

Sixth Annual IOS Conference: Social Policy in East and Southeast Europe in Past and Present. Demographic Challenges and Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion

Authors

Luka Dursun
Ekaterina Skoglund
Pieter Troch

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The opening event of the sixth annual conference for the Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies brought together two keynote lectures on social policy in Eastern Europe, in both past and present, at the Parkhotel Maximilian. **Prof. Ulf Brunnbauer**, Director of the IOS, welcomed all the guests and alluded to the relevance of the topic of this year's conference for contemporary public debates not only in Eastern Europe, but also globally. The conveners of the conference, **Dr. Ekaterina Skoglund** and **Dr. Pieter Troch (Dr. Alzbeta Mangarella** co-organised the conference but is currently on maternity leave) presented the particular focus points of the conference, namely, demographic challenges and patterns of inclusion and exclusion. They raised questions of historical continuity and discontinuity, the particularities and commonalities of social policy in Eastern Europe in a European dimension and the concurrence of social policy and patterns of migration in Europe.

The first keynote lecture was given by **Dr. Malgorzata Fidelis**, Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago, on "Socialist Modernity Goes Maternal: Gender and the Welfare State in Eastern Europe in the 1970s". In her talk, Professor Fidelis suggested to transcend the boundaries of the national state, which often confine the historical analysis of social policy. Instead, she argued to bring in transnational or even global trends when studying how social rights unfolded in practice. State socialist Central and Eastern Europe is a good place to begin such an analysis, because of the ideological weight ascribed to social equality. Focussing more specifically on socialist modernity in the 1970s, Professor Fidelis convincingly claimed that in their quest to address global social upheaval, the socialist states of Eastern Europe took a "maternal turn", prioritising the reproductive role of women as mother and housewives over a multi-dimensional view of women in society. Professor Fidelis presented an overview of legislation in family regulation, which showed that the 1970s throughout the "Eastern Bloc" was a period of intensified policy-making favouring the reproductive role of women (abortion legislation, maternity leave, and family allowances). Although a large majority of women welcomed and made use of these policies, they in fact had ambiguous effects on the place and role of women in society. Contrary to the dominant

positive interpretation of the 1970s as a period of liberalisation, increased consumption, and an expanding welfare society in state socialism, women were increasingly and categorically excluded from the public and productive spheres and confined to the domestic sphere. Even in seemingly progressive public discourse, the values of the nuclear family and the maternal role of women were not in question. Professor Fidelis concluded that socialist modernity was firmly grounded in gender hierarchies, and as such, the place of women was highly ambiguous.

The second keynote speech was held by **Dr. Pieter Vanhuysse**, Professor of Comparative Welfare State Research at the Danish Centre for Welfare Studies at the University of Southern Denmark. Prof. Vanhuysse delivered a lecture on “Pro-elderly welfare states in Central and Eastern Europe: evidence, policy, alternatives”. The core topic of the presentation is the resources flows between generations, and a potential asymmetrical nature of these flows due to the demographic and policy context within countries.

As Prof. Vanhuysse underlined at the beginning of his speech, there is a growing sense of alarmism both about ageing and elderly-based welfare regimes of some developed countries. More and more often the demographic developments are considered as determining the “destiny” of a country. In order to investigate the foundations of these concerns, he started with presenting an Elderly-Bias Social Spending indicator (EBiSS) that compares overall elderly-oriented state spending, per person 65+ to the overall non-elderly state spending per person 15-64. The evidence, which can be found in Vanhuysse’s book “Intergenerational justice in aging societies” (2013), highlights a variety of pro-elderly spending scenarios across the countries of Western, Central and Eastern Europe. The ‘middle-aged’ Hungary spends 4.8 times more on every elderly as on every non-elderly citizen, while a ‘slightly older’ Estonia does only 2.9 times more. In general, all European states, as welfare states, devote significantly more resources per capita to the currently elderly than to the currently young.

In the second part of the speech, Prof. Vanhuysse underlined that focussing only on the “visible world” of public spending towards elderly excludes from consideration large intra-familial transfers of cash and time spent on care. The flows of transfers across generation, in monetary and time terms, are neither symmetric nor easily traceable. First, there exists asymmetric socialization of care, namely working-age population contributes to care for the elderly through taxes and social security contributions, while care for children is undertaken through private channels. Second, there is the asymmetric statistical visibility, namely resources flowing to the elderly are near-fully observed in National Accounts, but inter- and intra-household transfers are rarely registered, and hence barely visible in national statistics.

