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GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WORK-FAMILY RECONCILIATION. AN ANALYSIS OF FAMILY POLICIES IN ROMANIA AND GERMANY

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ABSTRACT

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) was introduced by the European Union (EU) in 1997, as a strategy to achieve gender equality in all policy areas. Yet, European countries greatly diverge in their progress of implementation. We investigate the role GM played in Romanian and German policies aimed at achieving work-family reconciliation, using concepts from feminist policy analysis. Our analysis shows that pre-existing policies and discourse, the economic situation, as well as the relationship with the EU have shaped and impeded the implementation process of GM in both countries. While Germany slowly moves towards more egalitarian policies, GM as label and strategy did not succeed. In Romania, GM has only impacted work and family reconciliation indirectly through EU legislation.

KEYWORDS

- *Childcare*
- *Feminist Policy Analysis*
- *Gender Mainstreaming*
- *Parental Leave*
- *Work-Family Reconciliation*

Almost 20 years ago, the European Union (EU) adopted Gender Mainstreaming (GM) in the Treaty of Amsterdam as an instrument towards gender equality that was supposed to pertain to all policy areas. Today, GM implementation has fallen short of the expectations in many EU member states (Woodward: 2008). In Romania and Germany - member states that greatly differ in their socio-economic situation and in their relationship to the EU - the strategy was not sustainably implemented as well (Lewalter et al: 2009). Our paper aims to uncover to what extent - if at all - GM has played a role in national policy, at the example of family policies aimed at the reconciliation of work and family. Theoretically, the policy area offers plenty of opportunities for the implementation of GM, because work and family are areas strongly linked with gender relations (Pascall, Lewis: 2004).

Our case studies explore two states in detail: Romania, which joined the EU only in 2007, and Germany, which has been a founding member. We chose to analyze these countries for three main reasons: firstly, both experienced transitions following the fall of communism and their family policies have been influenced by their communist past; secondly, they are both members of the EU and, thirdly, to compare the evolution of the more recent developments in the field of family policy

of a founding member with those of a more recent EU member state. Although many studies have shown that other European countries, such as Sweden, have been more successful in their implementation of GM than Germany, we chose not to compare Romania to more successful countries because choosing cases on the basis of a dependent variable (in our case the extent and success of GM implementation) can easily lead to false inferences (Geddes: 1990).

Our study is limited in two ways: because family responsibilities encompass a large and diffuse set of practices (Ostner: 1991), our analysis is limited to the study of childcare responsibilities. Second, we focus on the impact of policies on heterosexual couples because of data unavailability on LGBT families.

In both East Germany and Romania, Western and EU ideas were implemented in societies whose attitudes and norms were shaped by a socialist past. Through the case studies, we assess whether GM has actually impacted family policies and their outcomes in both countries and we evaluate whether Germany could serve as a role model for newly joined member states with regard to policies adopted and promoted by the EU.

Our paper begins with a brief introduction to the origins of GM (1). Then, we outline our methodological background, grounded in feminist policy analysis (2). Our first case study on Romanian work and family reconciliation is presented next (3), followed by the German case (4). In section (5), we discuss whether Germany lives up to its status as role model for newly joined members in the EU. Our analysis shows that - despite EU efforts to frame gender equality economically - the concept has not been successfully implemented in both countries. While Germany slowly moves towards more egalitarian policies, GM as label and strategy did not succeed. In Romania, GM has only impacted work and family reconciliation indirectly through EU legislation.

1. The Origins and Principles of Gender Mainstreaming

Gender Mainstreaming (GM) is a political strategy to achieve gender equality in all policy areas, which was developed by feminists, activists, and scholars in order to bring gender inequalities from the margins to the center of politics (Stiegler: 2000, p. 5). The concept was introduced in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. Instead of viewing gender inequality solely as a women's issue, the conference shifted the focus towards gender equality as a matter concerning everybody.

In order to achieve gender equality in all policy areas, the Beijing Declaration proposed measures to be taken by governments, institutions, and NGOs. For the purpose of "promot[ing] harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men" governments were called upon to provide job-protected, paid parental leave, promote equal sharing of responsibilities, and enable freedom of choice with regard to part-time and full-time work for both men and women (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, p. 117).

The EU adopted GM in the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, naming the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between men and women as a common aim of the community (Pollack, Hafner-Burton: 2000, p. 437). Two methods are central to GM implementation and evaluation: Gender Controlling, which is supposed to accompany policy processes as well as assess results (Stiegler: 2000, p. 13), and Gender Budgeting, through which expenditures are controlled for their distribution by gender as well as for their impact on gender relations (Färber:

2007).

Some praised the concept for its impact on policy making processes, for creating a new pool of gender experts that support GM efforts, and for its horizontal approach (Stiegler: 2000), whereas others have questioned the concept's effectiveness, criticized its vagueness, and pointed to the instrumentalization of gender equality for economic benefits (Elomäki: 2015; Lewis: 2006; Woodward: 2008). Verloo (2005, p. 360) stresses that the concept loses its empowering, transformative potential if it is implemented in a technocratic manner that excludes marginalized feminist voices.

Our analysis will assess to what extent GM has played a role in national policies aimed at work and family reconciliation. Since work and family arrangements are fundamentally interrelated with gender (Pascall, Lewis: 2004), we would expect that the introduction of GM and its adoption by the EU have impacted labor and family policies at the national level. A consequent adoption of GM would entail that existing policies were revised and new policies were drafted to enable the sharing of responsibilities between men and women in employment and care.

2. Feminist Policy Analysis Instruments and Typologies

In order to assess Romanian and German policies directed towards work and family reconciliation, we utilize three concepts that have been developed by the feminist analysts of welfare states and policies: the household continuum developed by Crompton, the concept of (de)familialism by Leitner, and Saxonberg's typology of (de)genderization. Often, researchers classify welfare states into different types of (gender) regimes. Yet, as Saxonberg (2013, p. 30) notes, this approach is often associated with a focus on outcomes: "they lose the ability to clearly analyze the influence that particular policies have on gender roles". We therefore focus on policies, and, as our analysis will show, this enables us to assess continuities and change in more detail.

