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EASTERN EUROPEAN FAMILY POLICY'S EFFECT ON FERTILITY AND WOMEN'S
ECONOMIC STATUS

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ABSTRACT

In this study I explore the effects of pronatalist family policy on fertility and women's economic status. I do this by analyzing five types of family policy and their impacts in Eastern European countries. I hypothesize that policies which provide more substantial financial benefits to parents would cause the country's fertility rate to increase. I also hypothesized that more equally distributed policy benefits between both genders, would result in higher women's economic statuses. My results significantly support both of my hypotheses, suggesting that the most successful pronatalist policies provide the most financial incentives to parents, and that family policies benefit women most when benefits are distributed equally between parents. This confirms previous research which associates increased financial support with an increased willingness to bear children. It simultaneously contradicts the widespread theory that women benefit most from family policies which support them more than fathers and suggests a more equitable division of family benefits would be the most helpful for women in the workforce.

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Introduction

What is it that allows populations to grow? Does policy have anything to do with it? For more than two decades, leaders of the Eastern European states have been asking those very same questions. During the era of the Soviet Union, the fertility rates in these countries were stable and uniform, just like the social policy. However, since the collapse of the USSR and the tumultuous transfer to a market economy, birth rates have rapidly plummeted across the region. Faced with a population crisis and the new absence of the former central government, these new sovereign states each created their own social and maternity policies. These policies--and their results--have varied greatly over the years, and so has each country's status of women, whom these pronatalist policies impact most. While some countries have succeeded in restoring their populations and empowering women, others still trail far behind. The purpose of this study is to explore the origin of these differences, specifically as it applies to maternity and family policy.

This topic is of great importance, seeing as the results may carry great significance for the designers of future pronatalist policy. For the purpose of this study, the definition of pronatalist policy is any law designed with the purpose of increasing the state's fertility rate. Many scholars have wondered what features a pronatalist policy must have in order for it to succeed. More still have speculated about the observed connection between the creation of social welfare policies and women's economic status. This study will be the first to analyze both areas of interest.

I aim to identify which features of maternity and family policy produces the greatest increase in fertility rates, and which features increase the economic status of women. I do this by coding and analyzing five features of maternity and family policy of seventeen Eastern European states from the years 1990 to 2016: maternity benefits, paternity benefits, child care leave,

pregnancy grants and childbirth grants. I then analyze the qualities of each state's policy in relation to the state's coinciding birth rate and various measures of women's economic status. I finish by running a regression on the results of each state and discussing quantitative patterns. My results will reveal which types of pronatalist policy are most effective, as well as examining their effect on women's economic status.

Literature Review

Family Policy and Fertility in Eastern Europe During the Soviet Regime

Before diving into my analysis, it is important to understand the history of Eastern European family policy. To begin, we need to establish context from within the Soviet Union. Because of the USSR's central government, both fertility and family policy were uniform and remarkably stable throughout the region during the twentieth century. This is in direct contrast to Western Europe, whose fertility rate was growing rapidly, especially following the second World War. However, according to Gerber and Perelli-Harris (2012), fertility in the Eastern bloc hardly changed at all during the course of the entire first half of the 1900's. The first hint of change scholars saw occurred in the 1960s, during which the region experienced a uniform drop in fertility. This resulted in the Soviet Union's first pronatalist policy. While this solution was only temporarily successful at raising the fertility rate, its characteristics would remain quite influential on the region's future policy. For example, "birth grants," in which a lump sum of cash is paid by the state to the mother upon the birth of her child(ren) was first used during this time--a policy that is widely absent from Western policy but has remained a distinguishing feature of Eastern European family policy to this day (Gerber and Perelli-Harris 2012).

The divergence between Eastern and Western Europe extended much further than politics and fertility. There were also several significant demographic differences between the two regions. Eastern Europeans were on average younger than their Western counterparts when they had their first children, making families younger overall. There was a strong "two-child preference" (prevalence of families with two children) across the Soviet states as well, while Western Europeans averaged in larger family sizes (Gerber and Perelli-Harris 2012). In addition, while modern contraceptives such as condoms and hormonal birth control were distributed

throughout Western Europe fairly early, they were somewhat rare to find in the Eastern bloc. In fact, the most common “contraceptive” method in Eastern Europe was abortion and remained so until the fall of the USSR (Gerber and Perelli-Harris 2012). Finally, while Western Europe was going through a major demographic transition in the 1970s-80s, the East remained strikingly stable, with no shift in family structure, gender roles or age at first birth (Gerber and Perelli-Harris 2012). This staticness cemented already low fertility rates and positioned the region even further behind the West.

1990-2000: The Fertility Collapse

The 1990s was marked by a spectacular uniform drop in fertility rates across Eastern Europe. This decline can be attributed almost solely to the collapse of the USSR and the region’s sudden shift to a market economy. Sobotka (2011) identifies four leading theories to explain the phenomenon.

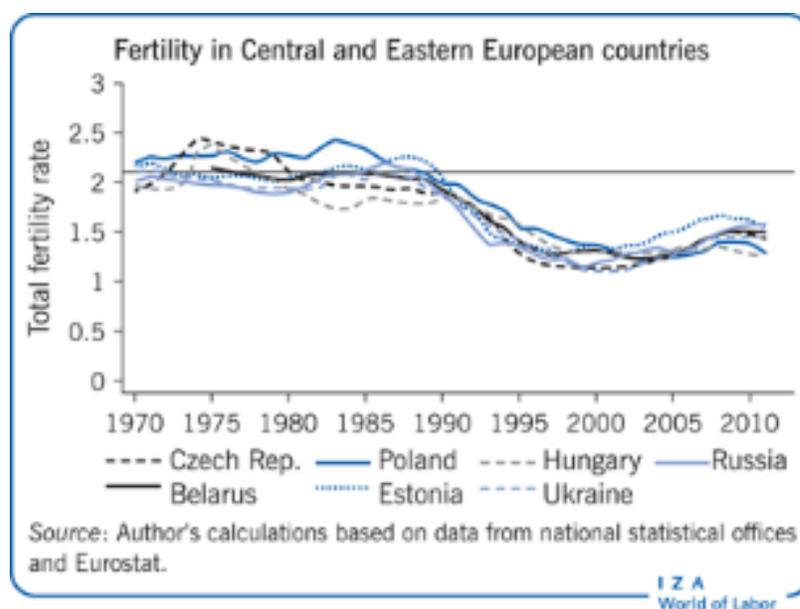


Figure 1 Fertility in Eastern Europe 1970-2010. Source: Brainerd (2012)

