

Social Policies in Central Europe: (How) Do They Work?

Lecturers:

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Outline of the course:

This course aims to provide students with an introduction to social policies dealing with the most common problems of modern societies and welfare state and how they are being formulated in the political process. These challenges include work-life balance, gender inequalities and discrimination, homelessness and poor living conditions and respective social services. For each topic, we first introduce the problem, its scope and relevance. We illustrate the historical perspective and time evolution and talk about cross-country differences and the possible reasons for these differences. Second, we discuss potential solutions and address specific policies that could be used to tackle this issue. We investigate how the specific context of Central Europe shapes policies used in the area and how that differs from Western countries. Third, we discuss the effectiveness of policies and provide some evidence about what works and why. Finally, selected students provide a short overview of the situation in their home country related to the issue at hand (the scope of the problem, policies used to tackle the issue and the related costs and benefits). At the end, we compare the situation in the Czech Republic to the one presented by students from their home countries and discuss potential implications for policy.

Students will learn to formulate problems and understand the intervention logic and differences in social policies across countries. They will learn to critically evaluate evidence about existence and strength of policy impacts in different areas. They will understand the role of a deeper societal value system in shaping the role of the state and other actors in the formulation of social policies.

Grading:

Active class participation (short at-class presentations): **30%**

Midterm exam: **30%**

Final exam: **40%**

Grading scale:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Description
A	93-100	Outstanding work
A-	90-92	
B+	87-89	Good work
B	83-86	
B-	80-82	
C+	77-79	Acceptable Work
C	73-76	
C-	70-72	
D+	67-69	Work that is significantly below average
D	63-66	
D-	60-62	
F	0-59	Work that does not meet the minimum standards for passing the course

UPCES Non-Discrimination/Harassment Policy

The UPCES program in Prague promotes a diverse learning environment where the dignity, worth, and differences of each individual are valued and respected. Discrimination and harassment, whether based on a person's race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or other legally protected characteristic, are repugnant and completely inconsistent with our objectives. Retaliation against individuals for raising good faith claims of harassment and/or discrimination is prohibited.

UPCES Diversity Policy

UPCES fully embraces diversity and strives to create a safe and welcoming environment for students from all backgrounds. Prague is a wonderfully diverse community and UPCES is no different. All students should feel at home while studying abroad and UPCES will do its utmost to make sure that becomes a reality. Although unique challenges may arise, we believe that students from all walks of life will encounter wonderful opportunities for enrichment as they explore a new culture while studying abroad.

Weekly schedule:

Week 1: UPCES Orientation Lecture Series

Week 2: Introduction to policy evaluation

- Outline of the course, requirements and motivations.
- Introduction to social policies: How much and to what purpose do governments spend money? Is the money well spent?
- Policy making and common sense: Policies that must work... or not? Examples of policies with opposite and unintended consequences.
- Policy evaluation: Why do we need evidence to decide which policies to implement? How does policy evaluation work?

Readings:

- Gertler, P. J., Martinez, S., Premand, P., Rawlings, L. B., & Vermeersch, C. M. (2011). *Impact evaluation in practice*. World Bank Publications.
- PALFREY, C., PHILLIPS, C., THOMAS, P. (2012). *Evaluation for the real world: the impact of evidence in policy making*. Bristol, Policy Press.

Week 3-4: Parenthood and the labor market, policies facilitating work-life balance

- Problem definition: How do mothers and fathers combine parenthood and paid work? How does it differ in different countries? What is typical for Central and Eastern Europe?
- Historical overview: fertility, motherhood and labor force participation in Central Europe during communism and nowadays.
- Policies: What are the policies facilitating work-life balance for parents? What are the goals of these policies? Do they achieve these goals?
- How do social norms and gender role perceptions affect policies and their efficiency? Unintended consequences of work-life balance policies.

