

The Future of Welfare State:

Childcare policies:

Institutional features, explanations,
policy recommendation and advocacy

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About me...

□ PhD in Social and Political Sciences, European University Institute, Florence, Italy.

- Dissertation: Ideas, , : Public Bureaucrats and the evolution of Family Policy in Hungary and Poland

□ Main research projects

- Comparative research on childcare policies: discovering variety of policy mixes in the post-communist countries.
- East/West: comparing 6 EU countries
- Evidence-based policy-oriented research:
 - Social policy as an investment not a burden:
 - Here: investing in childcare



ICRA Goals

- ❑ Enhance equality in several fields of public policy;
- ❑ Support inclusive and sustainable society;
- ❑ Contribute to public debate with evidence-based arguments;
- ❑ Use various methodologies and approaches;
- ❑ *Around 20 affiliates: sociologists, political scientists, lawyers*

ICRA fields of interest

- **Politics and Public Sphere**
 - Public discourse, history of ideas and concepts in politics
- **Economic and Social Policy**
 - State-market-individual trilemma, market failures and regulation, accountability
- **International Relations**
 - Human Rights, Homeland and External Security, EU politics

Concepts in family policy: how to compare?

□ “De-commodification”

- But was female work at home commodified?

□ Alternative typologies

- Male breadwinner: strong/moderate/weak
- Dual earner/carer, individual vs male breadwinner, one and a half earner, one and x quarter

□ “De-familialisation”

- Varieties of famililalism

Two dimensions of childcare policies: cash and care

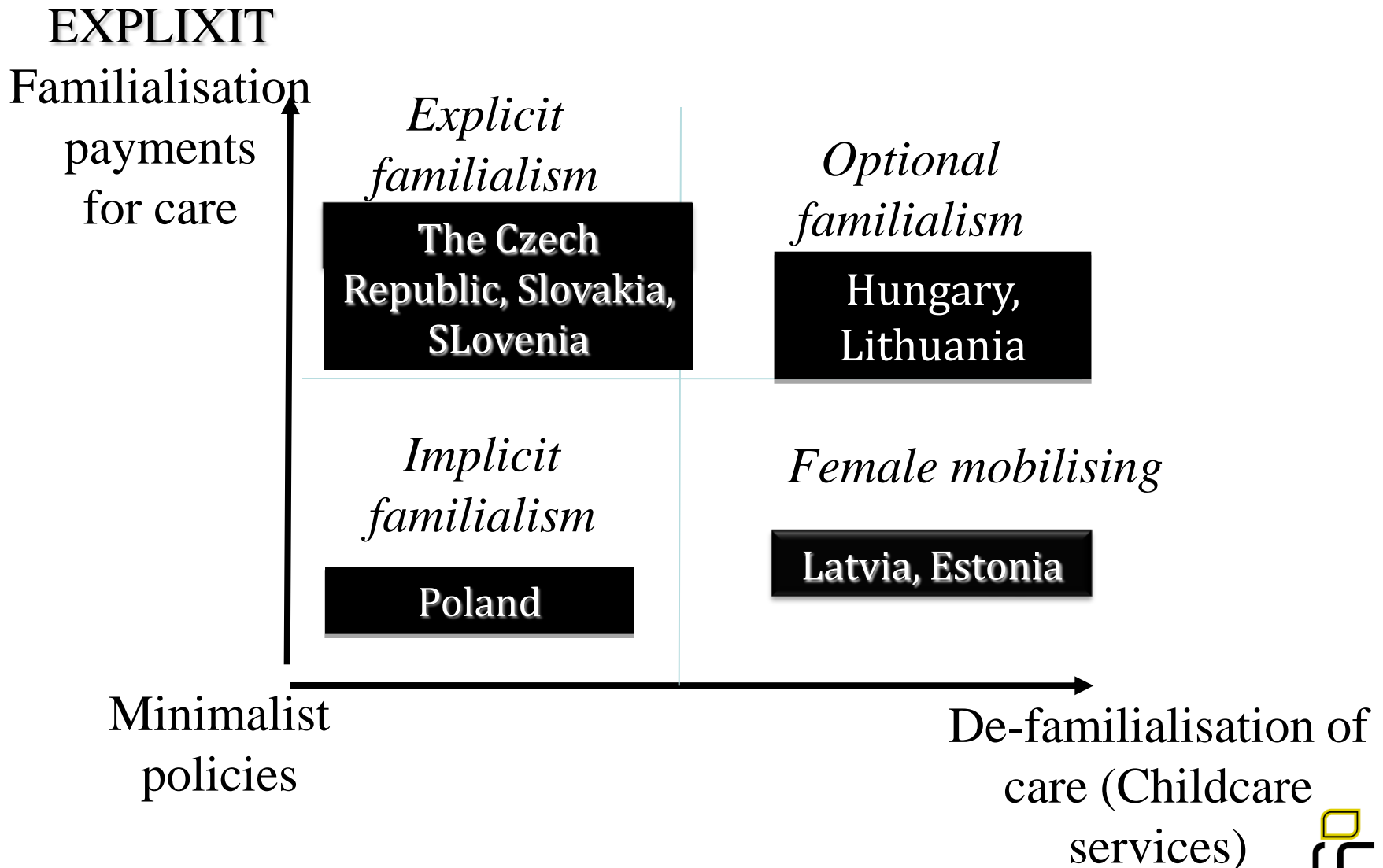
1. Familialisation of care:

- Parental leave arrangements
- Cash support: cash for care benefits
 - Duration
 - Level of payment
 - Accessibility (universal, income-tested, insurance-based)