The first addresses the economic and political uncertainty of the region at the time. With the sudden upheaval of the former government and the future up in the air, many people began to

doubt whether it was an appropriate time to start a family. The absence of central policy also created a void for regional family policy, and many of the social safety nets new families had previously relied on were suddenly gone, with few (if any) statewide policies to replace them. This led to a general hesitance to not only have children at that time, but to have children in the country at all. In fact, with the borders now open, thousands were flooding out of Eastern Europe.

This brings us to the second theory, which attributes the fertility drop to a sudden demographic transition. The transition Western Europe had experienced a decade earlier was now hitting Eastern Europe in full force. Not only were citizens travelling to other regions, they were also beginning to have children several years later, and more frequently out of wedlock. In addition, new family trends in some countries revealed a new one-child preference almost as prominent as the two-child preference of the preceding century (Sobotka 2011).

Another theory suggests that this transition was spurred on by the delayed contraceptive and sexual revolution now sweeping the region. The rapid increase in modern contraceptive use and sexual education allowed for greater family planning and resulted in a later start to child rearing. However, because the spread of modern contraceptives occurred at different places throughout the region's countries, it still does not fully explain the simultaneous uniform drop in fertility rates.

All of these factors combined are what influences the fourth--and what Sobotka (2011) deems the most relevant--theory: The Postponement Transition. For the majority of Eastern Europeans who remained in post-Soviet states, the motivation and means to put off having children until a more stable period of time prompted many to postpone the start of their families

(Sobotka 2011). This resulted in a huge drop and fertility rate just as young adults were reaching the age when they would have previously begun having children.

The fertility collapse caused considerable economic problems for the new governments across Eastern Europe. Without bodies to do the work, they were facing major labor shortages, decreasing output and hindering their competitiveness in the new international market they were now a part of. It was time to address the population crisis, and fast.

Solution: The Rise of Pronatalism

As I explained in my introduction, the definition of pronatalist policy for our purposes is any law designed with the goal of increasing the state's fertility rate. At the turn of the twenty-first century, Europe's post-Soviet states were making a collective effort to promote several variations of this family policy, with differing results. This makes Eastern Europe post-2000 an ideal setting to conduct pronatalist policy research. In my research, I aim to determine which features of the policy make them successful, and the nature of these policies' effects on women. To theoretically predict the features of successful policies, I referred to the work of previous scholars.

One of the first to try to answer this question is Bongaarts (2008). After synthesizing data on fertility rates in European countries, he finds that respondents' average ideal family size tends to be higher than the tempo-adjusted fertility rate and indicates economic and social factors as the main obstacles in achieving the respondents' ideal family size. This suggests that public policy which provides more financial and social support for families would result in increased fertility rates, and also shows that such policies have more of an impact on increasing fertility rate than personal preferences (Bongaarts 2008).

Gauthier and Philipov (2009) build off of Bongaarts' (2008) work in their own study. Like Bongaarts (2008), they question whether it is possible for policy to enhance fertility and to what extent and examine the gap between fertility preferences and actual fertility. Then, they look at possible links between policy and fertility. Using data from the United Nations' Gender Development Index, and OECD for economic and policy data, they draw the next link between financial policy and fertility rate. In a 2006 survey, they find the majority of women in Eastern European countries said that economic circumstances had 8.5% more of an effect on their decision to have children than child care/parental leave policy (Gauthier and Philipov 2009). It should also be noted that these countries had some of the least financial-support policies in place compared to the rest of the European countries. In contrast, women surveyed in countries which provided more generous financial support for new parents (in Central Europe and the Nordic states) were much less likely to say that economic circumstances would play a role in their decision to have children (Gauthier and Philipov 2009). This provides evidence to support a theory suggesting maternity policies which offer more financial support increase the likelihood of children being born, while negating negative effects a poor economy might have on fertility rate.

In a study by Bassford and Fisher (2017), the authors examine the impact of Australia's recently introduced paid parental leave policy. They find that, upon the introduction of the paid parental leave, overall women's fertility intentions did not change. However, if a woman already intends to have at least one child, the number of children she intends to have increased 13% on average (Bassford and Fisher 2017). Since Bongaarts (2008) has shown that fertility intentions predict fertility outcomes, these findings suggest that even modest paid leave programs can have a positive effect on fertility.

In the same year, Anna Raute (2017) analyzes how income-dependent maternity leave affects the fertility gap between highly educated (generally high earning) and low educated (generally low earning) women. The purpose of her study is to determine whether it is possible to raise the fertility rates of highly educated women, which as a trend are significantly lower than fertility rates of low educated women. She gathers her data from a policy in Germany which disproportionately increases the financial incentives for higher educated, higher earning women in particular to have a child, and measures the effects on fertility up to five years after the policy was introduced. Her results reveal a 22% increase in fertility rate in highly educated women, significantly closing the fertility gap (Raute 2017). This study remains one of the most concrete examples of how increasing a policy's financial generosity can successfully increase fertility.

That said, financial generosity can come in many forms, and some may be more successful than others. Two examples of this are the family policies of Russia and Lithuania. The Russian government takes a more conservative approach to its pronatalist campaign, allying itself with the Church and proclaiming that women and men have naturally different roles to play in society. The campaign promotes a traditionally gendered division of labor, with men as the primary breadwinner and women as the primary child rearer (Nechemias 2014). Their policies are comprehensive and very financially generous, but only to women. Male parents receive little to financial benefits.

