the banner of individual autonomy, are hostile to relationships and affiliations. They are a common good by convergence, in so far as each person aspires to them, but not in the sense that they are in themselves a relational place, a place to meet together. They are instead a place of demands and conflicts.

Moreover, the individualistic practice of rights inevitably produces resentment rather than reliance and trust. Groups or categories of people that are different, but are recognized in principle as equal in rights, now perceive as an intolerable injustice their inequality under the conditions of material subsistence. When people are excluded or marginalized, they fight to conquer status equality, but when in some way it is reached, then inequality in distribution of wealth becomes even more unjust and intolerable. It is even more intolerable that, for instance, a woman's work is paid less than a man's, once their equality of status has been recognized. This clearly shows that formal recognition is not enough if all of its logical consequences are not accepted. Unkept promises are much more unjust than promises not made. Recognized rights have an oriented course that produces duties. But in a society of libertarian rights there is no longer an autonomous source justifying social duties.

The factors that have contributed to stripping Politics of its necessary community dimension are manifold. Alongside the primacy of the individualism of rights we have to set globalization, which, even if beneficial for the economy, eradicates people from their social reference contexts, and multiculturalism, which deprives political life of its cultural identity and commonality in the forms of social life. These are all factors that contribute to loosening the traditional social bonds and the social relationships that made cohabitation stable, first among all the bases of national society. The nation, which was also built through a long historical narrative, has now lost importance for political life.

Libertarian rights, globalization, multiculturalism and decline of the nation must not be demonized, because they are first of all facts of our history that require to be administered and governed well, but certainly not disowned or rejected. Among other things, they represent an opportunity to purify our way of understanding political life.

Today it appears more and more evident that the common cultural bases of the political community and its common ethical feeling must be challenged once again, must be reconquered critically, if necessary updated or corrected, and continually confronted with alternative visions and lifestyles. It is no longer appropriate to say peremptorily: "this is what we do." Political commonality is always being constructed through a dialogue with diversity that is becoming more and more diverse. This dialogue, which rejects both assimilation and segregation, aims to give life to a society that both respects traditions and is open to accepting diversity. In this way the political commonality takes the shape of an activity that aims at the common good, which is common in a double sense, regarding both the object and the way of attaining it.

At the end of the day Politics as a community of life has always had to face problems of the kind. But this requires that it should be governed by the principle of fraternity.

It has already been amply noticed that in the famous triad of the French Revolution fraternity is the excluded or forgotten third element or the forgotten value. Forgetting fraternity as a socio-political constraint, together with the emphasis on the rights of individuals, has led to weakening of social ties and duties, and of Politics itself as a community of life. The fact is that liberty loosens the bonds and equality ignores them. Being free among equals does not in itself constitute a political society. Without bonds among citizens, democracy, from being a government of equals, falls into the paradox of inequality, as everyone can see today. What do citizens have in common today? Rights divide them, interests bring them into conflict, and obligations constrain them. Mere justice is not enough, because justice recognizes diversity and gives it what it is entitled to, but does not create commonality. Identity and diversity can go together only in the outlook of fraternity; consequently, equality is not egalitarianism and liberty is not separateness.

The decline of fraternity as a political value seems to be linked to the progressive political irrelevance of the family. In ancient societies the family and ethnic bonds – as Durkheim and Mauss have stressed – made fraternal help a real social duty. And still today in the societies that are least advanced from the institutional point of view the family remains an essential resource for assistance. But

in the time of globalization, multiculturalism and pluralism the political structures are always driven towards greater depersonalization of social relationships. Fraternity has no longer a place in the political theories of our age. But there is a distinguished exception. John Rawls' second principle of justice, the difference principle, is inspired by fraternity, by the idea of not having greater advantages unless this is to the benefit of others who are less well off. Rawls adds that this is precisely what happens in the family, in which particular care is taken of the weaker and more disadvantaged members, and in general over the wellbeing of the whole group. It is interesting to notice that this principle is not individualistic, as it subordinates individual choices to the stability of a social relationship.