Crompton's continuum of gendered household arrangements delineates five different types of labor division, from most traditional to least traditional models (Crompton: 1999; Rosenfeld et al: 2004, pp. 105-106). The male-breadwinner/female-carer model distinctly allocates men in the public sphere of employment, whereas women are responsible for the unpaid work of care and household in the private sphere. This traditional family model has been declining in most Western countries. The second model is the dual-earner/female-part-time-carer model. It is often also referred to as male-breadwinner/female-part-time-carer model, because these families still heavily rely on the larger male income. In this constellation, women are still responsible for care work, but also work part-time. At the third point of the continuum, Crompton places two similar models: the dual-earner/state-carer and the dual-earner/marketized-carer model. In both cases, substitute carers enable men and women to work full-time, therefore achieving gender equality in employment. At the end of the continuum is the dual-earner/dual-carer model, which is characterized by a "symmetry between women and men in both earning and caring" (Rosenfeld et al: 2004, p. 106). Not only does the latter require men to reduce their work volume in order to be involved in care work but it also involves a "radical restructuring of paid employment", where "full-time work as we know it might be superseded" (Crompton: 1999, p. 207) for both men and women. Crompton (1999, p. 205) stresses that "the male breadwinner/female carer is most likely to reproduce normative conditions of female subordination", whereas the dual earner/dual carer is "most likely to generate less traditional gender relations" as well as a lower level of economic inequality, regardless of gender (Crompton: 199, p. 208).

Based on Leitner's varieties of familialism, there are four types of family policies that regulate the caring function of the family: de-familialism, which promotes the dual earner model, supporting women to be enrolled in continuous employment by offering public childcare; explicit familialism, providing cash benefits and long parental leaves; implicit familialism, where parents are left without public financed support; and optional de-familialism, which is more flexible and allows families to choose their preferable childcare option (Javornik: 2014, pp. 240-242; Leitner: 2003, p. 359). As Javornik (2014, p. 245) underlines, a longer parental leave is a sign of familialism, whereas public childcare facilities for children from birth to school age belong to the de-familialization policies. Relying her argument on previous studies on the effects on children and parents, Javornik (2014, p. 247) argues that the optimal length of the parental leave should be of one year.

Saxonberg (2013, p. 33) proposes replacing the familialization/defamilialization perspective with genderizing "policies that promote different gender roles for men and women" and degenderizing "policies that promote the elimination of gender roles". When applying Saxonberg's frame of analysis to parental leave, there are several possibilities. Explicitly genderizing parental leave has a longer duration (between 2 and 3 years) and pays a low flat-rate benefit, which discourages men to take it, even if it is framed gender-neutrally. Parental leaves are implicitly genderizing if they are not offered, offered without benefit, or paid a means-tested benefit. Degenderizing parental leave includes a generous benefit capable of supporting a family, which is open to both parents and generally includes a non-transferable quota for the other parent.

Childcare policies are degenderizing if they offer a high number of public childcare places (or subsidies) for both children aged under and over 3. Implicitly genderizing childcare policies leave childcare services almost exclusively to the market, with few public childcare facilities and low subsidies (Saxonberg: 2013, pp. 35-39). Explicitly genderizing policies provide public childcare facilities, but these are available only in part-time and include mostly kindergartens for children over 3, not nurseries, because kindergartens are considered "places to educate and socialize children rather as institutions that enable mothers to work (hence the tradition of being open part-time)" (Saxonberg: 2013, p. 40).

Despite Saxonberg's critique of Leitner's perspective, our analysis utilizes both the concept of (de)familialization and (de)genderization, as they complement each other: Degenderizing legislation might on the one hand be achieved through paid parental leave, and on the other hand through extensive public childcare services. The former strategy is degenderizing and familializing, as both men and women are incentivized to participate in care work. The latter is degenderizing and defamilializing, with the state taking over the caring responsibility. These concepts enable us to describe policy intentions as well as their consequences for the gendered division of paid and unpaid work in the following case studies of Romania (3) and Germany (4).

3. Work and Family Reconciliation and Gender Mainstreaming in Romania

3.1. Family and Employment in Romania before entering the EU

Romania's welfare measures for families with children have suffered a great number of changes after the fall of communism in December 1989. The communist period proclaimed equality between men and women, but only in the public sphere

(Miroiu: 2004a). As such, during communism, the “power relations between men and women in the private sphere remained unchallenged” and the “division of labour within the family remained in its traditional shape” (Gheaus: 2008, p. 190). Gender inequality was masked by the fact that women had similar employment rates as men (Gheaus: 2008). In addition to a brutal pronatalist agenda (1966-1989), communism in Romania had a paternalistic approach to motherhood, which was reflected in the narrow construction of family policies: “maternity was framed as a health issue focusing on the wellbeing of the mother and the child” (Dohotariu: 2015, p. 127). Thus, women were entitled only to a paid maternity leave of 112 days in order to prepare for and recover after birth. In regards to work-life balance for mothers, the communist state provided free access to childcare facilities, but often these were insufficient and overcrowded.

After the fall of communism in December 1989, abortions became legal and women were, for the first time, entitled to a childcare leave paid at a rate of 65% from the monthly wage until the child turned one year, in addition to the maternity leave. In 1997, the paid childcare leave became gender neutral and it was extended until the child turned 2 years. Paternity leave was first introduced in 1999 and gave fathers a leave of five working days. The allowance for the paternity leave is offered at 100% of the daily wage of the father. Later on, Law 17/2000 established flexible eligibility criteria for the paid parental leave: the applicant parent should have worked at least 6 months of the last 12 months or 12 months of the last 24 months. The benefit was offered at a rate of 85% of the average of the last 6 months’ income, with no threshold. In 2005, the benefit was changed again, and it was paid at a low flat rate, regardless of the parent’s previous earnings. A minimum and a maximum threshold were introduced only after entering the EU.

These measures represent the bright side of the family policies adopted in the last two and a half decades. However, family policies rely on “cash transfers, including cash for care transfers and childcare services, which are nowadays based on three main objectives: (re)distributing income, increasing birth rates and implementing gender equality” (Hantrais in Dohotariu: 2015, p. 119). Childcare services have been ignored by the Romanian government, which adhered to a conservative regulatory framework leading to a familialization regime by reinforcing the traditional family values and by leaving “most duties to the family unit, adding the burden of greater responsibility” (Popescu: 2015, p. 94).