However, once we use data on the value of all forms of resources transferred across generations, a radically different picture emerges on what generations give each other. All European societies, as societies, transfer more per capital resources to children than to the elderly. Net time transfers are highest among newborns; remain large throughout childhood and teenage years. Transfers become negative, and hence “childhood” finishes, at the age of

24. “Old age” starts at 60, though total transfers received by an individual are not positive until the age of 80: adulthood lasts significantly longer in terms of unpaid household labor.

In the discussion, the audience raised questions of the determining role of demographics in this “maternal turn”. Professor Fidelis argued that demographics surely explains pronatalist policies in state socialism, but noted that the particular gender hierarchies and the reinforcement of the reproductive role of women cannot be explained as the natural outcome of pronatalist demographic concerns. She clarified her point that this policy measure should be understood in a global context of establishing social stability and addressing social upheaval. A further point raised in the discussion was that the “maternal turn” was a clear backlash against the policies promoting gender equality in public life introduced by the Stalinist state socialist regimes in the immediate post-war years. A point for further discussion raised in relation to Professor Fidelis’ talk relates to the parallels between the maternal turn of the 1970s and the current social policy measures taken to enhance social stability in Central and Eastern Europe.

Prof. Vanhuysen, in his turn, commented on such topics as public spending on childhood education as a channel of improvement of conditions of women, advantages and disadvantages of private and public pension schemes, and on the applicability of the intergenerational justice outside of the OECD countries.

Friday, June 22nd

Jürgen Huber, Mayor of the city of Regensburg, opened the first day of the conference. He spoke about Regensburg as a site of continuity for important meetings, conventions, and international dialogue. This tradition dates back to Regensburg’s status in the early modern period as the place for the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire. As well, its location on the Danube has meant that Regensburg has always maintained strong traditions of trade and outward-looking attitudes, which has continued to the current day in the form of its success within the European Union.

The first panel of the day was on the *Welfare State in Transformation* and was chaired by Prof. **Natali Stegmann** of the Chair of Southeast and East European History of the University of Regensburg. **Jelena Čeriman** from the Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory at the University of Belgrade was the first panellist. She presented her work on “How the changes from socialist to neoliberal social policies affected the social support to women from multi-marginalized groups in Serbia” (co-authored with Dr. Irena Fiket and Dr. Gazela Pudar-Dražko from the same institute). In her talk, Čeriman outlined the impact of the neoliberal transformation which took place in post-Socialist Serbia on the social support structures available to marginalized citizens, particularly disabled women. As she argued, the fundamental principles of neoliberalism – individualism, market trust, and societal rationalism – are antithetical to the principles that guided the socialist welfare state in the

past, and therefore, allowed for the growing inadequacy of social support systems for vulnerable groups. Neoliberal reforms have meant that social organizations compete for limited state resources and that the state's neglect of local contexts has led to particular difficulties for groups requiring support in rural areas. As well, victims of exclusion are blamed for their own inability to access services. This is in contrast to Slovenia, which maintained many of its former socialist structures of support. Čeriman finished her talk with a firm assertion opposing the unquestioned primacy of neoliberal structures, and a call to reconsider the values held during socialist times, which were more effective in providing care for marginalized groups.

The next speaker was **Dr. Ágota Scharle** from the Budapest Institute for Policy Analysis. Her talk was titled "Barriers to welfare reform in Central and Eastern Europe: the case of employment rehabilitation services" (co-authored with Balász Váradi from the same institute). The paper sought to explain the differing disability policies of four Central European States: Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and the Czech Republic. Scharle reduced variables by comparing the policy developments of countries that had similar economic institutional positions following the fall of Communism. In comparing Poland/Slovenia, and Slovakia/the Czech Republic, the authors found that the impact of internal forces which may promote the improvement of disability policies in the region is generally weak. In contrast, fiscal constraints, pressure to comply with the recommendations of the European Union (especially at the time of accession), and exposure to the influence of international organisations (the World Bank) are more important drivers of policy change. International organizations are thus essential in promoting disability policies more favourable for employment, and consequently, economic growth.