This line of thought can be continued, noticing that the family is structured on the basis of the cohabitation of differences of roles, genders, ages, capacities and health conditions. The family appears like an elementary model of social cooperation. On this basis we have to think that the family is the primary locus of education to political fraternity and that, if it disappears, the brotherly spirit disappears in political society. The right to liberty and equality can be demanded, but one cannot demand and even less can impose fraternity. Fraternity is a form of social action that can only be learnt in the living practices.

Precisely because from the family there springs the political good of fraternity, Politics must deal with the family for the purpose of protecting itself. But – as we know – the family is not a creation of Politics. When the family is considered as a “natural society”, the aim is to say that we are talking about a spontaneous order dictated by fundamental human needs, marked by diversity of cultures and traditions and by social evolution. The task of Politics is only subsidiary, but not for this reason irrelevant; the action of Politics in relation to the family depends on what is expected of it and from what goods are to be protected. I do not mean that the crisis of the family depends on Politics, but only that the latter may not realize the consequences that this crisis has on Politics itself as a community of life.

De facto – and this is only a sociological observation – in the west, and in Europe in particular, the family is conceived and fundamentally experienced as a “place of affections.” The family long ago lost its economic function, but now also (in fact and by right) its inter-generational solidaristic role, its dimen-

sion of sexual and procreative integration, its exclusive capacity for attribution of status. Even as a "place of affections" the family certainly does not have an exclusive role. Obviously affections are an absolutely private thing that by its nature escapes the control of law and Politics. Affections are by their nature unstable, they come and go, and the relationships that arise from them do not give rise to social duties, that is to say duties towards the relationship itself, but if anything to individual duties among the partners. A family solely conceived as a place of affections is entirely irrelevant for the political community, which is deprived in turn of a central resource of fraternity.

This is a general situation, undoubtedly reflecting a tendency of our time. But we cannot say that in general it has been adequately faced by national Politics. On one side, prohibitions and the imposition of obligations, in addition to not being very effective, appear paternalistic; on the other, the recognition of rights, though often necessary, has the unintended effect of considering individuals and not the family relationship as such. Family law now is interested above all in the rights of the individuals in the family. The stronger is the position of individuals within the family, the weaker is the position of the family as a whole in society.

For instance, it is very correct to shape a statute of the rights of children, and not only of the duties of parents, but then it is very difficult to govern the conflict that can arise between the right of parents to separate or divorce and that of children to live and be brought up within their own family. In the conflict of rights – as is well known – the rights of liberty get the better of social rights, or the rights of the strongest prevail.

Examples of the kind are manifold. On the other hand, if the family is only a place of affections, then there is no reason to deny the character of a family to all relationships of affections, with the consequence that the family is no longer an identifiable social relationship and the role of children becomes unessential for its definition. But it is really for the children that the family has a political value in that it ensures not only continuity among the generations, but also – as has already been said – the value of fraternity. From this point of view the falling birth rates in the family, especially in Europe, is an eloquent sign of the weakening of national political communities.

In this general situation of the family in our time the intervention of the European Union represents a further factor of complication. The European Union was not born as a political community and it is still far from being one. It was born under the banner of economic cooperation and, from this point of view, it has also necessarily extended to other forms of cooperation, because there is close interdependence among the different social relationships. They all come under the person, which – unlike the individual – is essentially defined in terms of a relationship with others.

In the case of the European Union, interest in the family has not been dictated by political reasons, but has been a logical consequence of one of its fundamental principles, that of free circulation of people. People bring with them their relationships of status with the rights and relative duties. But these status situations may not be recognized by the Member States in which these people find themselves, and could even be considered subversive of the public order established therein. The principle of free circulation of people makes it very difficult for Member States to preserve their own vision of the family, which has an identificational character. Besides, one cannot aspire to a European vision of the family, as long as the European Union does not recognize itself to be a real political community, but also one cannot accept the idea of arriving at the family through the route of the market.

Accordingly, while on one side there is generically proposed the legal, economic and moral protection of the family (as was maintained by the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe) and in this connection there is confirmed the competence of the national legislations, on the other side demands for unification and harmonization have led to direct interventions, specific and sectorial ones, in community law, which inevitably end up delineating such an elastic framework as to be able to incorporate all possible variations, and this has been called the “family without frontiers.”

