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Abstract

This project aims to explain considerable variation in family policies across the three former communist states, Poland, Hungary, and Romania. We analyze historical legacies of the old regime and the early transition (1945-2000). We identify elements of continuity and change and trace patterns of convergence and divergence of family policies across countries and across time in each country. We aim to determine the impact of international vs. domestic factors on these welfare states and address the relationship between path dependence and path departure in post-communist and European social policies. In doing so, we draw on the rich tradition of historical-institutionalism and examine the possibility of “transformative” incremental change. We argue, however, that comparative study of family policies will yield the best results when we pay equal attention to political agency and discourse.