Lithuania's approach is slightly more liberal. The campaigns message is also less gendered, and frames producing children as an important part of citizenship. Although their policy is also supported by the church because of its anti-abortion/-contraceptive campaigns (Gerber and Perelli-Harris 2012), the distribution of its comprehensive financial benefits is much different: both male and female parents can receive nearly the same amount of paid leave time

and cash grants. In the analysis portion of this paper, I will reveal which policy was more successful and my predictions as to why.

Pronatalist Policy's Impact on Women

Since pronatalist policy is centered around increasing fertility (described in terms of “births per woman”), it tends to focus on and affect mothers more directly. But at whose expense? And are the effects different depending on the policy?

Bongaarts (2008), Gauthier and Philipov (2009) provide enough theoretical background to suggest that generous financial support in a family policy would be positively correlated with fertility rate. But those policies' effects on the status of women remain unclear. Generally, policies which provide more financial support to mothers are marketed by politicians as “feminist” laws, and indeed, on the surface it would appear that giving women more money to support children would economically empower them. Still, Heitlinger (1991) questions whether the purpose of these policies is truly to empower women, or if lawmakers only use the idea of feminism to sell the policy, while the true purpose is to increase the population. After analyzing rhetoric surrounding policies of parental leave, childcare services, flexible work arrangements, re-entry training programs, social security and taxation programs, she concludes that while financial support for mothers may be portrayed as feminist, it also endorses the idea of “subsidizing the ‘stay-at-home-mother’” (Heitlinger 359). Generally, liberal feminists (who posit the mainstream version of feminism accepted across Western culture) agree that promoting sexual stereotypes in the household--with the father being the breadwinner while women raise children at home--is an enforcement of gendered norms preventing women from advancing in society's leadership roles. Feminists view this practice as a promotion of “women's subordination or dependency rather than... a form of women's equality” (Heitlinger 360). In

short, while financially supporting women may make it easier for them to have children, it does not guarantee them a boost in economic or social status (as their proponents might suggest), and in fact may result in a decrease in status. In other words, while generous maternity benefits are better for women than little or no benefits at all, splitting these benefits evenly between parents may be more conducive to increasing women's economic status.

Robila (2012) frames this theory in the context of Eastern Europe by reviewing the region's most "relevant" family policies and analyzing them using feminist theoretical perspectives. Although historically the communist government encouraged women to join the labor force, she finds that most Eastern European governments are now going through a "refamilization" trend, emphasizing traditional family roles involving women rearing children and men as the breadwinners (Robila 2012). While a comprehensive model which includes child care services was successful in engaging women in the workforce, the new, primarily financial incentive model, with limited daycare options, encourages women to raise their child at home, and to not go to work. Gender-segregating employment and care-patterns have been regarded as a means of reducing poverty, by enabling mothers to provide care for themselves rather than participate in the labor market. This is supported by a majority of countries with long parental (primarily maternal) and child-care leaves. In other words, policies tend to incentivize women to stay at home after having children instead of returning to work--or if they do return to work, to work in female-dominated fields, most of which yield lower incomes than male dominated fields. Robila (2012) notes that policies such as paternity leave, which spread parental benefits to both parents, contribute to the development of a gender equality perspective in family and in the workplace. However, most Eastern European countries do not have this type of policy which incentivizes changing the stereotypical division of gendered labor. Robila (2012) suggests that if

the income gap were reduced, men might be more likely to take the paternity leave. She also finds that even distribution of benefits could actually contribute to the closing of the income gap. For example, Slovenia and Romania, which have two of the most evenly split parental benefits across Eastern Europe, also have the lowest gender pay gap of the region (Robila 2012).

Farre and Gonzalez (2017) also find that evidence supporting the association between an even distribution of parental benefits and women's economic status. The authors study the effects of a "father quota" (i.e. required parental leave) on fertility and the household labor division. They base their research off of the 2007 Spanish policy which increased paid parental leave by two additional weeks. These two weeks were reserved exclusively for fathers and were not transferable to mothers. They find that the policy significantly increased the probability of women returning to employment shortly after childbirth by 11%. Their results also reveal that women who just gave birth make significantly more than they did prior to the policy's implementation (Farre and Gonzalez 2017). Overall, they conclude that this policy change reduces gender inequality in the workplace.

Another revealing study was conducted by Natasha Sarin in 2016. Sarin (2016) studies the impact of California's job-protected leave family policy on women's leave-taking and employment. She finds evidence that large employers who are forced to offer job-protected leave decrease female hiring by 1.1% in favor of less costly male employees. However, she also finds that women are 1.5% more likely to still have their jobs after maternity leave is over (Sarin 2016). Although job-protection slightly increases female employment because it protects women from being fired during maternity leave, since females with newborns are costlier to employers, it causes fewer females to be hired overall. In other words, Sarin's (2016) study finds that if a policy offers maternity leave for female-only employees, but does not include job protection, it

seems that it would result in a decrease in women's employment overall. Since most Eastern European maternity leave policies do not come with job-protection, we can use this study to predict that a generous maternity benefit will actually decrease women's chances of getting hired or advancing in the workforce.

Variables, Theory and Hypotheses

In this section, I expand on the results I expect to see and why, based on my literature review. I do this by first identifying my independent, dependent, and control variables. Next, I discuss how I expect these variables to interact with each other, based on the literature above. Finally, I present my hypotheses.

The independent variable in this study is family policy generosity. To better describe these policies, I identify five categories to classify the features of each policy: Maternity Benefit, Paternity Benefit, Childcare Leave, Pregnancy Grant, and Childbirth Grant. Maternity and Paternity benefit are classified as a paid-leave period specifically for mothers or fathers, respectively. Childcare Leave refers to the period of time after maternity and paternity benefits end, during which the state pays a parent at least partial leave to care for the child. A Pregnancy Grant is characterized by a lump sum of money given to the mother upon registering her pregnancy with the government. A Childbirth Grant is a lump sum of money awarded to a parent upon the birth of their child(ren).