Then in Europe a pluralistic vision of the family cohabits with a conception of the smallest common denominator, which ends up coming out on top. It is significant that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union abstains from defining the family, and only deals with the individual rights of its members, those that preside over the constitution of the family and those

that derive from it. But this neutrality is only apparent, because in article 9 the family is disjoined from marriage, and the latter in turn freed of the requisite of gender difference, once considered as the only really constant presupposition of the family union. In this way there is avoided all transformation of the family into an entity, which would lead to recognizing this social relationship as having supra-individual rights. For its part, the jurisprudence of the European courts has not sought any unitary legal reconstruction, but has proceeded with the egalitarian method of the comparison of situations, foregoing the search for a family identity.

The present-day situation of the family appears like a symbolic case of a tragic dilemma, in which individual rights and political values conflict, so any result necessarily implies violation of something that it would be correct to protect. One way out could be the development of a relational practice of rights, an alternative to the individualistic one, that is purely liberating or exclusively emancipatory. But I do not know if this is possible.

Under these conditions, while we know what the family expects of Politics, we should also wonder what Politics expects from the family.

In conclusion, I will sum up the fundamental points of my talk:

1) For Politics to be a community of life, it is necessary that, alongside the values of liberty and equality, there should also be that of fraternity.

2) Education to fraternity begins in the family, but on condition that the latter has a recognizable and socially recognized identity.

3) The family is the primary place in which diversity and difference are interdependent. This is the value of civic friendship or social solidarity, which is precisely proper to brothers, who are different in equality.

4) The European pluralism of the conceptions of the family must be fully respected. This is impossible if the smallest common denominator is strengthened, which is itself a particular conception of the family, and therefore substantially discriminates against others.

5) "United in diversity" is the motto of the European Union and it has a community and brotherhood sense. The expansion of fraternity has its beginning in the family, it is communicated to the national community and it is propagated by irradiation from the particular to the universal and not vice versa, in so

far as identities are not conceived as closed and exclusive. People are not born brothers as European citizens or citizens of the world, but become such, which is the hope expressed in Beethoven's "Hymn to Joy" ("Alle Menschen werden Brüder"), which in 1985 was adopted, with some optimism, as the official hymn of the European Union.

ABSTRACTS

Opening address to the seminar by H.E. Pascale Andreani, Ambassador of France

Though online, it was important to hold this seminar on the theme of the family. Beyond the traditional definition (persons linked to each other by marriage or filiation or by a partnership enshrined in law and living under the same roof) there is no common definition of the family established by the European Union. Family is an area that falls within the competence of each Member State, which determines its family policy according to its values and its history. Indeed, the family setting and its social challenges have been evolving: economic and climatic challenges and the place of the professional life are factors that have influenced families and had an impact on their life; nevertheless, the family unit remains the basic unit of the functioning of our society.

Nowadays, the health crisis has brought uncertainties and difficulties in employment, social relations, education and family life. Governments in all member states have to address these challenges. However, the demographic dimension remains essential when the rate of the renewal of the population is only 1.9, for example in France. In Hungary, this demographic dimension has also been essential. In France, family policy includes family benefits, allowances to compensate for the cost of education, tax measures and assistance to families in the form of services and equipment. The priority remains to support fertility by encouraging the birth of a third child, parental leave, as well as the establishment of nursery schools and drop-in centres. Furthermore, a particular attention is paid to the most fragile children, especially in single-parent families.

In the traditional model, the sole function of the family was filiation and the preservation of family property. Today's families are diverse. Married, unmarried, with or without children, divorced, reconstituted, 'paxed' for France, with an evolution of concepts of procreation and adoption: family issues support important public discussions making the exchanges of points of view fascinating.