The post ‘89 paid childcare leave did not represent (solely) a compensation for the imposed separation between working mothers and their children during the communist period. After 1990, especially during the first decade, unemployment grew especially among women, although women’s occupation rate was higher than the European average (Băluță: 2014, p. 234). Thus, paid childcare provided at home by the mother was motivated by a couple of rationales: it secured mothers from unemployment (a paternalistic and protectionist tendency inherited from the former regime); strengthened the idea that children are better taken care of within the family and thus reinforced the women’s roles as caregivers; reintroduced the male-breadwinner model and decreased the necessity of having public childcare facilities. The public provision of childcare services suffered massive cutbacks since 1990, which led to the dramatic decrease of the number of nurseries (for children of 1 to 3 years) from 840 in 1990 to 285 in 2011. From the total of 285 units registered in 2011, only 1% were in rural areas (MADR: 2014, p. 55).

In Romania, public nurseries are “almost without exception concentrated in urban areas” (Kovács: 2015, p. 10); few have a full-time program and those that have

one do not provide it for free – parents have to pay for meals, extracurricular activities, and courses. The decline of public childcare services is also linked to the fact that public authorities do not have the legal obligation to secure a place in formal care and educational facilities, as it happens in most Scandinavian states and in Germany. Thus, as Kovács (2015, p. 7) underlines, “local authorities maintain what is nominally a demand-based supply of places, but in practice insufficient public provision”. Given the lack of public nurseries, the negative perception associated with their quality, and the dominant familialist discourse, middle-class parents revert to an alternative that meets both the traditionalist view on child raising, as well as the liberty to go back to work on a full-time basis: childminders (in most cases informally employed and paid). Families that cannot afford to pay for a childminder often appeal to the help of grandparents. Those unable to find support from the extended family or from the state - through access to public full-time public nurseries, find themselves in a situation that can be saved only by sacrificing gender equality: The two-year paid childcare leave is followed by a ‘gap year’ in childcare services - kindergartens are opened for children over 3 years old, public nurseries are scarce and mostly on a part-time schedule. Considering that women’s income is generally lower than men’s (with a gender pay gap around 10% in Romania, Eurostat), it comes as no surprise that women from lower income families will tend to extend their childcare leave from 2 to at least 3 years (the extension of the leave is not paid).

The other two pillars of Romanian family policy are the child benefit, introduced in 1993 (the only universal benefit for families with children, granted for all children, which is offered until the age limit of 18) and the “allowance for supporting the family” - a means-tested benefit whose beneficiaries are poor families, mostly from the rural areas (Popescu: 2015, p. 105).

3.2. Childcare in Romania after Entering the EU

After entering the EU, legislation was changed to raise the childcare benefit to 85% of the previous 12 months’ earnings. An important aspect was given by the minimum and maximum threshold. Between 2008 - 2016, if parents opted for the one-year leave, the maximum threshold was of approx. 773 euros, whereas if they opted for a two-years leave, the upper ceiling was of approx. 273 euros. The minimum threshold was identical for both options: approx. 136 euros. The only condition was that the parent receiving the benefit had worked continuously for the previous 12 months. Since July 2016, there is no upper ceiling for the childcare benefit anymore, which is offered at a rate of 85% of the last 12 months’ average revenues. The minimum threshold of 85% of the national minimum wage remained and consisted of approx. 241 euros in July 2016. This new legislative change was partly - only in regards to the eligibility criteria - adjusted in order to better fit the socio-economic reality of Romania. Thus, a parent can qualify for paid parental leave if he or she has had taxable income during at least 12 of the last 24 months prior to the birth of the child. The previous form of the law had a narrower pool of eligible parents: it required that the parent must have gained taxable incomes continuously for the last 12 months prior to birth. However, the 2016 law on parental-leave benefit perpetuates economic inequalities in the absence of an upper ceiling. As such, in September 2016, the Ministry of Labor announced that 0.17% of the paid parental-leave beneficiaries receive a third of the total allocated budget, where the national average value of the benefit was of approx. 312 euros and the maximum value was of 35,000 euros.

Apart from the gender-neutrality dimension of the parental leave introduced in 1997, in 2011 Romania adopted the EU Directive 2010/18/UE and encouraged men to participate in childcare activities: Romania has implemented the ‘father’s month’, a non-transferable quota of the childcare leave allocated to the other parent. According to the new regulation, if the other partner (not the main parent on leave) does not make use of the right of having a month of childcare leave, then the main partner’s benefit and leave is shortened by one month. This new measure had little success. In 2013, only 0.5% and in 2014 only 2.8% of the fathers entitled to take the non-transferable month have chosen to do so (Popescu: 2015, 103). The national data on fathers taking paid parental leave show a rather atypical picture: “Men are quite frequent among paid-leave beneficiaries, especially in the rural area. Romania has the highest rate of men taking leave entitlements from the European Union” (Popescu: 2015, p. 103), at an average of around 17% of men living in urban areas and 30% of men from rural areas (Ghebrea: 2013, p. 65). Unfortunately, this is not determined by gender-equality considerations: In Romania’s rural areas, men are more likely to be employed than women, and thus they are the only ones entitled to a paid parental leave. Women continue to be the ones who take care of children in rural areas, while men engage in informal paid work during their paid childcare leave.

An important deficiency regards the access to part-time work: Only mothers are allowed to work part-time during parental leave (Ghebrea: 2013, p. 65) and, nevertheless, the proportion of mothers working part-time is among the lowest in the EU. In order to improve gender equality, fathers should be entitled and encouraged to work part-time – and this seems to be an issue not only in Romania, but in all member states.

Table 1: Percentage of part-time employment of adults by sex, age groups, number of children and age of youngest child.

Number of children	Percentage of adults from 20 to 49 years					
	Romania		Germany		EU average	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Zero children	8.1	6.1	10.6	25.7	9.6	21.6
1 child , less than 6 years	4.7	5.0	6.4	57.4	5.7	33.5
2 children, less than 6 years	6.4	7.1	5.8	73.4	5.3	42.2
1 child, 6 to 11 years	6.4	7.0	5.5	64.4	5.4	33.3
2 children, 6 to 11 years	6.9	8.2	4.6	39.5	4.7	39.5

Source: Eurostat, table code “lfst_hhptechi”. Data available for 2015. Accessed 15 November 2016.

Table 1 shows similar values for men with children involved in part-time work: The values revolve at a rate of 5%. Moreover, men without children are almost twice as likely to be employed part-time compared to men with children. This can easily be correlated with the fact that the male-breadwinner model is still pervasive in Romania: Men with children are more present in full-time employment, because they are expected to provide for the family.