My dependent variables are Fertility and Women's Economic Status. Fertility rate is measured via births per woman. Women's Economic Status is measured in percent women's employment, the ratio of women's yearly income to men's, the ratio of women's estimated years of schooling to men's (*United Nations' Gender Development Index 2016*), and women's economic rights (*CIRI Human Rights Data Project 2011*).

My control variables are GDP per Capita (PPP US\$) and Population (*The World Bank 2016*). Since the literature suggests that economic factors seem to play a potentially significant role in fertility rate, it is important to be aware of how the average GDP fluctuates through my

study's timeline as I complete my analysis. I also need to monitor the countries' population, as this may affect the policies' performance.

The literature highlights three factors which influence fertility rate: economic stability, historical conditions/events, and the financial generosity of family policy. Sobotka (2011), Gerber and Perelli-Harris (2012) point to widespread economic instability in the wake of the USSR's collapse as the cause of falling fertility rates throughout the 1990s. They do not, however, consider the effects of family policy. Bongaarts (2008), Gauthier and Philipov (2009) search for policy effects on fertility rates. Both studies find that, holding the economic situation constant, financially generous family policies are positively correlated with fertility rate. A survey in Gauthier and Philipov's (2009) work even indicates that when a policy is generous enough, it has the potential to negate economic instability's negative effects on fertility.

While more generous maternity policies have often been marketed by lawmakers as empowering for women, Heitlinger (1991) suggests that these policies may actually be oppressing women more by placing the burden of child care on them, thus confining them to the home and the traditional gender roles which Western feminism has attempted to liberate women from. It should be noted that the Western version of feminism is not the only version of feminism by far, but I am measuring policy's effect on women's economic status, and any effects of policy keeping women out of work, making less money, or being taken less seriously in the workplace is part of that variable. It seems policies which essentially require the woman to be the child-rearing parent are less likely to result in an increase in women's status. In addition, it has been shown that political policies can in fact influence civilian attitudes towards women (Banaszak 2006), which means when traditional gender roles are reinforced via family policy, it can result in more traditional attitudes towards women's role in the family and in the workforce.

With these concepts in mind, I present two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The more generous the family policy, the higher the resulting fertility rate.

Generous family policy is characterized by larger financial benefits and longer periods of paid leave. I predict that when parents are given more resources to raise children, they will be more likely to reproduce.

Hypothesis 2: The more balanced the financial benefits and leave time are between the parents, the higher the resulting women's economic status.

The more balanced the parental benefits are between both genders, the less likely the child-rearing burden will be placed solely on mothers, which gives women more opportunities to advance economically. I predict that a shared family benefit will help to increase women's status. Specifically, I predict that a generous Maternity Benefit (the only type of policy which—by definition—solely benefits the female parent) will decrease Women's Economic Status, while generosity in the other four policy categories (all of which either contribute to a more equal distribution of benefits directly or indirectly) will increase Women's Economic Status.

Russia: An Illustrative Study

To demonstrate how my theory of policy's effect on fertility and women's economic status fits into a real situation, I find it useful to describe a situation where a generous but unequal policy succeeded in increasing fertility at the expense of women's economic status. Russia is a perfect example. Starting with the disbandment of the USSR, Russia had been experiencing a drop in population of about 750,000 every year between 1990 and 2006--a global phenomenon. The country's recession--caused by the transition to a free market economy--marked the worst of this period, with birth rates falling and mortality rates rising year after year from 1991-1999 (*Dissonance* 2012). A large part of this phenomenon was due to widespread poverty. During this period, the population below the poverty line reached 35%, and while many people still had jobs, they would often work for months or even years at a time without ever seeing a paycheck. In addition, there would not be any kind of safety net to soften the blow of this transition until 2006--Russia's economic reformers explicitly refused to compensate people living in the highest levels of poverty (Aslund 2014). As a result, many families simply did not have enough money to keep having kids. Men who could no longer bring in money for their families took this particularly hard, resulting in a marked increase in male suicide, alcohol abuse, and alcohol related deaths--which is reflected in the country's increased mortality rate.

In 2000, Boris Yeltsin resigned as president and ceded power to Vladimir Putin. It was a good time to become a Russian president; global oil prices began a dramatic spike immediately after Putin took office (*Macrotrends* 2017). Russia's petroleum-based economy finally began to see some prosperity in the free market world. In addition, a landmark child care law was implemented during this time. The law, signed in 2000, switched the reimbursement rate (which

had previously been based on the mother's individual wages) to an amount based on the national minimum wage. This meant that those women who were being paid little or even nothing by their employer would still receive adequate resources to care for their infant. Due to this new system and increased prosperity, Russia's birth rate increased significantly between 2000 and 2005. But unfortunately, the mortality rate rose as well, and the country's population continued to spiral downwards (*Dissonance* 2012).

This downturn was especially problematic for Russia because the main cause throughout the ordeal was the premature deaths of men, often during a time in their lives when they would have been most productive in the workplace (Nechemias 2016). The loss was causing widespread labor shortages within the Russian economy. There were several ways President Putin could have addressed this issue, including providing resources for men dealing with emotional strife, better health care services, or avenues for recovery from drug addiction and abuse. Instead, in his 2006 state-of-the-nation address, Putin encouraged families to start having more children. He backed this sentiment up with a new social and maternity policy. The aim was to restore the health care system of Russia, while (notably) providing financial incentives to mothers who had more than two children and allowing new mothers eighteen months of paid maternity leave, plus a payment of 250,000 rubles (\$12,000 US dollars) upon the birth of each child ("Russian State of the Nation Address" 2006). In addition, women could now receive a lump sum of cash by registering her pregnancy early with the government.