Opening address by Katalin Novák, Minister without portfolio for family affairs

Family is a fundamental value for the Hungarian government and for Hungarians in general. The demographic history and the demographic situation of our country, as well

as that of the whole of Europe, explain this interest: the fertility rate in Hungary does not exceed 2. In 2011 it was only 1.23. This is the challenge that the Christian Democrat Government, which has been in power for ten years, is trying to meet, with the aim of providing security for couples wanting to have children. Nevertheless, the Hungarian Government is not a lonely player, there are churches and non-governmental organisations that work in favour of families, and even companies such as the French companies present in Hungary, which can also introduce measures in favour of their employees' families. The Government has passed pro-family legislation and even the new constitution adopted in 2011 defends the values of family life. In addition, 5% of the Hungarian national budget is dedicated to families. Moreover, there are services such as crèches. France was a good example with its family allowance system and income tax relief. Another form of support is the new possibility of interest-free loan, to be repaid after the birth of a first child, with a reduction in the repayment rate according to the number of children. This measure is unique in the world. A housing programme has also been established to encourage housing for young people without children and for families who already have children or single-parent families raising children. The more children there are in the family, the lower the income tax will be. From 1 January 2022, an income tax exemption will also be introduced for people under 26 years of age. A young person who works will not pay income tax, and women who have at least four children do not pay income tax for the rest of their lives. As a result of these measures, the fertility rate in Hungary is the highest in whole Europe. Finally, the marriage rate has doubled in ten years, while the number of divorces is currently the lowest.

**FRANÇOIS-XAVIER BELLAMY:
Europe and the Challenge of the Liquid Society**

In the past, Europeans – especially people from the countryside and in rural areas – had their lives governed by a multitude of rules and strict laws from birth to death rather than by the reign of freedom.

A book written by Benjamin Constant, *La liberté des Anciens et des Modernes* (1814) is relevant in this respect. Parents bequeathed their trade and property to their children. The same rule applied for social and family contacts. The family was the basic unit of society, especially in the countryside and smaller towns. Human contacts were established earlier in life and shaped people's lives more permanently and over a longer

period. For a very long time, family life was at the centre of human life. In most dictionaries we read that "in society the two main functions of the family are filiation and the preservation of property". However, this is not true any longer.

Quite recently, a number of authors have begun to pay attention and analyse an important change in social relations after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Nowadays, the ideology which reigns in European society is the one of perpetual change and universal liquidity. Today, in the post-modern era, family relations have become more fragile, not to say that they are being neutralised. Parenthood and the preservation of property, once considered the two main goals of marriage, have ceased to be decisive and definitive.

It would be appropriate to define what the concept of modernity means today. Zygmunt Bauman refers to our post-modern society shaped by movement, mobility and speed as to a '*liquid society*'. It seems obvious that movement is becoming the decisive element of our existence and in a world like this, individuals cannot help not to become fluid themselves.

In this new world, families have been changing too. In France, in particular, the popularity of marriage is at an all-time low. Furthermore, the law and society have recognised the legal character of a relationship between two individuals of the same sex (the PACS). Currently, the threat to families is indeterminacy. In Europe, politics itself is becoming fluid and it is the unity of the family that is in danger. We need to show mutual respect and take into consideration the different attitudes of the European states to family matters: this is why this conference is also very important in enabling us to avoid the worst: isolation.

SÁNDOR KARIKÓ

Philosophical-Educational Outlines of the Family

The family is the micro-structural unit of society, a 'face to face' community. As described in classical terms, men, who daily remake their own lives make other men to propagate their kind, through the relation between man and woman, parents and children, creating the family. This study would like to focus on family life and family activity where the ideal and virtue for goodness, or at least the aspiration for goodness should dominate. The basic question is: how can one become a good person or the best person? According to Milán Füst (Hungarian writer of the last century), the prevailing idea is

that a mother believes that her child can be, must be free, clean and a good human being. This implies that one's desire and endeavour for goodness cannot be eradicated from the history of humanity, from the life of a family. The possibility of goodness is the greatest miracle and mercy all over the world.