The final panellist was **Dr. Borbála Kovács**, from Central European University. In her presentation "Formal insecurity regimes? The peculiar logic of post-socialist welfare state retrenchment", Kovács examined the continuing retrenchment of benefits and services for the disadvantaged in Hungary, Romania, and Lithuania since 1990. In many ways, her talk was thematically similar to Jelena Čeriman's work (with a specific denunciation of neoliberal individualisation), albeit with a more comparative emphasis. According to Kovács, the post-Socialist welfare state has emphasized the preservation of those beneficial to the labour market, particularly for public-sector employees and the more privileged in society. As such, given that retrenchment has not harmed those with greater agency in society, the formal insecurity regimes have become more and more normalized. By identifying the key features of these regimes, Kovács brought attention to, and arrested the continuing inequity.

The panellists partook in a question/discussion round following the presentation of their papers. The first question, for Jelena Čeriman and Agota Scharle, bid the presenters to reconsider their attack on neoliberalism and to move away from speaking through ideological lenses. More specifically, Jelena Čeriman was asked to evaluate exclusive social policy in post-Socialist Serbia in relation to exclusion which took place under socialism. This

was paralleled by a question on the validity of categorizing Central-Eastern European countries together, given the political diversity across states. Čeriman answered both these questions together by referring to neoliberalism as the normative framework for the EU. In the case of Serbia especially, abiding by this framework is viewed as a political necessity for accession. Despite the more inclusive nature of socialism, socialist policies are viewed as political non-starters for that reason. Agota Scharle asked Borbála Kovács about the linkage between the retrenchment of the welfare state and certain demographic/political explanations. Kovács was hesitant to assign any of these developments to political leanings, and noted the across-the-board support for these new neoliberal paradigms. Finally, Jelena Čeriman was asked about the inclusion of policy suggestions in her paper, which she noted was outside the scope of her specific work, and may form the basis of further research.

The second panel of the day, with **Dr. Melanie Arndt**, research associate at the IOS, as its chair, was titled *Welfare and Poverty*. The first speakers were **Dr. Marjan Petreski** and **Dr. Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski** from the School of Business Economics and Management at the University American College Skopje, who together presented their paper on “Overhaul of the social assistance system in Macedonia: Simulating the effects of introducing Guaranteed Minimum Income (GMI) scheme.” Their research was spurred by recent political developments in Macedonia, as the ruling government promised the implementation of a GMI scheme. The current framework is flawed, as economic growth has not been enough to alleviate poverty and informal labour has fostered the dependence on whatever marginal social assistance is available. The paper examined the potential of three separate GMI schemes, all of which were successful in reducing relative poverty and eliminating absolute poverty, largely by incentivizing the search for employment and discouraging labour inactivity. The most effective of these approaches was the “making work pay” scheme, which seeks to strike a balance between equity and efficiency.

The second presenter was **Veronika Duci**, from the Department of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Tirana. Her paper was titled “Precarious retirement: transnational policy gaps and ageing Albanian (return) migrants” (co-authored with Dr. Zana Vathi of Edge Hill University). Duci analyses the vulnerable position of ageing Albanian migrants to Greece who have or are planning to return to Albania due to the economic crisis in Greece. Their years of labour and retirement contributions are often unacknowledged, making the pursuit of pension difficult or not possible. Her work examines the legislative and political inconsistencies between the two countries that exacerbate this problem. Transnational agreements and shared policy priorities would help to amend this gap and allow Albanian migrants to benefit from their retirement.

The third speaker was **Dr. Natalija Perišić** from the Department of Social Policy and Social Work at the University of Belgrade. She spoke on “Public Policy and Poverty in ex-Yugoslav Countries – Post-Socialist Continuities and Discontinuities” (co-authored with Dr. Jelena Vidojević from the University of Belgrade). Perišić began her talk by noting the socially

constructed nature of poverty and analysed to social discourse and policy regulations with regard to poverty in Socialist Yugoslavia. In the context of Socialist Yugoslavia, poverty was presented as a remote and marginal phenomenon of people “without the necessary material provisions.” Social assistance schemes were modest; the poor were often viewed as parasites, undeserving of the bounties of the country and unwilling to contribute to the building of socialism. She continued by briefly discussing the shifts in discourse on poverty and public policies aimed at poverty reduction in the context of neoliberal transformation (a common theme in the conference) and reiterating the importance of international organizations in enforcing the political necessity of neoliberal paradigms. Despite the problematic state of poverty reduction during the socialist period, the discourse following 1990 has become even less empathetic throughout most of ex-Yugoslavia following disintegration.