This policy has been successful, with birth rates increasing each year, and the mortality rate reversing (*Dissonance* 2012). In 2011, for the first time in over twenty years, Russia's population began to increase, and has continued to increase each year ever since.

Still, the question should be asked: how does this policy affect women? Providing mothers with all these resources may seem like a great benefit or equalizer for women. But imagine, for example, how this affects women's status in the workplace. If the government makes having children the national strategy to combat economic downturn, it is likely that national attitudes may reflect this policy, embracing women's traditional role as the primary parental figure in the household and turning them away from a career-driven lifestyle. In addition, employers may become less likely to hire younger women in case they're going to have a baby soon (And many more employers may be expecting them to, now that women have financial incentives to do so). As an employer, it does not make sense to hire, promote, or give a raise to someone you think may be taking eighteen months off in the near future.

Scholars have also observed how attitudes seem to be reverting to the traditional once again now that Putin has renewed the state's alliance with the Russian Orthodox Church, known globally for its patriarchal structure and rejection of the Western ideal of "an equal role in society played by men and women" (Alfeyev 2012). The church, which now plays a widespread role in both Russian culture and government, proliferates the idea that men and women (who are regularly referred to as the "weak" sex) were both given separate roles by God, and that it is the natural order to carry those roles out (Nechemias 2016). With such an overarching presence in Russian society, it is only natural to expect this alliance to affect the status of Russian women as well.

With financial and cultural incentives keeping women out of the workforce, Russia has indeed been experiencing an overarching decline in women's economic status. Since Putin's maternity-centered policy was implemented in 2006, the percent of women's employment, the ratio of women's income to men's, and the ratio of the years women go to school compared to

men have all decreased. This generous policy which only gave incentives to mothers was success at the expense of women trying to compete in the workforce. And Russia is only one example of these effects.

Data Coding and Research Design

In this section I describe my data sources, how I use them to measure my variables, and how quantitative variables are coded. I then review the structure of my regression analysis.

Demographic and fertility data, such as births per woman and state population have been collected from the World Bank (2017), while data comparing women and men's education and economic status was taken from the United Nations' Gender Development Index (2017). Data on women's economic rights was taken pre-coded from the CIRI Human Rights Data Project (2011). Additional data was used to calculate control variables and policy coding included GDP per capita (World Bank 2017), GDP per capita in US\$ (PPP) (Index Mundi 2017), and exchange rates to the US\$ (from Penn World Table). My data was collected from seventeen Eastern European countries from 1990-2016. Pulling data from individual countries each year allows me to observe trends over time and as well as between countries. It also ensures that the effects of changing policies on the dependent variables can easily be observed.

All of my policy data was collected from the Social Security Administration, a qualitative source which I have coded quantitatively (*USA Social Security Administration* 2016). As I mentioned earlier, there may be up to five components in each policy: Maternity Benefits, Paternity Benefits, Childcare Leave, Pregnancy Grants, and Childbirth Grants. Each of these categories has features which will be quantitatively analyzed for each policy to determine its generosity. The generosity of maternity benefits, maternity benefits, and child care leave are measured by the average weeks of paid maternity leave, and the average percent of income paid during these weeks. The generosity of pregnancy and childbirth grants are measured by the ratio

of the amount of money awarded to the average per-capita income. All currency values were converted into PPP US\$ to create clear and measurable values.

Quantitatively analyzing policy can be a complicated process, especially when those policies have many features. In order to quantitatively examine welfare decommodification, Allan and Scruggs (2006) create a “decommodification index” (Allen and Scruggs 61). The index classifies several features of welfare decommodification policy and uses a numeric code to describe a score based on the generosity which each state received in each area. The score is then totaled per state, and each state is given a “total decommodification score” to indicate the generosity of their welfare policies (Allan and Scruggs 2006). Using this index, policies across states may be compared objectively and clearly, despite differing currencies and finer policy details.

To measure and compare the generosity of policies across countries, I have created a Generosity Index, which is modelled after Allan and Scruggs’ decommodification index (2006). The independent variable “policy” is displayed in the five categories outline above. In order to code these values within the Generosity Index, I first find the mean of all of the category’s values over all the years in every country, which I code as “2”. I then determine the standard deviation of that value, and code the aspects of the policy based on how many standard deviations they are above or below the mean (i.e. if the mean is coded 3, one standard deviation below the mean would be coded as “2”, one standard deviation above the mean would be coded as “4”, and so on). If a category has two factors which determine generosity, the median of those two coded values are taken as the final code for that category. For example, a policy’s maternity benefit generosity is determined by both the number of weeks of paid leave, and the percent of yearly income that is paid during the leave period. If the weeks of paid leave receives a score of “2” and

the percent of yearly income paid receives a score of “5”, the final score for that policy’s maternity benefit category is “3.5”. This process is repeated for each category of the policy.

Women’s Economic Status is measured by the numeric values present in the data of four sub-variables: Women’s Employment, Ratio Women’s Income to Men’s, Ratio Women’s Years Schooling to Men’s, and Women’s Economic Rights. I interpolated scores during five-year gaps in the data in order to make the data usable in regression analyses. Using the same method as I use to code the Generosity Index, the mean data value of each sub-variable is found, and the data is subsequently coded based on the standard deviations it is from the mean value. The final calculation for Women’s Economic Status is then found by taking the mean value of whatever coded data is available for that year. This results in a variable which is present throughout the date range of my study, despite some data gaps within its sub-variables.

Results

In my analysis, I use my data to examine family policy as it relates to two dependent variables: fertility and women's economic status. In this section, I will briefly discuss the dimensions of my data, before diving into a more thorough analysis of the policy effects as they relate to my hypotheses.