PROF. FRANCESCO VIOLA

The Family's Role in the Twilight of Political Community

Today, there is a significant correlation between the political irrelevance of the family and the loss of the community dimension of Politics, which is often considered as a factor of progress. But civil society is not a community but an aggregation of a myriad of associations, among which are families. Politics, instead, is identified with the State, whose task is to guarantee the rights of individuals. The evolution of constitutionalism has made rights the fundamental goods of Politics while a libertarian conception of rights, hostile to affiliations and no longer a source justifying social duties prevailing. But libertarian rights, globalization, multiculturalism and decline of the nation are facts of our history that require to be governed well, not rejected. Politics should be governed by the principle of fraternity. Today, forgetting fraternity as a socio-political constraint, together with the emphasis on the rights of individuals, has led to weakening of social ties and duties. The decline of fraternity as a political value is to be linked to the progressive political irrelevance of the family which has consequences on Politics itself. In the frame of depersonalization of social relationships, the family is the primary locus of education to political fraternity. Politics must deal with the family for the purpose of protecting itself. If the family is solely conceived as a place of "affections", it is entirely irrelevant for the political community and the stronger is the position of individuals within the family, the weaker is the position of the family in society. In the meantime, the fall in the birth rates is a sign of the weakening of national political communities. Today, in the European Union, the principle of free circulation of people makes it difficult for Member States to preserve their own vision of the family. And one cannot aspire to a European vision of the family, as long as the European Union does not recognize itself to be a real political community. This is a dilemma, in which individual rights and political values conflict.

The European pluralism of the conceptions of the family must be fully respected. "United in diversity" is the motto of the European Union.

JÁNOS FRIVALDSZKY

Marriage and Family from the Perspective of Natural Law

The institution of marriage is the committed, lifelong union of a man and a woman who have publicly entered into a contractual relationship. They vow an indissoluble union with no time limit. Both marriage and family are based on this union which has a legal character. The family requires specific legal recognition. It is not the State that gives family its legal status, but it recognises the intrinsic normativity and principles of the family and protects it by means of positive law. At the same time, the relationship through 'cohabitation' is not intended to be a marital commitment, i.e. its recognition by family law would be a sort of 'marriage' deprived of its essence and, if it were to be given equal protection, would jeopardise marriage. Treating different things as equal is not only unfair but also unlawful, and against natural law and unconstitutional. A 'registered partnership' is the simple registration of a factual situation, which does not, of course, make it a marriage or a marriage-like legal relationship.

A child does not merely have a fundamental, existential need to be raised by his or her own parents, i.e. a man and a woman, but also to be born of the committed love of a lifetime of his or her parents, i.e. a husband and his wife. The existence of marital as well as parental roles, personal spaces and family functions is fundamental to the healthy development of a child's personality and identity. Homosexual couples objectively lack these anthropological realities: their relationship cannot be the basis for marriage and therefore, neither for a family; that is the reason why they cannot adopt children, in order to protect the child's rights to a healthy personal development. A father's love for a child is different from a mother's love for a child, and in many respects, it means a different reality for a son and for a daughter. A mother's love is essential for both male and female children. And the father, as the representative of the norm, the rule (the law), also plays an important role in the development of the child's personality. A homosexual couple should therefore not be allowed to adopt a child, as adoption would seriously jeopardise the child's right to a healthy personal development. There is no "right to children".

GILLES SERAPHIN

Universal Family Policy versus Targeted Family Policy? The French Case

For many years, the question of universality or targeting of a public policy has been the subject of passionate debates in France, in particular when it comes to family allowances. The recurring cross-cutting question is the following: in family policy schemes, should universality or targeting be favoured?

If we analyse the arguments discussed in 2014 during the reform of family allowances and the reactions to the provisions for childcare for families in poverty, we can see that a few people only are calling for a return to full proportionality regarding family allowances. In a practical way, a universal policy would target all families and children, while a targeted policy would only concern children in poor families. We might think that a universal childcare policy is to be preferred, even if the level of support should be then proportional. Indeed, a targeted family policy, apart from the risks already mentioned (stigmatisation, threshold effect, targeting error, etc.), is related to policy projects the implementation of which is limited in time. However, no universal policy seems to be very effective if not accompanied by support for structures so that families have, at the very least, access to the type of care they want. The question of access to rights is therefore crucial in order to make any public policy effective.

ZSUZSANNA MAKAY

Changes in Family Policy in Hungary since 2010

In Hungary, the fertility rate started to decline in the middle of the 20th century: indeed, it was in 1977 that this rate last reached the level of 2.1 children necessary for the reproduction of the population. In 2011, it dropped to 1.23, the lowest figure ever recorded. The number of inhabitants has also been falling subsequently. In the second half of this century, an extensive institutional network was set up in order to take care of the payment of family allowances, childbirth leave, parental leave, and to manage the network of nurseries. With this relatively generous family policy “package”, Hungary made its transition from a socialist to a capitalist system. At the same time, homecare of young children was becoming a general habit and was even recognised as a generally adopted social norm.