The final talk was titled “The state policy towards the homeless in post-Soviet Moldova: between the ‘soft line’ and the ‘hard line’” and was given by **Dr. Petru Negura** from the Department of Social work and Sociology at the Free International University of Moldova. Negura sought to examine the ways in which state policies towards the homeless evolved in Moldova following the fall of Communism. His paper makes use of a homeless shelter in Chisinau as its primary case study. The shelter takes a dual approach to the treatment of its residents; certain patients are seen as possible subjects for treatment, and thus given care by the state in a “maternal” (most employees are women) form of social assistance. In contrast, those patients who are seen as “lost causes” face punishment and discipline in a “paternal” (most employees being former law enforcement) form of treatment. These two approaches work in conjunction with one another, often representing the difference between treatment during the daytime and during the night. Using interviews, shelter records, and press materials, Negura presented an ethnographic look at how the shelter embodies a compromise between these two approaches.

Following the final panellist, Melanie Arndt made some key conclusions, noting the similar attempts to examine poverty from different angles and the overarching theme of transformation. She raised a rhetorical question to the panellists: do these conclusions apply more globally? Following these thoughts, members from the audience prompted discussion. Marjan Petreski and Nikica Mojsoska-Blazevski were asked about the political preparedness to actually introduce GMI schemes in Macedonia. The speakers noted that despite the political support for the proposal, the ruling party has made no steps toward its implementation. They intend to show the policy findings from their research to the administration in order to foment change. Commenting on Petru Negura’s work, Natalija Perišić offered some of her own contrasting expertise on poverty care in Socialist Yugoslavia. Poverty was often understood through the lens of othering (Roma groups, etc.), and she contends that this lack of empathy may resonate in the Moldovan case as well. In Yugoslavia, state socialism was softer and less assimilationist, and the nationalist attitudes alongside increasing neoliberalism of the post-Socialist period have been detrimental to social services

for many groups. Veronika Duci briefly discussed the role of private pension funds in Albania/Greece, largely how these are still inadequate given the legal and political obstacles which exist. Natalija Perišić and Petru Negura exchanged thoughts on the stigmatized nature of homelessness that still persists in Eastern Europe. Even though poverty reduction schemes under socialism were more effectual in some ways, Perišić noted the ideological distaste for social work under Communism; social assistance would be vestigial in any Marxist nation, and social work was viewed not as an avenue for empowerment, but as one of control. Other discussions elaborated on the precise methods by which western support models were replicated and transplanted after 1989.

The third panel of the day – *Health: subjective and objective* – was chaired by **Olga Popova, Ph.D.**, research associate at the IOS. First speaker was **Yulia Raskina** from the Economics Department of the European University at St. Petersburg. She presented her work and the work of her co-author, Daria Tsyplakova from the Accounts Chamber of the Russian Federation, on “Health and work ability of elderly Russians: are there restrictions for the increase of retirement age?”. In her paper, Raskina poses the question if longer life expectancy leads to better health at older ages and therefore higher labor force participation of elderly people in Russia, or if it leads to longer periods of illness and disease and in conclusion to lower ability to work at old age. First, she investigated the relation between health and working status. To control for possible reporting problems concerning self-assessed health, she included objective health indicators as well. In the empirical analysis of a sample of about 4000 Russians aged 50 and more years, it turned out that both subjective and objective health have a negative effect on the labor force participation. Using these estimates, Raskina simulated the employment share above the actual retirement age in Russia. The results suggested that there is still room for a higher retirement age in Russia.

