

Abstract

The main aim of this Master's thesis is to define the relationship between fertility rates and family policy in Central Europe, that experienced steep decline in fertility during the 1990s, and in Northern Europe, known for its stable and relatively high fertility. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, current models of family policy are defined and examples of policy measures that motivate people to start a family are found. The thesis also wants answer the question whether it is possible to implement a successful model of family policy in another region. The research focuses on two groups of countries, which went through similar development over the last decades: Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary that share a similar socialist experience, while Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland attempted to find the third way between market economy and strong welfare state. Both regions also had to restructure their economy and reform their welfare states in the beginning of the 1990s. This development influenced today's beliefs about family support, childcare services or flexibility of the labour market, crucial in formulations of national family policy.