In 2002, the Barcelona European Council set the objective that all “Member States should remove disincentives to female labour force participation [...] and provide childcare by 2010 to at least 90 % of children between 3 years old and the mandatory school age and at least 33% of children under 3 years of age” (Barcelona European Council: 2002, p. 12). The Barcelona Objectives Report from 2013 acknowledges that although some member states have improved their share, most have not made progress towards the targets, and the situation even deteriorated for some member states in 2011, after the adoption of austerity measures. Moreover, the importance of work-life balance is emphasized in the Europe 2020 Strategy, but given the current state of affairs in Romania, this objective is deemed to be underachieved.

Table 2: Formal childcare by age group and duration - % over the population of each age group.

	Romania		Germany	EU
	2007	2014	2014	2014
Up to 3 years - part-time (< 29 h/week)	3	2	12	14
Up to 3 years - full-time (> 30 h/week)	3	1	15	14
From 3 years to compulsory school age - part-time (< 29 h/week)	41	37	35	34
From 3 years to compulsory school age - full-time (> 30 h/week)	16	15	54	49

Source: Eurostat, table code “ilc_caindformal”. Accessed 6 March 2016.

Table 2 shows that since 2007, the year Romania became a member of the EU, the number of children attending both part-time and full-time nurseries has decreased from a total of 6% to 3% of children under 3 years enrolled in formal childcare. The data show a surprising shift, since we would expect that the gender-equality discourse highly promoted by the EU would positively impact the provision of public nurseries and kindergartens in order to help mothers achieve work-family balance. A similar pattern can be identified for childcare facilities for children over 3 years: The percentage decreased since 2007, moving away from the average value at EU level.

3.3. EU's and GM's Influence on Family Policies in Romania

The EU's interest on work-family balance was originally based on the need for sharing household duties between men and women, but later became more focused on increasing employment, and thus, greater relevance was given to the labor market than to family policies (Lewis: 2006; Saxonberg: 2015, p. 514). Romania transmitted

its request to become a member of the EU in 1995, the official negotiations on its accession started at the beginning of 2000, and its membership status was obtained in 2007. Thus, negotiations were held after GM was adopted by the EU through the Treaty of Amsterdam. According to Saxonberg (2015, p. 514) the EU has “greater influence on countries when they try to become members than when they have already become members”. He also stresses that the EU had little direct impact on family policies in post-communist countries. Most of them already registered the minimum requirements such as those regarding maternity leave. Among the direct demands that influenced family policies we can count its requirement to formulate laws gender-neutrally and thus to open the parental leave to fathers. Saxonberg (2015, p. 512) notes that in practice, parental leave remained an “extended maternity leave”, because the EU does not regulate the payment level of the parental-leave benefit, and men are less likely to take it if it is poorly paid or at a flat rate. The countries where fathers take over 15% of the leave duration provide generous benefits of at least 80% from the parent’s previous earnings and also provide a non-transferable quota from the total leave duration (Saxonberg: 2015, p. 517; Castro-Garcia, Pazos-Moran: 2015, p. 3).

Regarding the impact the EU membership had on Romania, the easiest way to identify results can be found in the public sphere, such as: “non-discrimination, employment and the creation of institutions with a mandate in the field of gender equality” (Chiva: 2009, p. 204). The implementation of the *acquis communautaire* led to the adoption of the Law on Equality of Opportunity in 2002 and the creation of the National Agency for Equality of Opportunity Between Men and Women (ANES) in 2005, which, during the austerity measures of 2010, was dissolved and became “a simple directorate” of the Ministry of Labor (Băluță: 2014, p. 236). Moreover, this institution, designed to be the main GM promoter, was heavily politicized and its members were not, by far, gender specialists. In October 2015, ANES was re-established, functioning under the Labor and Social Protection Ministry. An official explanation has not been provided, but feminist NGOs have long advocated for its re-establishment since the effects of the crisis have passed.

According to Inglot et al (2012, p. 27), changes regarding family policy in former communist states after joining the EU “ha[ve] benefited working middle-class families, sometimes at the expense of the poor”. Despite the high percentage of the salary offered as parental-leave benefit, little progress has been made on universal benefits such as the child allowance. The fact that paid parental leave was opened to men and, moreover, that they have a non-transferable month from the leave period, represents a measure beneficial to all women, regardless of class. This is clearly derived from EU-accession negotiations and aims to stimulate an equal sharing of childcare responsibilities within the family. What is detrimental to women, especially those living in rural areas, is the fact that this equality-enhancing measure is accessible to only half of the couples with children, where both parents have been in employment at least 12 months in the last 2 years prior to birth (for the 2016 form of the law). Given this mandatory condition, an alternative method to contribute to gender equality and also to diminish economic inequalities (both for parents and children) would be the provision of public full-time childcare facilities for children from 0 to 6/7 years. The EU has not put pressure on its member states to meet particular targets and, as Saxonberg (2015, p. 517) notes, the Barcelona targets are only recommendations. Moreover, a target of 33% for children from 0 to 3 years is still low, especially given the fact that it does not specify whether it regards full-time or part-time nurseries. If the Barcelona targets had binding aspects, then Romania (and other member states) might have changed

its legislation by now to guarantee access to public childcare facilities, such as the Scandinavian countries and Germany do.

To summarize, among the changes in family policies deriving from Romania's EU membership we count the gender-neutral paid parental leave and the father's non-transferable month of leave. Romania has a rather generous level of payment (85% of the last 12 months' income) and also provides a back-to-work bonus. Prior to gaining its membership, Romania already enforced paid maternity leave, paid paternity leave, and paid parental leave.

3.4. The Economic Crisis' Impact on Family Policies

A common observation, when it comes to women's advancement and gender equality measures, is the vulnerability to budget cuts in financially tough times (Brumlop: 1994, p. 460). This could also be observed for Romania. The 2010 austerity package, which was negotiated with the International Monetary Fund, aimed at reducing the impact of the economic crisis in the late 2000s, and consisted of ten measures, three of which were deemed to negatively affect families: a reduction of the parental-leave benefit to a flat rate at around 150 euros per month, the dismissal of the universal trousseau for newborns (a birth grant introduced in 2006), and a cut from the support allowance for poor families with children (Inglot et al: 2012, p. 39). Due to protests organized by mothers in Bucharest, the first measure was removed and, instead, the benefit was cut from 85% to 75% of the previous wage and the upper ceiling was lowered from approx. 910 to approx. 773 euros. Parents who opted for the two-year paid leave were affected more: The benefit was cut to approx. 273 euros. The upper and lower thresholds remained unchanged until July 2016, although the effects of the economic recession had passed a few years prior. The latter two measures from the austerity package remained as well. As Inglot et al (2012, pp. 39-40) underline, the protests misleadingly framed the flat-rate childcare benefit as "against all mothers" as this cut would have affected only around 15% of the beneficiaries from the urban areas and 7% from the rural areas – because the rest of the beneficiaries already received the minimum amount. Moreover, given the conditionality of working uninterruptedly the last 12 months, only "half of all Romanian couples with small children" (Dohotariu: 2015, p. 129) met this eligibility criteria and qualified for the parental-leave benefit.