The second speaker was **Iryna Mazhak, Ph.D.**, from the Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies at Aarhus University. She spoke on “Socio-Economic Inequalities in Self-Reported Health in Ten Eastern European Countries” and focused on inequalities between social groups and countries. Additionally, she also tries to reveal the differences between subjective and objective health reports. On country-level, Mazhak finds two clusters, the 8 EU’s New Member States and Russia and Ukraine, the latter reporting the highest levels of poor health. In general, subjective health is poorer than objective, with the largest gap in Russia and Ukraine. Countries differ as well in health inequalities. Except for Russia and Ukraine, absolute inequality in subjective poor health is higher for females in all countries. In view of these results, Mazhak suggested to not combine all transition countries in health studies.

The final presenter, **Gulnaz Isabekova** from the Research Centre for East European Studies at University of Bremen, held her talk on “Diverse health care developments: the role of national and international actors”. She complements the analysis of inequalities by looking closely at reforms and healthcare developments in transition economies and provides a categorization of countries into groups according to the role of state and to the role of

external assistance in reforming healthcare systems. As her preceding speaker, Isabekova pointed out that healthcare systems diverged in the last decades. The differences can be largely explained by interaction with external actors, which includes organizational membership, sector-wide approaches and project-based interactions.

Following the presentations, a discussion round took place. The question arose whether there is a public debate regarding the health indicators and healthcare development in transition countries and what is the role of this debate for social reforms. The speakers confirmed this, pointing out the announced plans to increase the retirement age in Russia. There were also some methodological suggestions from the audience. As different social groups might have different access to health care, they might also differ in their deprivation rates. With regard to measurement and data issues, it was suggested to use alternative health measures, to consider years of healthy age instead of life expectancy and to take geography into account.

Saturday, June 23rd

Dr. Sabine Rutar, research associate at the IOS, hosted the first panel of day two on *Exclusion and Informal Social Assistance*. The first speaker was **Joanna Rozmus** from the Doctoral College Galicia at the University of Vienna. She presented her paper, “Lost in Transformation? Former Polish State Farm Workers and Their Informal Ways to Social Assistance in the 1990s.” Her work analysed expressions of agency by former state farm workers in the village of Paczółtowice in Galicia in Poland, who were excluded from the benefits of transformation and who have been neglected by the post-socialist state. Through extensive use of oral histories, she investigates the everyday life of former state farm workers and the identity/sense of belonging which defines these communities. She found that given the lost social mobility due to transformation, individuals who were unable to migrate were very inventive in their survival methods. Occasional employment, illegal employment, and taking advantage of strong social/familial networks were integral to these strategies. Rozmus ended her talk with an optimistic view on how a single case study can call attention to the numerous ways in which individuals express agency and react to exclusion in contexts of transformation and state withdrawal.

The next presenter was **Dr. Alissa Klots** from the History Department at The European University at Saint Petersburg. She presented her work on “For the Elderly by the Elderly: Public Organizations and the Late Soviet Welfare System” (co-authored with Dr. Maria Romashova from Perm State University). Following the introduction of pensions in the Soviet Union under Khrushchev, pension coverage was often incomplete, discriminatory, (on the basis of gender or career position) and very inefficient. Given the growing elderly population of the Soviet Union, many non-state organizations took up responsibilities in securing pensions for the elderly. These pensioners’ and women Soviets were essential to the welfare system of the country. These organizations were diverse in their operations and priorities,

often filled with volunteers and activists who petitioned on behalf of pensioners, offering consultations, etc. The speaker also discussed the ambivalence these groups faced from the government itself; it valued their activism and socialist essence, yet also sought firm control over their activities and worked to maintain the singular focuses of these groups (lest they evolve into something threatening to the state, ex. feminist dissidence).

The final speaker of the panel was **Dr. Tahir Latifi** from the Department of Anthropology at the University of Prishtina. His work was titled “Generational and intergenerational care and mobility networks in Kosovo.” He argues that, given the weak welfare state in Kosovo, kinship ties are very important to social stability. Increasing economic problems lead to further familial interdependency (especially dependence on remittances; emigration is essential to escaping poverty), which has an impact on gender dynamics and family structures. The paper takes on a demographic angle and examines the changes which have been ongoing in Kosovo’s population for the past few decades. Considering the slowing fertility rate and the growing nuclearisation of the family, the speaker intends for this research to form the basis of a future project investigating the impact these trends will have on those left behind, particularly the elderly.