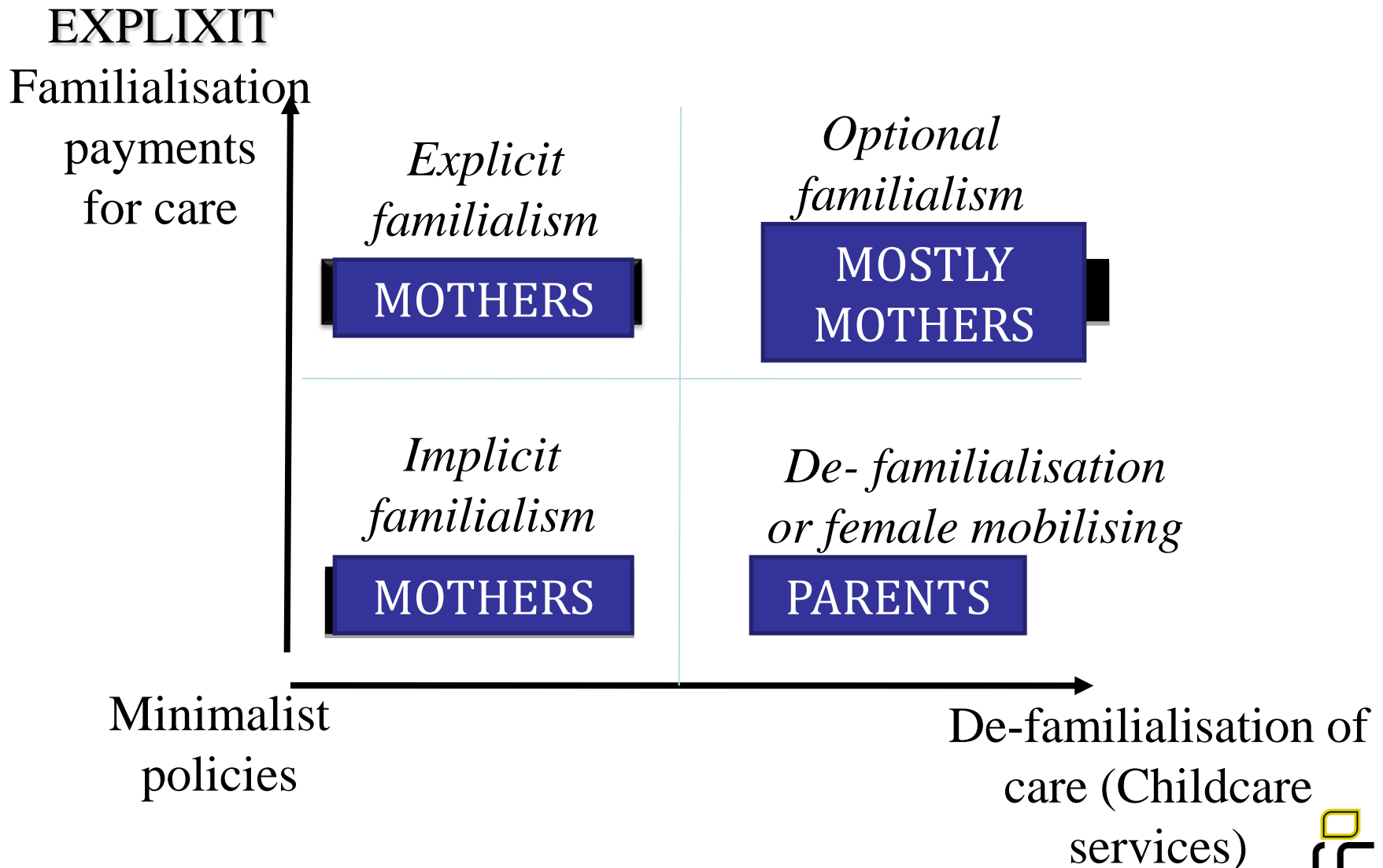
2. De-familialisation:

- Accessibility of childcare facilities
 - Enrollment in crèches and kindergartens

Varieties of familialism (S.Leitner)



Varieties of familialism – who cares?



Central and East European countries comparison: most important conclusions

- Varieties of childcare policies in the post-communist countries
 - Importance of history, local context and policy legacies

- Gender relations: countries place the responsibility for care within family (mothers)
 - Familialism „channeled” in different ways, different „faces” of familialism
 - At the same time the region suffers from „birth strike” and low rates of (female) economic activity

Benefits of childcare services

- ↓ Female economic activity rates growing
- ↓ Individualisation of female aspirations and economic independence
- ↓ Demographic growth stronger
- ↓ Psychological and social child's development enhanced
- ↓ Equal opportunities from early stage of life
- ↓and much beneficial for the economy!



Parents

- Child's social and cognitive development
- Taking over the burden of care

Women

- Possibility to go to work and achieve economic independence

Policy-makers, Tax payers

- Investment in childcare is beneficial for the economy and state budget!
- Wider tax base, less spending on social risks

Society as a whole

- Available, good quality childcare helps to equalise life chances at early stage
- Equal society - more social justice and peace

Social investment – some thoughts

□ „Economisation of the discourse”

- Childcare facilities were the tool for women emancipation (1st and 2nd wave feminism)

□ Danger of half-way solutions:

- facade gender equality?

□ Necessity of using other mechanisms

- Complex community policies towards childhood, youth and parenthood
- Social investment in larger sense

Research areas and questions

- ❑ Further exploration of variety of outcomes
- ❑ Directions of reforms, conditions for „successful cases”
- ❑ Improved data accessibility and quality

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