3.5. Analysis of the Family Policies from the Gender Perspective

We will briefly analyze the evolution of family policies in Romania using the insights provided by the theoretical approaches presented in section 2. Taking into account the chronological evolution of family policies in Romania presented above, one can identify two periods that both fall under the umbrella of explicit familialism following Leitner's approach, given the fact that childcare services remained constantly ignored after the fall of communism.

During this period, family policy in Romania was less focused on enabling women to reconcile maternal and professional roles, but instead relied on cash benefits and extended parental leave, thus encouraging women to stay at home. At the same time, there has been little effort to improve childcare services, which suggests an opposite approach compared to the communist period. This "refamilialization trend", which also reinforces the male-breadwinner model (Robila: 2012, p. 35), is common to most Eastern European countries (Saxonberg: 2013, p. 29). As Păunescu (2012, pp.158-159)

notes, the post '89 period is characterized by a tendency of “individualizing maternity” while showing a “community indifference” on the alternative and complementary measures to the paid parental leave.

The first post-communist decade (1990-2000) was explicitly genderizing in regards to both parental leave (open only to mothers) and childcare services. After Romania started negotiating its EU membership, there was a shift towards degenderizing the parental leave: The most significant changes were the gender neutrality of the leave (Law 120/1997) and the father's non-transferable month. Today, Romania has a degenderizing parental leave, but still an explicitly genderizing childcare policy (given the much higher percentage of children over 3 enrolled in kindergartens than children under 3 enrolled in nurseries). So far, GM has not proven to lead to specific interventions in regards to work-family balance in Romania after becoming a member of the EU. However, given the fact that GM was already incorporated into the EU's agenda when Romania was accepted as a member, we cannot fully dismiss its influence on the conditions imposed to candidate members. This influence has manifested in the form of what Miroiu (2004a) calls “room-service feminism”, in the sense that the aforementioned legislative changes did not occur following national initiatives, but they resulted mostly from EU directives. Nevertheless, as noted by Krizsan and Popa (2010, p. 383), the European Commission missed the opportunity to better implement gender equality policies during the Eastern enlargement by addressing gender issues only through soft laws.

The current family policies in Romania make it impossible to name a sole prevalent household arrangement type based on Crompton's proposals. We rather identify two models valid for the present period: The male-breadwinner/female-carer model applies to families with children under 3 and the dual earner/state carer model to families with children over 3 (as the state provides care/educational services mostly in part-time regime). During communism, there was a sole model, the dual earner/state carer (Crompton: 1999, p. 205), but it did not address the traditional culture ingrained in society. After December 1989, Romania's family policies moved towards a more traditional pattern, that of the male breadwinner/female-carer - especially for families with children under 3. Although at first, this was more prone to be encountered in the case of poor families (due to scarce public/affordable nurseries), the 2016 legislative change especially encourages parents with high earnings to opt for the two years of childcare leave.

In an opposite direction than their western peers, some feminist authors have suggested that laissez-faire liberal economic policies would better fit the need of women in regards to work-family balance (i.e. Miroiu: 2004a). However, as the Eurostat data presented in section 3.2 show, the state's passivity with regard to childcare services has been detrimental to women. Moreover, laissez-faire policies are implicitly genderizing in the absence of the governmental intervention in the market, e.g. through subsidizing or providing public childcare (Dohotariu: 2015, p. 124). Although better than conservative, explicitly genderizing policies, laissez-faire policies do not improve the status of all women as they are beneficial only to the middle class. Thus, laissez-faire policies will allow and perpetuate the existing gender and income inequalities as “it forces many mothers to stay at home, when they cannot find affordable day care” (Saxonberg: 2013, pp. 30-31).

Access to formal childcare is pivotal to both the well-being of parents and their children. Public childcare for children aged under 3 remains Romania's persistent problem since the fall of communism. As Gheaus (2011, pp. 490-492) notes, there are

many substantial reasons why non-parental public care has beneficial outcomes, such as the advancement of gender justice and the diminishment of social and economic inequalities that children inherit from their families. Public childcare facilities would give children the chance to catch up on diverse aspects, which might be lacking from their private care provided by parents.

4. Work and Family Reconciliation and Gender Mainstreaming in Germany

4.1. *Work and Family in the Divided Germany and its Reunification*

Germany was divided into two states in 1949, the western Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), and the eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR). This division of social, economic, and political life led to the development of family ideals that, *inter alia*, shaped family and employment policies. These differences are firstly thought to be the result of institutional divergence, and secondly of “differing perceptions of the value of women’s employment” (Rosenfeld et al: 2004, p. 120). When Germany was reunified in 1990, the two states had developed distinct family discourses, models, and policies that resulted in different realities for East and West German women and men (Töns, Young: 2001).

Similar to Romania, the GDR’s dominant policies promoted the dual-earner/state-carer model (Rosenfeld et al: 2004). An extensive childcare system defamilialized care responsibilities; labor, wage, and parental-leave policies were degenderizing as they incentivized full-time employment for both men and women (Ostner: 2010, p. 218). As a consequence of these policies, the vast majority of women, including mothers, were employed full-time (Töns, Young: 2001, p. 135). In contrast to Romania, women enjoyed more rights, such as the right to abortion.

In the FRG, the male-breadwinner/female-carer model was promoted as ideal (Töns, Young: 2001, p. 131). Most legislation - taxation, parental leave, and labor policies - supported this model. The principle of subsidiarity meant that family members were obligated to support each other; the state’s duty on the other hand was to strengthen family relations (Ostner: 2010, p. 220). Care responsibilities were largely familialized, as childcare facilities, especially for full-time care, were scarce (Ostner: 2010, p. 218), and implicitly genderized: paid parental leave was available for both parents since 1986, but did not financially incentivize men to take the leave as well (Saxonberg: 2013, pp. 39-44). The number of women working part-time had grown over time, but especially mothers still opted out of employment (Rosenfeld et al: 2004, p. 111; Töns, Young: 2001, p. 135). A shift had therefore occurred from the male-breadwinner/female-carer model to a modernized version, in which women worked part-time, but were still responsible for the majority of care and household work (Rosenfeld et al: 2004, p. 110).