Summarising the papers of the panel, Sabine Rutar pointed at the different wording that was used to interpret informal social assistance, from “survival” in the case of Rozmus, to civil society voluntarism in the case of Klots and finally family care for Latifi. She also noted the different temporalities that were used by the different speakers to analyse their cases. The discussion began with a question for Tahir Latifi, focusing on his lack of mentioning internal (i.e. rural to urban) migration in discussing the demographic changes of Kosovo. He mentioned that although this is certainly an important phenomenon to consider, it is not the primary focus of his work. Alissa Klots was asked to expand on the role of state-led voluntarism in Soviet society. She noted that despite the perception of civil society as intrinsically anti-Soviet and dissident in nature, her work offers an example of state-sanctioned (but not necessarily controlled) civilian agency in Soviet society. Moving forward, Joanna Rozmus spoke about the phantom border of Prussia visible in the borders of Polish state farms. She was also asked to clarify the temporality of her work, alongside her use of the terms “survival” and “reinvention”. More specifically, she spoke on the use of similar methods (to state farm labourers) used by other marginalized groups throughout post-socialist Poland. Notably, state farm labourers lacked the capacity to organize politically, largely given the rural and isolated nature of their struggles. Finally, Joanna spoke on her intentions behind the project, and a desire to portray an example of “success” in transformation, and a reassertion of individual agency. This was, however, questioned by some audience members, as she was viewed as glorifying individual agency at some points, failing to account for community circumstance. Tahir Latifi was asked to reconsider the framing of the kinship/institutional strength relationship, as a speaker noted that strong kinship ties might lead to the generalized distrust of state institutions, and thus a weakening of the state and market.

Dr. Kseniia Gatskova chaired the second panel on *Fertility, abortion, and women's status in society*. First speaker was **Dr. Corina Dobos** from the Centre for Research in Contemporary History at University of Bucharest. In her presentation "What women want... desire, children, empirical research and policy making in Ceausescu's Romania" she provided an overview of the abortion regulations in Romania in 1950ies – 1980ies. In the 1960ies, professionals and statisticians convinced politics of the serious problem of decreasing birth rates for society. But instead of following their advices, politicians chose a simple way and drastically limited abortion rights. Using ample historical evidence including historical social surveys from Romania, the speaker provided an extensive analysis of the demographic consequences of the pregnancy termination practices.

Serafima Chirkova, PhD from the Department of Economics at University of Santiago de Chile presented her new paper coauthored with Sona Kalantaryan. "Sex-selective abortion: missing girls in Armenia" explored the determinants of sex ratio imbalances in Armenia. The authors use household survey data for the period of 2008-12 and control for various family characteristics. They find convincing evidence that the sex ratio bias is caused by the sex selective abortions in the families with more than two children and depends on the sex of the elder children. There is no effect for the first two children, indicating social and cultural factors causing this bias.

Finally, the presentation of **Magda Malec** and **Joanna Tyrowicz, PhD** (both from FAME|GRAPE, Warsaw School of Economics) was devoted to "Evaluating welfare and economic effects of raised fertility". Focusing on the case of Poland, the scholars analysed the costs and benefits of an increased birth rates using an overlapping-generations-model. They found that fiscal effects were positive but, even in the case of a large fertility increase, they were very small. Furthermore, the results of analysis suggested that the sign and the size of both welfare and fiscal effects could change substantially depending on the patterns of increased fertility.

In the following discussion round, the case of Romania presented by Dr. Corina Dobos was compared to other countries in the same period of history. Regarding Serafima Chirkova's talk, preference for boys and its consequences were discussed in the context of cultural norms dominating in Armenia.

The final panel was titled *Family Policies and Care*, with **Dr. Edvin Pezo**, research associate at the IOS, serving as the chair. **Dr. Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić** from the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade was the first speaker, who presented her paper on "State and parenthood. Family planning policy in Yugoslavia (1945–1991)." According to Dobrivojević Tomić, the glorification of love and romance was a key development of the sexual liberation movement of the 1960s within socialist Yugoslavia. As the number of unwanted pregnancies and illegal abortions was rising, Yugoslav state authorities moved to gradually liberalize abortion laws during the 1950s and 1960s, which followed the trend

alongside Eastern Europe as a whole. Family planning became a social and not just a health issue and in 1974, the human right to decide freely on having children was included in the Constitution. Despite the societal stigma and little privacy, abortion quickly became the preferred method of birth control, in most cases of socio-economic reasons. In her paper, Dobrivojević Tomić analysed the divergence between the rhetorical family planning proposals at the government-level and the tangible policies (often regressive and minimal) of the republic administrations.

