

Family Formation and Stability in Western Welfare States Since 1960

The Influence of Family and Housing Policy

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Abstract

This thesis explains differences in changes to family formation and stability in France, Norway, the FRG and the GDR based changes to family- and housing policy. Focus is on developments from the 1960s to the early 2000s. Previous research has focused on more recent developments from the 1980s onwards. A new conceptualization of family policy is introduced that enables a distinction between policy that alleviate the care giving role of mothers (de-familialization) and policies that intervene more directly in the caring responsibility within the family, aiming for a more equal share of childcare between women and men (de-genderization).

Findings show that higher educated women are more likely of entry into marriage, when family policy provides more de-familialization (France, GDR) or de-genderization (Norway). But higher educated women are less likely of entry into marriage in the FRG where family policy remained conservative, forcing these women to choose between family and career. In the FRG where family policy remained conservative, with low support for female employment, married women with low levels of education became more likely of entry into divorce. A difference between women with different educational levels is not observed where family policy has included more de-familialization and de-genderization. Findings for changes to housing policy are less convincing. Soft deregulation of rent control and tenure security has a positive effect on entry into consensual union in all countries, making a

two person income household better equipped to cover the cost of rent increases that this change introduced. But results for the influence of support for home-ownership show little effect on entry into a marriage and divorce in all four countries. This may be because the full effect has not manifested itself yet. Extending the time period of analysis may provide more insights on the influence of these changes.

Jury:

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Bio

Anders is a PhD researcher at the European University Institute. In his work he researches the influence of family and housing policy on entry into marriage, consensual union, separation and divorce. His research combines Event History Analysis with the theoretical framework of welfare regimes, and relies on extensive data and statistics. Before pursuing a PhD at the European University institute he was a master's student at the University of Southern Denmark (SDU), and a stagiare at the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), studying reforms to parental leave schemes in various European countries.