Over the first decade since reunification, the formerly-divided German states converged significantly as a consequence of institutional and policy changes, which primarily affected the East: During the reunification process, most East German legislation was replaced by West German law, which led to the elimination of most measures that supported the dual-earner/state-carer model (Töns, Young: 2001, p. 131). Only small steps were made in family and labor policies, for instance the right to a childcare place for children aged 3 to 6 was introduced in 1996, but only for part-time care (Töns, Young: 2001, p. 134). Policies were still familializing and genderizing care work, but enabled female part-time work and thus promoted a modernized breadwinner

model (Rosenfeld et al: 2004, p. 115). During the 1990s, there was a convergence of gendered patterns of labor-force participation in eastern and western Germany: While women in western Germany took on more and more positions, mostly in part-time employment, women in eastern Germany increasingly shifted from full- to part-time work (Rosenfeld et al: 2004). In the West, women's participation rate rose from 58.4% in 1991 to 60.5% in 1998, whereas eastern German women's rate sank from 77.2% to 73.5% (Töns, Young: 2001, p. 139). Rosenfeld et al (2004) attribute this convergence to involuntary shifts in the East, but also to a convergence in women's preferences.

4.2. The Introduction of Gender Mainstreaming

In the new millennium, Germany followed the dominant frame of market integration and employability, which had emerged in the guidelines of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the EU and was implemented by an increasing number of Western welfare states (Lewis: 2006; Ostner: 2010). According to Lewis (2006, p. 430), work and family reconciliation “became increasingly tied to the new desire to prioritize flexibility and security, and an important component of the commitment to ‘social quality’ at work”, making reconciliation more an issue of employment policy than gender equality. GM was often merely used as an instrument to increase economic growth by raising women's employment rates. Similarly, Germany introduced GM in the early 2000s with a strong emphasis on gender equality in employment. A new Social Democratic and Green government simultaneously introduced GM and the new paradigm of employability. However, the latter had a significantly larger impact on work and family reconciliation.

The government first referred to GM in the program “Frau und Beruf” (“Woman and Work”), which described inter-departmental tasks to improve gender equality - for example in the area of work and family reconciliation and women's careers (Lewalter et al: 2009, p. 127). Several measures were taken to implement GM; for instance a law on gender equality in the federal administration was passed in 2001. Pilot projects within federal and state administrations explored possibilities of implementation (Lewalter et al: 2009; Töns, Young: 2001).

Further reforms were launched in the “National Action Plan for Employment 2000”, which amongst others aimed at activating the non-working population, especially women, and adopted GM as a concept (Töns, Young: 2001). Next to the reform of unemployment benefits and social assistance (Belzelt: 2007), parental leave was adapted to be more flexible: Parents could decide between a leave of one or two years, the former entailing a flat-rate benefit one third lower than the latter. Ostner (2010, p. 225) noted that Germany began “giving preferentiality to services funded and mainly provided by state or para-state agencies” in childcare. Still, childcare services remained scarce for children under 3; only 11% of all children under the age of 3 had a place in childcare in 2004, in contrast to over 80% of children between the age of 3 and 6 (Destatis: 2005). Women continued to be dependent on their partners, and were still responsible for care work. Dual-earner couples accounted only for 56% of all families (with married parents) in 2003 (Destatis: 2004).

Similar to the lack of gender considerations in the social assistance reform, as shown by Belzelt (2007), GM principles were not followed when family policy was changed, either: Parental-leave benefits were still paid at a low flat rate, and thus did not encourage fathers to take the leave. Gender Controlling could have revealed that, due to the male-breadwinner model, families were not able to forgo the father's

income. The literature points to two reasons GM principles were not implemented: First, family policy was aimed at furthering employment, not at gender equality and equal sharing of responsibilities (Ostner: 2010). Thus, there was a lack of motivation to change the predominant, gendered household arrangements. Second, Töns and Young (2001: p. 151) had already hypothesized that the implementation of GM would “face institutional barriers that are part of the bureaucratic nature of German decision-making”. Efforts to integrate GM into the day-to-day business of policy-making had remained small (Lewalter et al: 2009).

4.3. Progress and Obstacles Towards a Dual-Earner/Dual-Carer Model

The move towards a dual-earner model in family policy continued when Germany was governed by a grand coalition of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats from 2005 to 2013. However, as Lewalter et al (2009) observed, the implementation of GM was halted and already established structures were dissolved. The authors noted that the government had declared GM as successfully implemented in 2009, whereas the United Nations simultaneously criticized Germany for having abandoned the strategy. As this section shows, the lack of GM led to an incoherent mix of family policies.

In 2006, a new parental leave was introduced that was strongly influenced by Scandinavian models (Ostner: 2010). Since 2007, parental benefits (Elterngeld) are paid for twelve months; two extra months are paid if the other parent takes at least two months of parental leave as well, thus encouraging fathers to participate in childcare, too (Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetz, - BEEG). Benefits are paid at 67% of the income (minimum 300, maximum 1800 euros). The new policy implemented the EU directive 96/34/EC, due since 1998. The BEEG had great impact on male participation in childcare: in 2005, only 3.22% of parental benefits were received by men; in 2009, after its introduction, this number had increased to 18.6% (Destatis: 2005, p. 211; Destatis: 2010, p. 217). The new legislation was a first and important step towards equal sharing of childcare responsibility in partnerships since parental leave was phrased gender-neutrally in the 1980s. Yet, parental leave is most commonly taken by women for the duration of 12 months, with their partners taking the leave of two bonus months (Destatis: 2015, p. 60). Ciccia and Verloo (2012, pp. 520-523) find that Germany's change in parental leave did not conform to any of the ideal types prevalent in theory on the gendered division of households: despite large improvements towards gender equality, it does not fully support the dual-earner/dual-carer model.