The next panellist was **Dr. Natalia Jarska** from the Institute of History of Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. She presented her paper, which was titled “(Young) marriage as object of social policies in Poland 1945–1989: continuity and change.” Jarska’s paper presented the evolution of policies towards marriage in Communist Poland, with a focus on benefits for married couples and for young marriages. Throughout the period under scrutiny, the state promoted a model of marriage based on equality, which would at the same time be durable and useful for society. The promotion of marriage through various social programs (largely to assuage demographic decline) and tax benefits corresponded to concerns over an increasing divorce rate and the particular discouraging of young marriages. By investigating government policies and the discussions which precipitated those policies, Jarska uncovered their motivations, and how such policies interacted with other structures of the socialist welfare state.

The final speaker of the conference was **Dr. Gorana Đorić** from the Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Niš. Her article was titled, “For better or worse: Child carers in social policy reform in Serbia.” Her work examined the impact of the changes to the welfare regime in Serbia on income inequality between certain categories of women. She began her presentation by clarifying the chronology of her work, specifying that the post-socialist transformation during the 1990s in Serbia and the former Yugoslavia was “blocked”. Her work focusses on the “un-blocked” transformation of the 2000s. In evaluating the income inequalities of the six categories (based on familial or marital status), she expected that equality would increase following the implementation of certain welfare reforms since the late 2000s (as occurred in Hungary). Her predictions were proven correct, and she ended her presentation by speculating on the benefits that a larger sample size would have had on her research, as well as by recommending further childcare services be made available to women (especially single mothers living on their own) in the future.

Following the final panellist, Edvin Pezo offered a few closing comments. Firstly, Pezo asked to consider questions of path dependencies and to what extent we can speak of continuity in family planning across the ruptures of the Second World War and post-socialist transformation. Pezo then went on to inquire about the impact of religious institutions on family policy, as all three presenters had notably failed to make any mention of the church as a relevant institution. Dobrivojević Tomić noted one distinct form of continuity in the case of the former Yugoslavia; women and their attitudes toward unwanted pregnancies had

remained mostly unchanged (it was expensive to raise a child). With regard to religious institutions, she noted that the Catholic Church had more involvement and agency during the Yugoslav period than the Orthodox Church, due to the difference in means and funding sources (the Catholic Church is international in nature, while the Orthodox church relies on state patronage). Jarska insisted that there was indeed a radical break following the accession of socialism in many ways, notably given the entirely different legal framework that arose. Regarding the Church in Poland, she agrees that the Catholic Church is often understudied outside of its dissidence in Communist Poland; more research needs to be done on the Church's influence in everyday Polish life. As for Đorić, she noted a continuity with the socialist period, in that women were again expected to return to the household and take upon the "double burden" expected of them by the patriarchy and by economic necessities.

Finally, Pezo asked Gorana Đorić if her work had considered the relevance of spending and budgetary concerns (both very important in the minds of officials and voters) in evaluating the efficacy of her supported policies. Đorić noted that these policies are peculiar in that they have received support from both left and right-wing parties (for the left, empowering women; for the right, pronatalism and nationalism), and thus spending is weighed less importantly than one might have expected. An audience member asked Ivana Dobrivojević Tomić about Islam in Yugoslavia during this period, and how it affected perceptions of contraception. She noted that Bosnian Muslims were mostly against abortion as a means of birth control, but this did not prevent its pervasive use. For Albanians in Kosovo and Montenegro, this group was at an entirely different demographic stage, with a much higher birth rate and with little use of birth control. Ivana was also asked why the use of abortion was so widespread despite the societal stigma. She noted that there was a general distrust and ignorance surrounding the use of birth control, which was viewed as ineffective, alongside its lack of general availability. Đorić spoke on the subject of neo-traditionalism, which was prompted by a question from an audience member. She described politics in Serbia as traditionalism with a thin layer of neoliberalism, while socialist and leftist ideas have been completely discredited.