

Introduction: change and continuity in recent family policies ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Abstract:

Families have become a focal point in debates of 'new risks' and much needed 'new policies' for Western welfare states. Family policy responses to the new challenges and even the goals associated with welfare policies designed to aid families have, however, varied across countries, and there is much uncertainty about the sources of this variation and the future development of the policy field. This special issue takes stock of recent developments in the field of family policy. It brings together a range of countries that, taken together, map the full spectrum of advanced industrial countries' family policy dilemmas, responses, and intervening institutional and ideational variables. Its goal is to take a first step towards explaining the varied degrees and forms of family policy activism in mature welfare states of Western liberal democracies. The introduction to the special issue first sketches the changing nature and social roles of the family, as they evolved along with public law and welfare policies. It then presents family policy regimes which allow for a systematic account of possible intervening factors in the formulation of country-specific responses. Most importantly, the introduction provides a brief outline of plausible causal approaches to the question of family policy change and comments on their strengths and the potential hazards and describes how the papers assembled here may collectively contribute to a better understanding of what drives and shapes family policy development and how these potential causes are interrelated.

Region: International ^[3]

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