Readings:

- UNICEF (1999). *Women in transition (MONEE Project, Regional Monitoring Report 6)*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
- ILO (2014). *Maternity and paternity at work: law and practice across the world*. International Labour Office, Geneva.
- Rossin-Slater, M. (2017). *Maternity and Family Leave Policy*. In the *Oxford Handbook on the Economics of Women*, ed. Susan L. Averett, Laura M. Argys and Saul D. Hoffman. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Saxonberg, S. and Sirovátka, T. (2006). *Failing family policy in post-communist Central Europe*. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis*, 8(2), 185-202.
- Henderson, A., & White, L. A. (2004). *Shrinking welfare states? Comparing maternity leave benefits and child care programs in European Union and North American welfare states, 1985–2000*. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 11(3), 497-519.
- Bičáková, A., & Kalíšková, K. (2019). *(Un)intended effects of parental leave policies: Evidence from the Czech Republic*. *Labour Economics*, 61(101783).

Week 5-6: Gender inequality and discrimination in the labor market, related policies

- Stylized facts: Why do women work less than men? Why do women earn less than men? How does this evolve over the life cycle?
- Historical overview and comparison of different countries.
- What drives the gender wage gap? How is it related to occupation choice? How can we measure discrimination?
- Recent developments and policies aiming at gender equality and discrimination.

Readings:

- World Development Report (2012) Gender Equality and Development, World Bank.
- Lundborg, P., Plug, E., & Rasmussen, A. W. (2017). Can Women Have Children and a Career? IV Evidence from IVF Treatments. *American Economic Review*, 107(6), 1611-1637
- Goraus, K. et al. (2017). How (Not) To Make Women Work? Evidence from Transition Countries. GRAPE Working Paper # 1.
- Blau, Brummund, Liu (2013). Trends in Occupational Segregation by Gender 1970–2009: Adjusting for the Impact of Changes in the Occupational Coding System. *Demography*, 50:471-492

Week 7: Midterm exam

Week 8-9: The cost of homelessness and social housing

- Social costs of sub-standard living conditions (overview of impacts, evidence of strength of impact, monetisation of costs)
- Approaches to homelessness solutions - what works
- Rental versus ownership housing in the Czech Republic and municipal housing (and its use for different target groups)
- Political process of social housing legislature in the Czech Republic - lessons to be learned

Readings:

- Crisis / PwC (2018). Assessing the costs and benefits of Crisis' plan to end homelessness.
https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238957/assessing_the_costs_and_benefits_of_crisis_-_plan_to_end_homelessness_2018.pdf
- Aubry, T., Bloch, G., Brcic, V., Saad, A., Magwood, O., Abdalla, T., Alkhateeb, Q., Xie, E., Mathew, C., Hannigan, T., Costello, C., Thavorn, K., Stergiopoulos, V., Tugwell, P., & Pottie, K. (2020). Effectiveness of permanent supportive housing and income assistance interventions for homeless individuals in high-income countries: a systematic review. *The Lancet Public Health*, 5(6), e342–e360.
[https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667\(20\)30055-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(20)30055-4)
- Evans, W. N., Phillips, D. C., & Ruffini, K. (2021). Policies to reduce and prevent homelessness: what we know and gaps in the research. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 40(3), 914–963. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22283>
- Fujiwara, D., & Vine, J. (2015). The Wellbeing Value of Tackling Homelessness: Identifying the impact on life satisfaction using the Journeys Home dataset. HACT.
<https://www.hact.org.uk/sites/default/files/uploads/Archives/2015/9/Homelessness%20and%20wellbeing%20analysis.pdf>

- Keenan, C., Miller, S., Hanratty, J., Pigott, T., Hamilton, J., Coughlan, C., Mackie, P., Fitzpatrick, S., & Cowman, J. (2021). Accommodation-based interventions for individuals experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 17(2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/cl2.1165>

Week 10-11: Shared economy and the case of AirBnB regulation

- shared economy versus standard business regulations (accommodation services, taxi drivers)
- legal context - criteria that define service as “shared economy” or standard entrepreneurship - advantages and disadvantages,
- impact of share economy definition on the scope of short-term accommodation in the case of Prague
- impacts of shared short-term accommodation and possibilities for regulation

Readings:

- TBA

Week 12: Closing session - success stories and failures in the policy definition and adoption process - real life examples

- Success story - hazard games legislation in the Czech Republic - successful crucial impact of RIA in fighting partial interests
- Analysis driven by wishful thinking - same-sex marriages CBA from Deloitte
- Sensitive parametrization of a policy - case of valorization of pensions in the Czech Republic 2022
- Wrong perception of baseline scenario - solar energy subsidies

Week 13: Final exam