In order to address the undesirable phenomenon of a steadily decreasing population, several new measures to support families have been taken since the beginning of 2010.

The government has recently granted various tax benefits and housing allowances to families, especially to those raising several children. The Hungarian family support system is considered to be a rather generous one by European standards. Moreover, public spending on family policy has been increasing over the past few years. According to the Hungarian government, in 2018 the state spent almost 4.8% of GDP on family subsidies. In 2019, the Hungarian government published an Action Plan for the Protection of Families, adding seven new subsidy forms to those already existing at the time. By increasing the support to families, the Hungarian government aims to increase the fertility rate and to contribute to the improvement of the living conditions of families with children.

Since 2010, insurance-related subsidies have become more important. A family tax allowance has even been introduced, favouring families living on a stable income. The government primarily supports families with a rather solid background, with a job and capital. On the other hand, the real value of guaranteed family benefits has been decreasing continuously. Recently, the above-mentioned subsidies have been extended to families raising one or two children only, while families with three or more children remain priority, in particular through tax benefits and housing allowances.

ERIC TROTTMANN

**Family Policies in France and in the Nordic Countries:
a Comparative Study**

France as well as the Nordic countries are benchmarks in family policy matter, but even if they have a lot in common (demographic and well-being of the family structure), their methods differ. Like everywhere else, there has been a shift from prolific families to mononuclear families in which the primacy of the individual prevails. Besides, with the Covid crisis the decline in the fertility rate, like everywhere else, increased further in 2020.

Like in France, it is in the family sphere that the Swedish 'welfare state' is the most committed and powerful, and this policy is based on a great consensus in the society. Two major reforms have proved to be decisive: in 1974, parental leave was made available to both men and women for a period of 480 days, with 80% of the salary maintained, and in 1975, day care from the age of one-year, non-means-tested, was provided and financed by the municipalities and the latest has been an "enforceable right" since 2000. The bus to get there is free and many of them are open non-stop and for all parents (especially for

single-parents) with atypical working hours (including in particular nurses or caretakers). Parental leave and the corresponding family allowances are not subject to means and allow to reconcile family and professional life, and are shared between fathers and mothers, whatever the level of professional responsibility might be.

These generous policies towards families in the Nordic countries, as in France, are the result of public spending on family benefits and early childhood, which places them at the top of the OECD countries, with the following ranking in 2015: Sweden (5.14% of GDP), Denmark (4.64%), Norway (4.55%), France (4.29%) and Finland (4.21%). In Sweden, childcare provision is essentially collective and mainly public, funding for childcare is essentially provided in the form of benefits in kind and their educational approach is focused on fighting against gender stereotypes and promotion of equal roles for parents, which perhaps will help to shape more peaceful societies.

ATTILA MELEGH AND DÓRA GÁBRIEL

European Inequalities, Transnational Families and the Care Industry

Transnational care for the elderly is organised in the framework of an institutionalised, hierarchical and highly competitive market within a given migration space having a strong impact on the wage and cost relations, the demand and the way how demand is generated. This institutional framework continuously affects and sustains mass migration, it can thus hardly be the mechanical outcome of aggregate rational/welfare decisions. Wage maximisation also plays a role in age-care migration, but the interviews show that the decisions themselves have a longer-term and more complex character than neoclassical theory could explain it: wider structural causes and changes preparing the ground for socially embedded migration decisions play an important role. It is worth going beyond the political economy level and possibly looking for the causes of mass workforce migration.

The group itself has its importance, as in relation to age and other factors, the interviews show the emergence of a former layer of workers, namely the one of unskilled women workers in various declining occupations. It appears that in the globalised world, some of the women emerging from declining blue-collar occupations try casual service occupations for longer periods and then eventually enter this market through certain family, ethnic and local patterns and connections, especially when after a longer and more stable period, they become seriously unable to make a living in the long run. The issue here is not the coexistence of different forms of work and inequalities. In this case, these different

forms of work and inequalities entailed are linked by a historical logic in a given migration space. Some of these worker groups slowly shift from local marginalized occupations to the caretaker part of the labour market and, in this way, become transnational actors.