Due to austerity measures in response to the economic crisis, Germany cut parental benefits for social assistance recipients as well as for high-income earners, slightly reduced spending in parental benefits for parents with medium-income, and put on hold plans to increase partner months from two to four (Leschke, Jepsen: 2014, pp. 499-503). Leschke and Jepsen also note that the economic crisis affected men and women differently: Women were more strongly affected by cuts in benefits, men by short-time work. The authors criticized a lack of GM activities in order to control the gendered outcomes of the measures.

Additionally, a legal entitlement to a childcare place for children aged 1 to 3 was introduced in 2008, and is in effect since August 2013 (Trappe et al: 2015, p. 234). The new legislation did not start successfully, as the availability of childcare places did not meet the demand. Many communities were overburdened, and a lengthy strike of childcarers followed, demanding better salaries and better working conditions (Spiegel

Online: 2015). Furthermore, childcare is not free of charge, and in some cases, parents could not afford the high costs of these services (Wiegmann: 2013). Yet with this new direction in family policy, Germany aimed at achieving the Europe 2020 targets for female employment, as well as the Barcelona objectives for childcare availability from 2002. Since 2010, the availability of childcare places for under 3 year olds has visibly increased (Table 3). In 2013, Germany was close to meeting the Barcelona objectives for childcare. Still, only 19% of all children under the age of 3 had access to a full-time place in 2013 and the percentage even decreased to 15% in 2014.

Table 3: Children in Formal Childcare in Germany in Percent per Age Category, 2005-2014.

Year	children < 3 (%)		children 3-8 (%)	
	total	full-time	total	full-time
2005	16	8	87	26
2007	16	9	86	27
2009	19	12	88	40
2011	24	15	90	44
2013	28	19	89	54
2014	27	15	89	54

Source: Eurostat, table code “ilc_caindformal”. Accessed 6 March 2016.

In 2013, the *Betreuungsgeld*, a monthly flat-rate payment of 150 euros per child, was introduced for parents who did not make use of childcare services but instead stayed at home with their child during the age of 1 to 3 (Auth: 2012). Several Scandinavian states had introduced similar policies, although with a higher compensation, which had led to a slight decrease in usage of childcare facilities and employment of mothers (Auth: 2012, p. 138). The new policy was an initiative of Christian Democrats, who formed a coalition with the Free Democratic Party from 2009 to 2013. Conservatives argued that it would enhance freedom of choice for parents. Critics referred to the new legislation as “stove bonus” as it was expected to strengthen the male-breadwinner/female-carer model. Researchers highlighted that the *Betreuungsgeld* would likely only be used by women in families that were not dependent on two incomes or by low-qualified and migrant women working part-time (Boll, Reich: 2012). As Ahrens and Blum (2012) stressed, the policy was a concession to those Christian politicians who had opposed the childcare expansion in the prior legislative period. In 2015, the law was declared unconstitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court because of the constitutional division of legislative competences between the Federation and the federal states (Bundesverfassungsgericht: 2015). Only applications prior to the court’s decision were still paid after June 2015. The benefit was primarily used by mothers in Western Germany: 91% of the benefits paid in the beginning of 2016 were paid to women in the West (Destatis: 2016). The *Betreuungsgeld* had meant a step backwards from enabling the reconciliation of work and family for both men and women.

In 2014, the most common household arrangement was still the male-breadwinner model, either with a female part-time earner or with a stay-at-home parent. In 35.9% of all couples with children, only one parent was employed (Destatis: 2015, p. 58). In 52.2% of all couples, both were employed, but only in 22.6% of these cases both parents worked full-time. From January 2015 on, a new parental-leave policy offers parents a choice between the scheme introduced in 2007, *Elterngeld*, and the new leave, *ElterngeldPlus* (BMFSFJ: 2015). With *ElterngeldPlus*, part-time working parents receive half the money they would get with the existing leave, but for twice the length. The policy enables both a faster return to work and a longer period of support from the government: “If mothers and fathers both decide to work part-time simultaneously – for four months in parallel and between 25 to 30 hours per week – they will receive four additional *ElterngeldPlus* months each” (BMFSFJ: 2015, p. 5).

The parental leave introduced in 2007 had a significant influence on the sharing of care responsibilities. However, most fathers did not extend their leave beyond the two bonus months. As Table 1 shows, part-time work among men is uncommon, and even rarer among fathers. With the *ElterngeldPlus*, a change towards more fathers working part-time can be expected. The policy also aims to support women’s earlier return to work after childbirth. The new policy is expected to have positive effects on gender equality in the private sphere as well. According to Bünning (2015), taking parental leave increased fathers’ involvement in care work later on; if they took more than two months leave, their involvement in housework increased as well. Since the *ElterngeldPlus* legislation incentivizes fathers to step back from paid work and to participate in care work for a longer period of time, an increase in sharing responsibilities in the private sphere can be expected.

4.4. The Impact of Gender Mainstreaming on Work and Family Reconciliation

As the presentation of policies and outcomes relating to work and family reconciliation in Germany has shown, the process towards egalitarian family models in policy and in practice has not been linear. Today’s mix of degenderizing and genderizing, and familializing and defamilializing policies is the result of diverse actors, institutions, and cultural norms (Ostner: 2010). While some researchers highlight the positive developments of the recent past, others view the mix of legacies and new models as problematic. As Hummel writes, Germany’s social fabric is “[shaped] by asynchronicities and contradictions [...] - at the institutional-structural as well as at the cultural-symbolic level of gender roles, norms, and values. This impedes women and men to realize an existing wish to parent, or to even develop such a wish in the future” (Hummel: 2007, p. 99). She stresses that contradictory messages from policies have an influence on women’s and men’s future plans.

The EU has played an important role by providing a dominant frame of discussion, by issuing directives, and by setting targets. However, Germany has resisted change for a long time, for instance concerning the parental-leave directives. Even when Germany adopted a frame of employability and work-family-reconciliation promoted by the EU, and made GM efforts, actual implementation was slow and ultimately unsuccessful. Domestically, German traditionalists, mainly from the Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union, have continuously advocated for a genderized and familialized family model with the arguments of child-well-being and the mother’s freedom of choice, specifically their freedom to opt out of employment for their child (Wiliarty: 2010; Boll, Reich: 2012).