Descriptive Statistics

To have a full picture of the data, I will first review the distribution of policy type throughout my data. The most common type of family policy is the Maternity Benefit, which involves paid leave from work for mothers and mothers only. Every country offered this benefit, even when they had none of the other policy types in place, and the average generosity score was also the highest. Paternity Benefit (involving paid leave from work for fathers and fathers only), on the other hand, was one of the fewest occurring policies. Childcare Leave was much more common (though not pervasive) and tended to be more generous. Pregnancy Grant policy only appeared in two countries, Russia and Belarus, and were both accompanied by a generous Maternity Benefit. Childbirth Grants also occurred occasionally, with generosities at almost every level.

The general trends in the dependent variables vary between cases (countries). The most homogeneous trends are in fertility, which drops significantly in the 1990s for all states (with low points around 1.2 births per woman) and has slowly climbed back up over the past twenty years. However, it seems even the states most successful at restoring fertility have yet to reach the levels they were pre-1990. The highest fertility rates are close to 1.7 births per woman, while pre-1990 rates were about 1.9 births per woman. Still, some states with ungenerous family policies are still experiencing fertility decline, the lowest current rate being around 1.3 births per

woman. While the sub-variables for Women's Economic Status's data do not all have data for each year, the coding method I used to combine the sub-variables into one provides variable data for each year in the study. The final scores range from 0.67 at the lowest and 4 at the highest, with most falling between 1.5 and 2.5.

Regression Analysis

In my first hypothesis, I predicted the policy generosity would result in increased fertility (which I measure in average births per woman). In Table 1, I display the effects of policy in six models: one for each policy type (models 1-5) and one which examines the effects of all policies when taken together (model 6). In each model, two control variables (population and GDP per capita) are also present. In all models, population is not significant, while GDP per capita consistently does. This suggests that GDP per capita should also be considered a factor which contributes to a country's fertility, but it seems unlikely that it is influencing the effects of individual policies. However, the results do show a tendency for wealthier countries to have higher fertility rates.

While not all policy types contribute as strongly to fertility as I originally expected, there is no significant evidence of any negative relationship between policy generosity and fertility, and all the significant evidence I do find throughout the models depicts a positive relationship between the two variables, as Hypothesis 1 suggests. The policy types with a significant positive relationship are Maternity Benefit, Pregnancy Grant, and Childbirth Grant. Childbirth Grant has the lowest coefficient and becomes insignificant in Model 6 when all policy effects are taken together. Maternity Benefit appears to have the largest effect on fertility, which may in part be caused by its consistently high frequency and generosity across all the countries' policies. In other words, a generous maternity benefit could itself be an indicator of high generosity overall, which means (if my hypothesis is correct) that we could also expect a high return on fertility rate.

Table 1 Analysis of Policy's Effect on Fertility Rates in Eastern Europe, 1990-2016

	Model 1: Maternity Benefit	Model 2: Paternity Benefit	Model 3: Childcare Leave	Model 4: Pregnancy Grant	Model 5: Childbirth Grant	Model 6: Total Policy
Maternity Benefit	0.071* (0.009)					0.0733* (0.010)
Paternity Benefit		-0.005 (0.009)				0.001 (0.009)
Childcare Leave			-0.007 (0.006)			-0.005 (0.006)
Pregnancy Grant				0.039* (0.012)		0.054* (0.014)
Childbirth Grant					0.016* (0.006)	-0.003 (0.008)
Population	0.0001 (0.0002)	-0.0001 (0.0003)	0.0001 (0.0003)	-0.0001 (0.0003)	-0.0003 (0.0003)	0.0001 (0.0003)
GDP per capita	0.008* (0.002)	0.005* (0.002)	0.005* (0.002)	0.005* (0.002)	0.003* (0.002)	0.009* (0.002)
Const.	1.102* (0.041)	1.391* (0.017)	1.398* (0.018)	1.377* (0.017)	1.387* (0.017)	1.079* (0.045)
N	339	339	339	339	339	339
R ²	0.164	0.026	0.029	0.057	0.045	0.220

*= Significant at a 95% Confidence Interval

Note: Individual entries are regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Finally, Pregnancy Grant appears positively significant in all models. It should be noted that all cases of Pregnancy Grant come out of countries' which simultaneously administered generous maternity policies, so we may actually be seeing the effects of Maternity Benefit when we look at the correlation between Pregnancy Grant and Fertility.

In my second hypothesis, I predict that policies which contribute to the equal distribution of benefits to parents of both genders will result in a boost to women's economic status. To clarify, policies which solely benefit men (i.e. Paternity Benefit) still contribute to that equal distribution, because all family policies include a Maternity Benefit (a policy solely awarding benefits to women). Therefore, the addition of a Paternity Benefit helps to even the balance of resources provided between the two parents. Furthermore, Childcare Leave, Pregnancy Grant, and Childbirth Grant benefits can all be awarded and/or shared between parents of both genders, so these policies also contribute to an equal distribution of resources. That said, Maternity Benefit--which is linked directly to the mother's income from her occupation and by definition cannot be transferred to the male parent--is the only form of policy which contributes to the unequal distribution of family benefits. In summary, if Hypothesis 2 is true, I expect a positive correlation between Women's Economic Status and the following policies: Paternity Benefit, Childcare Leave, Pregnancy Grant, and Childbirth Grant. On the other hand, I expect to find a negative correlation between Women's Economic Status and Maternity Benefit.

As Table 2 shows, all of these predictions are supported by significant evidence. Maternity Benefit has a negative and relatively large coefficient which is statistically significant in both models the it appears in, suggesting that as the generosity of maternity benefits go up, women's economic status goes down.