CHRISTINE HENRY-HUTHMACHER

Changing Family and Changing Family Policy in Germany

Family policy in Germany is currently undergoing a process of transformation that can only be understood if we know the background of the profound social, economic and demographic changes of the past decades. The increasing diversity of what a family is, has been affecting not only our way of life, lifestyle and the life path, but also the self-image of the family. The family is not a statistical system. Given the enormous dynamics making the world change as well as the evolution of new careers and families, in 2005 family policy underwent a paradigm shift in order to better reflect the needs of family diversity. Family policy is no longer a social policy; it is now a question of money (including 'family allowances', a wage supplement based on individual income before the birth of a child – as the gendered division of labour has been increasingly challenged), which relies on a combination of time and infrastructure to ensure the compatibility of a higher birth rate and female employment.

Since this shift in the orientation, family policy in Germany has developed in a relatively coherent way in terms of concepts and individual measures. We can see that global conditions for families have improved recently: there is an increase in the number of kindergartens, a right for full-day primary school care and for more equal parenting roles. There is a slight increase in the birth rate which is seen by family experts as a cautious proof of improving framework conditions. Nevertheless, demographic change will be one of the biggest challenges Germany will face in the coming decades.

ANDREAS LINK

The Family in Switzerland: the Tension between Autonomy and State Intervention

The effects of current state/policy measures depend to a large extent on the self-image of families in society. In a society in which the family is increasingly only one option for living arrangements, public perceptions, the real needs of families and possible policy measures have to be increasingly adapted. Above all, the interests of the child, parents

and family must be taken into account. If children feel good, this has a positive impact on parents and on family life as a whole, which has a positive impact on the economy and society. However, young women and men often have different ideas about family and work. More space needs to be given to flexible models. Public policies should focus on the well-being of families, parents and children. Models such as 'both parents working part-time' should become the norm. Freedom of choice is also part of family autonomy. The 'sole breadwinner model' must also be adapted to the present, with appropriate recognition and safeguards. Parents should be given the freedom to choose the 'opportunities and risks' of the current model before the birth of their first child, regardless of any state or social ideals, as it is about future generations and their opportunities to become healthy, strong people with great potential.

State intervention can only pursue certain goals and can come up with a variety of methods, as well as a judicious and limited timeframe for the deployment of policy instruments. However, the objectives must be clearly communicated and discussed with the electorate. It is about the ongoing pursuit of goals, which is the well-being of the child, parents, family and society. These goals are hardly achieved in the current situation by a strict, autonomous approach or by current political interference. The family, as the pillar of the state and its smallest unit, offers enormous potential for maintaining a functioning state. That is why efforts to create perfect family conditions can never be enough.

WOLFGANG MAZAL

Families and Family Policy – Prisoners of their Contradictory Interests

In democratic systems, family policies struggle much more than any other political issue between different interests and images of the family: What can we call a family? In which direction the development and support of families should be oriented? – these are some of the most politically controversial topics. Moreover, since practically everyone has its own experiences, claiming to be taken into account in the democratic debate, it is obvious that any consensus on the goals and measures of family policy can hardly be achieved.

Dynamical changes in the external framework of family policies make the democratic discourse more difficult: the increase of life expectancy, a non-sustainable birth rate, the diversity of family forms in real life as well as the increasing diversity of value

concepts, the decreasing ability to compromise and the decreasing culture of commitment, reduce the chances of achieving a consensus.

Nevertheless, despite scarce resources, responsible policy-makers shall set priorities and reflect on goals to be pursued in family policy.

In Austria, in the course of a project to evaluate family policy, it was necessary to analyse, at least *ex post*, the goals that the Austrian family policy pursues. In a process that lasted several months and was conducted with political stakeholders, it turned out that family policy would serve numerous and partly contradictory objectives. Given the concept of the family, open on the one hand and highly emotional on the other, family policy has obviously been used by political stakeholders to reflect some other areas: under the "family policy" label, we find discourses that should have actually been dedicated to topics as women's policy, labour market policy, regional policy, education policy and social policy in the strict sense (especially financing of the social systems, pension schemes, care systems or prevention of poverty).