GM did have an impact on German family discourse and policies. Since the Social-Democratic/Green coalition introduced new paradigms of employability and sustainability in family politics, measures have increasingly been degenderizing through gender-inclusive language, efforts of including both parents in care work, and enabling an earlier return to employment after childbirth. However, to speak of a successful implementation of GM would not be true. The *Betreuungsgeld* would not have passed if prior to the adoption of the policy an impact study had been conducted, and if policy makers were committed to gender equality in paid and unpaid work. The lack of Gender Controlling and Gender Budgeting shows furthermore that GM principles may have been symbolically implemented in legislation, but not institutionalized in decision-making processes. This is particularly evident in the persistence of marital splitting in taxation. While other countries have already switched to individual taxation in the 1990s, Germany still privileges married couples, especially the male-breadwinner model (Camus: 2010, p. 126), thus undermining efforts of parental-leave and childcare provisions. Furthermore, the principle of subsidiarity is still in place, and therefore familialism and implicit genderization are still present in policies that promote private care solutions (Auth: 2012; Trappe et al: 2015, p. 239). While Ostner (2010) notes that family definitions have been expanded in recent years to include non-traditional families, legislation has not caught up with this change yet. Married, heterosexual couples are still privileged compared to single parents, multi-parent families, and lesbian and gay parents.

Lewalter et al (2009, p. 135) have already noted that GM as a label (and strategy) had been abandoned by Germany. Today, while completely absent from policy-making, GM has become a target of right-wing, Christian fundamentalist, and men's activist groups, who view GM as a strategy to "equalize" gender differences (i.e. to erase gender), to destroy nuclear families, and to promote homosexuality (Hark, Villa: 2015). The newly established right-wing party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) demands, amongst others, the abolishment of previously implemented GM legislation as well as the defunding of gender studies at German universities (AfD Baden Württemberg: 2015). The government, on the other hand, has recently been focused on the paradigm of diversity, and the promotion of diversity management in German companies and institutions through the non-binding, voluntary diversity charta *Charta der Vielfalt* (Braunmühl: 2009). In this context, it is very unlikely that a revival of GM would be successful, especially without a new label. However, the area of family policy would still greatly benefit from the implementation of GM principles, as legislation undermining gender equality efforts would be revised.

5. Discussion

Despite their different social and economic positions, both Romania and Germany struggled to implement the EU framework aimed at gender equality in family policy. As our case studies have shown, both countries failed to institutionalize GM principles, as well as the methods of Gender Budgeting and Gender Controlling in their national policies aimed at work and family reconciliation. EU framing and legislation still impacted work and family policies in Romania and Germany, however to a much lesser extent in the former than the latter.

GM has rarely been used as an argument in Romania when drafting family policies. EU directives have been the major change in enhancing equal sharing of childcare work within the family. However, given the fact that the directives on the

gender-neutral childcare leave and on the father's non-transferable month were drafted after the adoption of GM at EU level, we can conclude that GM has had an indirect influence. Other measures that would advance gender equality in regards to work-family balance have not yet been taken in Romania. In Germany, on the other hand, GM was first well received, and efforts towards implementation were made. However, the core methods of monitoring, restructuring, Gender Budgeting, and Controlling were not institutionalized. Thus, Germany's family and labor policies remained incoherent, despite recent developments towards an egalitarian model. In both countries, the goal of gender equality was not protected from austerity policies, as the responses to the economic crisis have shown, due to a lack of Gender Controlling.

Despite a common basis in an EU directive, we observed an interesting difference between Romania and Germany in the way the 'father's' month(s) are framed: in Romania, the policy is depicted as a penalty - if the father does not take it, then the parental leave of the mother is shortened by one month - whereas in Germany, the two months allocated to the fathers are framed as a bonus; the parental leave gets extended by two months.

The importance of legally binding legislation and EU regulations is evident in the differences in childcare services: The two countries differ majorly in the percentage of children under 3 years enrolled in public childcare facilities. Germany is close to meeting the Barcelona objectives (27% of children under 3 were enrolled in childcare facilities in 2014), whereas Romania is nowhere near reaching this target (3% in 2014). Germany's increase in the number of childcare places can be attributed to a law granting every child a place in childcare services, whereas Romania lacks such legislation and leaves this subject to be managed by local authorities.

Another point of departure between the two countries refers to freedom of choice in regards to part-time work for both men and women - an element which has been central to GM ever since its introduction in the Beijing Declaration. As Table 1 shows, only approx. 5% of fathers work part-time in both Romania and Germany, a value also common at EU-28 level. However, Germany has addressed this issue with the *ElterngeldPlus*, which will enable and encourage men to take part-time work and a part-time parental leave, thus motivating them to share childcare responsibilities while also encouraging women to re-enter the job market sooner. In Romania, only mothers legally have the right to benefit from a part-time schedule. Flexible work arrangements are important for realizing work-family reconciliation. However, part-time work without part-time public childcare services is deficient, as it poses the question of who takes care of the child while the parents are working.

The most recent developments in the field of family policy and work-family balance show a different pattern between the two countries. While Germany moves towards equal sharing of childcare responsibilities between both parents, Romania continues to focus almost exclusively on cash benefits that encourage a longer parental leave and at the same time ignores the shortage of public nurseries, which amplifies economic inequalities between low- and high-income families as well as rural and urban areas. As such, Romania does not only remain behind in policies that would advance gender equality in child raising, but it also deepens economic inequalities: on the one hand, it has recently eliminated the upper ceiling for the parental-leave benefit and on the other continues to offer no support for low-income parents that do not qualify at all for the benefit or qualify only for the minimum amount.

6. Conclusion

Regarding the influence the EU has on its member states, Saxonberg advocates that nowadays the EU largely relies on GM as indirect influence on national family policies, which will contribute to strengthen the discourse on feminism and gender equality (Saxonberg: 2015, p. 512). However, we view this hypothesis as problematic, because GM has not been institutionalized properly: there is no monitoring, no sanctioning mechanism, and there are no consequences for non-compliance. We question whether the newest members of the EU are willing to adopt and implement GM principles when a founding member like Germany still only hesitantly introduces policies that support a degenderized family model. Despite this reluctance to systematically change family policy, our analysis points to several newly introduced measures that can be used as a reference point for member states looking to improve gender equality in work-family reconciliation, such as the ElterngeldPlus. However, with regard to Germany's incoherence and resistance towards EU regulations, we conclude that Germany does not serve as a positive role model for newly joined member states in regards to GM implementation and compliance with EU regulation. Romania, on the other hand, continues to strengthen the "refamilialization trend" through an explicitly genderizing childcare policy that almost exclusively supports raising children within the family, and recent developments in parental-leave policy did not address the gendered class inequality that it perpetuates.

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