Table 2 Analysis of Policy's Effect on Women's Economic Status in Eastern Europe, 1990-2016

	Model 1: Maternity Benefit	Model 2: Paternity Benefit	Model 3: Childcare Leave	Model 4: Pregnancy Grant	Model 5: Childbirth Grant	Model 6: Total Policy
Maternity Benefit	-0.202* (0.029)					-0.188* (0.029)
Paternity Benefit		0.130* (0.029)				0.137* (0.027)
Childcare Leave			0.074* (0.019)			0.010 (0.021)
Pregnancy Grant				0.161* (0.037)		0.147* (0.044)
Childbirth Grant					0.056* (0.020)	0.002 (0.025)
Population	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 * (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.002 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.002* (0.001)
GDP per capita	0.025* (0.005)	0.027* (0.005)	0.032* (0.005)	0.038* (0.005)	0.031* (0.005)	0.018* (0.005)
Const.	2.443* (0.130)	1.583* (0.053)	1.523* (0.057)	1.551* (0.545)	1.594* (0.054)	2.304* (0.134)
N	342	342	342	342	342	342
R ²	0.237	0.176	0.162	0.171	0.145	0.323

*= Significant at a 95% Confidence Interval

Note: Individual entries are regression coefficients with standard errors in parentheses.

Paternity Benefit and Pregnancy Grant are both positively correlated and also significant in both models. Childcare Leave and Childbirth Grant also present with significant and positive

coefficients, although their coefficients are smaller and lose their significance in the composite policy model (Model 6). Even so, these results taken together strongly support my second hypothesis, and give evidence to the theory that policy benefits balanced between parents of both genders boost women's economic status, while benefits provided exclusively for women actually decrease women's economic status.

Table 2 also shows that GDP per capita has a consistent positive correlation with women's economic status in all models. As in Table 1, it seems that GDP Per Capita significantly impacts the dependent variable (Women's Economic Status in this case), but it remains unlikely that it influences the effectiveness of individual policies. Table 2 also shows that Population has a significant positive coefficient in Models 2 and 6. However, the coefficient is so small that, however significant the correlation may be, it is unlikely to impact women's economic status noticeably compared to the effects of the policies.

Discussion and Conclusion

In this study I asked questions about the effect of pronatalist family policy in Eastern Europe. I wanted to know what types of policy succeeded in increasing the fertility rate, and I wondered how each policy might affect women and their economic status. I hypothesized that 1) Fertility would increase when the policy was more financial generous to parents, and 2) that policy which distributed benefits more equally between both parents would increase women's status, while policies which disproportionately gave to women would decrease their status. I then numerically coded the generosity of five types of policy from seventeen Eastern European countries, ultimately finding significant evidence to support both of my hypotheses.

The implications of my results are quite intriguing. They show that fertility does in fact increase when the policy is generous, but that affect may only become significant when the generosity is high. There may also be a link between generosity and maternity benefit, and/or policy which disproportionately benefits women, but this is difficult to conclude with the data available in this analysis.

My results also strongly support my hypothesis which predicted disproportionate family benefits for women would decrease their economic status, while a more equal distribution of benefits increases their status. These findings are supported and explained by feminist theory, which has posited that when government policy focuses primarily on women as caregivers by providing large financial incentives to mothers (but not fathers), it decreases their success in the workplace. There are three main reasons for why this is true: 1) the financial benefit incentivizes women to take more time away from work, causing them to spend less time in the workplace than men. 2) Employers are also incentivized to not hire, promote, or raise the salary of women who are at the age they would be having children, because they may soon be needing to pay

those women large benefits while they take lengthy parental leaves. Women may also be at risk for being laid off if they take too much time off of work. Men living under this policy, however, might appear to be a reliable source of work no matter their age. And 3) policy often creates and/or reflects the culture it is in. In many Eastern European countries, pronatalist policy came along with campaigns that characterized women's role as mothers as being the most important or patriotic duty in their country, as scholars have seen in Russia. It is reasonable to suspect that policies which characterize women as the primary caregivers advance cultural expectations of women's and men's traditional gender roles. Thus, institutionalized bias against women which prevents them from advancing in the workforce is likely to be more prominent in societies with laws that encourage women to take on traditional gender roles.

These findings affirm previous research which shows how creating a more financially supportive situation for parents can increase the number of children they ultimately have. It also shows that, while increasing mother's benefits has previously been thought to help women economically, awarding mothers benefits disproportionately ultimately make them fall behind their male counterparts. It seems that the only way to assure a maternity benefit does not have a negative impact on women's economic status may be to add a clause which protect their employment status during leave, as has been implemented in California. However, this ultimately only stops women from being fired, and employers are still incentivized to hire and pay them less. It seems the best way to promote women's status via policy is by giving benefits to both parents as equally as possible.

This study was not perfect: I would have liked to include countries which had more data on policies other than Maternity Benefit. The lack of data for certain policy types--Pregnancy Grant in particular--made it hard to draw conclusions about their effects. If I could expand my

dataset to include more countries which use this policy, it would make my findings more solid in this area. I also hope to one day examine whether immigration has any effect on fertility, and had I had more data on net migration flow in these countries, I would have included it as a control variable.

I have a few suggestions for scholars who might want to build on these findings. First, similar studies linking fertility and women's economic status to family policy should be done in several regions around the world, to confirm whether or not these policy effects are specific to Eastern Europe. These studies should also examine whether there is a tipping point for when a policy's financial generosity begins to impact fertility and try to confirm whether this effect is only caused by Maternity Benefits, or if it holds true for any policy. Finally, it would be interesting to do a deeper analysis of how each policy type--not just whether it is balanced or not--effects women's economic status.

The findings of this study have great implications for pronatalist family policy's success and its impact on mothers. Too often throughout history have women been forced to compromise to further the public good while men advanced. I hope the politicians who write laws in the future will do their research, and craft policies which are generous and equally distributed to maximize fertility without harming women's economic chances.

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EDUCATION

The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

May 2018

B.A. Political Science

B.A. Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies

HONORS

The Schreyer Honors College

The Paterno Fellows Program

The Presidential Leadership Academy

Department Marshal: Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies

WORK EXPERIENCE

PA Advocacy Corps Organizer at The Friends Committee on National Legislation, Washington D.C.