In order to change this situation, family policy should be defined as an independent policy area. If there is no more overlapping with other policy areas and if family policy objectives are clearly communicated, thinking on family, family life and family policy will improve as well as the probability to renegotiate in order to imply better family policy objectives will increase.

Under real-life circumstances, there should not be a one and only one determining family conception. On the contrary, an open family conception should be applied, aiming to establish personal and binding responsibilities across generational barriers. If a family policy is able to encourage people and supports them in taking responsibility for accompanying children as they grow up and for accompanying members of elder generations in their weaknesses, it could enable families to become a space for human experiences, a learning space for the development of personality and the core of a healthy society.

TOMASZ KRUPSKI
Families and Family Policy in Poland

The present situation in Polish families is characterized by a very low fertility rate at 1,39, a crisis of marriage institution and in consequence a high level of divorce rate and single parents raising their children. This situation is explained by the historical context (consequences of the war) and the inefficient pro-family policy during communism, as

the ideology was unsupportive, unfriendly or even hostile for the traditional family. An effective family policy in Poland started to significantly develop since 2007 – and since 2015 it was made a priority for the Polish government. It is helped by the Large Family Association Three-Plus created in 2006, which is now the biggest family friendly non-governmental organization in Poland. The most important systemic changes concern tax reduction per child, extension of maternity and parental leave, family benefits (the “500 plus program” to help the families to bring up children until the age of 19), the Polish Large Family Discount Card, and retirement benefits. Because of the COVID pandemic the demographic situation in Poland got even worse and fertility rate went decreasing. To gather experts and advises, an Institute of Family and Demography similar to the one in Hungary, is planned and it is hoped that the cooperation between European countries in the field of family policy will help Poland to develop the right diagnosis of the situation, and also to exchange experience in implementing effective solutions for the benefit of families.

JAN SLAVÍČEK

**Family, the Istanbul Convention and its Political Reflections
in the Czech Republic**

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) has marked an important step in efforts to institutionalize prevention (and protection against) domestic violence at the international level. However, the Convention also includes some provisions that were considered to be controversial by an important part of the Czech society and politicians. This was also reflected in the statements of politicians: they saw the convention as a “threat to the traditional family”. The study addresses the following questions: 1. How expert-based were the reactions of Czech politicians and to what extent were they factual or, conversely, not founded by facts (or even populist)? 2. What were the attitudes of particular Czech political parties to the Istanbul Convention? 3. What was the language used by top politicians and whether their statements and the language are following the parties’ attitudes. The used methodology is based on comparative text analysis of the Istanbul Convention and of the public statements of Czech top politicians.

JIŘÍ KOHOUTEK

**Family and its Metaphors in Political Manifestos of Czech Political Parties:
2017 Elections for the Chamber of Deputies of Czech Parliament**

Family can be seen at the same time as the core social structure of society and as a contested political concept. The presented study analyses the concept of family in political manifestos of the Czech political parties. Following the influential book by Lakoff and Johnsson, it also analyses the possible metaphors used to interpret family in the individual manifestos. Methodologically, the study is a content/metaphor analysis of relevant nine Czech political parties' manifestos used in the 2017 elections to the Chamber of Deputies of Czech Parliament.

This seeks to answer two research questions:

1 What (if any) was the framing (contextualization) of family in political manifestos of Czech political parties before the 2017 parliamentary elections?

2 What metaphors of family (if any) were used/could be implied from the manifestos?

Before the 2017 elections, one can say that family is framed as the basis for human co-existence, seen traditionally with children, as a responsible unit and with some economic meaning, while sometimes the refusal of "other" or "non-traditional" concepts of family was present. But family was not conceptualized at all with the left-wing parties, the social democrats and the communists. The first metaphor, present with the conservative Christian democrats and TOP 09, presented families as the pillars of society. The other metaphor then presents families as in need of protection and/or support, implying that they are weak and in danger.

The conceptualization and metaphorical position of families as strong and as weak at the same time could be seen as surprising. The leftist parties do not acknowledge the value of family that much. The general idea proposing protection or support for family could then be explained by political marketing strategy, as Czech society holds the concept of family dear. Probably no politician would dare say that families do not matter. The important thing is to notice such double-tonguedness of politicians and not to be fooled by it.