August 2017-Present

- Organized and recruited for bi-monthly lobby visits and conference calls between PA Congressmen and their constituents.
- Developed relationships with staffers of Pennsylvania's congressional offices which I currently maintain.
- Led and organized workshops teaching constituents how to lobby, and recruited for FCNL's Spring Lobby Weekend.
- Wrote and published several Letters to the Editor in local papers regarding current environmental legislation.

Lobbying Research Assistant for Prof. Marie Hojnacki at the Political Science Dept. of PSU

June 2017-September 2017

- Created and organized large spreadsheets of compiled data from 2017 lobby visits regarding health care reform.
- Coded data from thousands of lobby visits independently, by bill provision, using Open Secrets.
- Gained in depth understanding of the provisions of the Affordable Care Act (2009) and the American Health Care Act (2017)

Terrorism Research Assistant for Dr. James Piazza at the Political Science Dept. of PSU

January 2017-May 2017

- Coded data regarding terrorist groups using multiple scholarly sources.
- Analyzed the nature of diaspora movements and their effect on terrorist groups.
- Studied the influence of cultural factors on terrorist group operations.

Intern at Quota International, Washington, DC

June 2016-August 2016

- Created advertisements, presentations and articles viewed by an international audience.
- Analyzed and wrote reports on service projects taking place around the world.
- Managed and reorganized databases containing information on hundreds of individuals.
- Worked alongside directors of an international nonprofit organization in an administrative setting.

Social Movement Research Assistant for Dr. Lee Ann Banaszak at the Political Science Dept. of PSU

January 2016-June 2016

- Analyzed and coded hundreds of regional news articles regarding the presidential candidates for 2016.
- Examined and documented several forms of protest against US presidential candidates.
- Presented research results at the Center for American Political Responsiveness Conference, February 2016.

SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Washington D.C. Social Justice Fellowship, Washington D.C.

January 2017-May 2017

- Created lesson plans to interactively educate teenage students on issues of social justice.
- Taught course based on original lesson plans to public high school students in D.C. area, May 2017
- Formulated a Civic Action Plan with the goal to promote young's women's empowerment, based on policy research.
- Formally present Civic Action Plan to legal stakeholders in D.C., May 2017

The Presidential Leadership Academy, University Park, PA

April 2015-Present

- Selected for PSU Presidential Leadership Academy, April 2015.
- Wrote a thoroughly researched paper on bilingual education in PA schools.
- Formally presented research to university leaders and State College Area School Board.
- Drafted full bill and proposal based on research, submitted to Pennsylvania State Legislature.

ServeState, "Students for Philanthropy," University Park, PA

September 2014-May 2017

- Documented 350 hours of service since joining in September 2014.
- Elected Vice President, Apr. 2016, reelected Dec. 2016. Main admin for ServeState, organized large club events, advised president on sensitive decisions.
- Elected Service Coordinator, Apr. 2015, reelected Dec. 2015. Organized/managed multiple service events per week, working with multiple parties and delegating responsibilities within large groups of people.
- Elected Recruitment Chair, Dec. 2014. Organized multiple events to recruit new members. Designed advertising campaigns.

Pennsylvania Democrats, State College, PA

October 2016-November 2016

- Volunteered 9 hours a week, mobilizing Pennsylvania voters by canvassing and phone banking.
- Catalogued and distributed voter information to voters and activists.

PSU Social Justice Advocates, University Park, PA.

September 2014-May 2015

- Selected for PSU Social Justice Advocates Program, September, 2014.
- Presented in symposium, "Leading the Way towards Change," March, 2015.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

The Effect of Family Policy on Fertility and Women's Economic Status, University Park, PA.

August 2016-April 2018

- Writing full graduate-level research paper with quantitative analysis and multiple qualitative case studies.
- Data was extracted and coded quantitatively using an index I designed.
- Full thesis to be reviewed by Penn State's Political Science department and the Schreyer's Honors College, April 2018.

The Correlation of Democracy and Happiness, University Park, PA.

August 2015-December 2015

- Designed a quantitative regression analysis of reported happiness scores among citizens of different regime types.
- Presented results to a panel of Political Science faculty to receive feedback.
- Preliminary literature review also compiled.

LANGUAGES

- Fluent in German (studied 2008-2014).
- Able to read, write and speak proficiently in Modern Standard Arabic (studied 2014-2016).
- Fluent in several statistical software programs, including Stata, R Studio, and Minitab

ADDITIONAL AWARDS, GRANTS AND HONORS

- Outstanding Undergraduate Student Award from PSU's Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department, March 2018.
- Department Marshal, Women's Gender and Sexuality Studies at PSU, February 2018.
- Entrance into "Triota," Penn State's Women's Gender and Sexuality's Honor Society, September 2017.
- Kim Anderson Memorial Scholarship from PSU's Political Science Department, January 2017.
- Scholarship from PSU's Political Science Department for Academic Excellence, May 2016.
- Scholarship from PSU's College of the Liberal Arts to Intern in Washington D.C., May 2016.
- Scholarship to attend United Nations Social Good Summit as a student journalist, PSU, September 2014.
- Paterno Fellows Scholarship from PSU's College of Liberal Arts, 2014-2018.
- Dean's List, Penn State University, Fall 2014, Spring 2015, Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, Spring 2017, Fall 2017.

SKILLS

- **Lobbying:** Experienced in lobbying members of Congress professionally, in person and over the phone. Skilled at conducting in depth policy research and maintain relationships with Congressional staffers.
- **Grassroots Organization:** Experienced in canvassing, phone banking, publicly distributing literature and sending emails in a professional manner.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** Experienced in analyzing and presenting quantitative data, particularly in the political sphere. Able to operate "Stata", "R Studio" and "Minitab."
- **Research Compilation and Report:** Experienced in gathering data in many contexts and compiling it into a working summary and report. Skilled at creating professional APA and MLA style bibliographies.
- **Event Management:** Experienced in organizing service projects involving multiple parties and large groups of people.
- **Bloggng:** Experienced in using research compilation skills to write informed opinion pieces on relevant societal issues to be posted in a public domain.