

# **The Family in a New Social Contract**

*The Case of Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia*

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## Acronyms

<b>GDP</b>	Gross domestic product
<b>KZT</b>	Kazakhstan tenge
<b>MCI</b>	Monthly calculation index
<b>MNT</b>	Mongolian tugrik
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>RUB</b>	Russian ruble

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## Summary

The current paper examines the evolution of the family in both conceptual and empirical terms, as well as family support policies, in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It argues that family support is a central element of a transition to a new social contract in these countries. It uses the systematic analysis of parental leave policies, childcare services, and family allowances and child benefits to understand the nature of the emerging welfare model in the three cases more deeply.

While within social and family policy debate, considerable attention has been paid to advanced welfare states and increasingly to countries in the Global South, the new independent states of the former Soviet Union have remained relatively neglected. This study thus aims to fill a gap in this research and policy area. The paper is further framed within a broader consideration of trends in development of families and family support policies globally and over time.

Being part of the same Soviet social welfare system, Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia transitioned from socialism simultaneously, having similar economic trajectories and demographic concerns at the outset. The study proposes a three-stage periodization of family support policies in these countries: (i) family destabilization in 1991–1999 that saw the collapse of the old social contract accompanied with drastic changes in economy and society; (ii) family revival in 2000–2007 that marked the resurgence of family support enabled by economic growth, putting families at the core of the new social contract; and (iii) family strain in 2008–2016 where the fiscal basis for family support policies has been undermined by economic crises, intensifying the vulnerability of families to poverty.

In response to the challenges that Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia have faced during transition, the respective governments adopted a pronatalist approach to family support policies, with some variation in measures within this approach and outcomes for families. The analysis of data on social spending, specific family support policies, as well as the priorities and concerns of the three governments, reveals a dissonance between the state rhetoric of the importance of the family as a social institution and the reality of its policy interventions. Despite some significant state efforts to support families, which contributed to the increase in fertility and reduction in poverty in these countries, there has not been sufficient emphasis on the quality of care services for children and the elderly, work-family reconciliation and gender equality.

The analysis further points to a shift in the relationship between the state, society and family within the new social contract, which entails more family autonomy and involves the partnership between the state, family and other actors including the private sector and non-governmental organizations. The underlying principle of self-responsibilization that serves as the basis of this relationship reflects a trend towards refamilialization in these contexts. The study indicates that these countries represent a hybrid welfare model, with a dominant liberal part and some distinct elements of the conservative model and to a much lesser extent of the social-democratic model.

The study also finds a growing tension in the institution of the family in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia (as well as more globally), which has a negative impact on the structure, composition and well-being of families. To improve this, the paper suggests that family support policies in these countries could focus on ameliorating the access and quality of social services for children and the elderly, creating family-friendly employment opportunities with equal amount of paid maternity and paternity leaves, eradicating poverty through increasing incomes and social payments, and enhancing gender equality through reducing unpaid care work and promoting shared responsibility within the family. This all can help generate better future returns in terms of economic growth, human capital development and social cohesion.

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**Keywords**

family, family support, social policy, social protection, family policy, parental leave, childcare, gender equality, ageing, demography, poverty, welfare regime, social contract, Russia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, transition economies





## 1. Introduction

The family is arguably a fundamental building block in the structure of any society (Eshleman 1988; Rothausen 1999). As one of the major social institutions, the family matters because, in most cases, it contributes to generating labour force; it protects from various life contingencies through the provision of economic and social assistance, as well as moral support; it provides intangible assets such as love, and instils values and ethical norms that underpin human behaviour, all of which is necessary to sustain a well-functioning economy and society (UN 1995, 2004, 2015; IFFD 2014).

While within social and family policy debate, considerable attention has been paid to advanced welfare states and increasingly to various countries in the Global South, the countries of the former Soviet Union have remained relatively neglected and under-researched. There have been limited empirical data available about welfare changes in these countries since the official dissolution of the Soviet Union around 25 years ago and their impact on families during this period. The current paper thus aims to fill a gap in this area by examining the role of the family in a social contract in post-Soviet Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, and various social policies that have been implemented to support families in these countries, which are referred to in this paper as family support policies.

In the context of the risks and challenges that these countries have confronted since the collapse of the Soviet Union, understanding the role of the family and the nature of family support policies is necessary in order to understand the kind of welfare model emerging in contemporary Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. To this end, the paper addresses the following questions:

- i. What changes have occurred in families in these countries since the dissolution of the Soviet Union? Why has this happened?
- ii. What policy innovations have been introduced to support families in the three countries? What have been the drivers of such policy change?
- iii. How have these policies been implemented and what effects have they had on livelihoods of families in these countries?
- iv. What implications have these outcomes had on the relationship between the state, society and family within the new social contract?

The social contract here is seen as an implicit agreement between the state and society on their mutual roles, rights and responsibilities. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the newly emerged independent states faced a task of formulating a new social contract. Previous conditions that underpinned the social contract during the Soviet era ceased to exist, and the relationship between state and society, as well as the role of the family within it, had to be revisited. In the current paper I maintain that at the beginning of the transition period in the early 1990s, this process started under similar conditions in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, all of which adopted a pronatalist approach in family support policies. In the course of development, the respective governments have undertaken diverse measures within this approach to support families in response to emerging challenges.

The context of economic, social and political transition in post-Soviet Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia presents an interesting case study to examine the role of the family within a changing social contract. First, these countries were all part of the same Soviet social welfare system. While both Russia and Kazakhstan formed parts of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mongolia, though formally independent, was considered “the de facto sixteenth republic” of the Soviet Union (Murrell 1996:26). Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, all these countries embarked on a transition path, which involved far-reaching reforms and created new conditions for building a social contract. Second, at the beginning of the transition, all three countries had similar demographic concerns, that is, they were characterized by low population density, declining fertility and high mortality. These demographic trends had significant implications for the directions of family support policies undertaken by respective governments. Third, Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia are all mineral-rich countries in which available domestic resources could provide a financial, albeit volatile, basis for family support. Finally, all three countries share a similar attitude with regard to the importance of the family. In Russia, as well as in historically nomadic economies like Mongolia and Kazakhstan, the family has been a critical link between different generations, the guardian of spiritual and cultural traditions and a source of mutual help and support.

In the examination of family support policies in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, I divide these policies into three main groups based on time, services and resources, and subsequently focus on (i) parental leave policies (in relation to time), (ii) childcare services (in relation to services), and (iii) family allowances and child benefits (in relation to resources), respectively. This serves as a framework for systematic and structured comparison of family support policies across the three cases.

The paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides the conceptualization of the family and of family policies. Section 3 provides a categorization of family policy regimes in welfare states. Section 4 introduces national contexts, including the definition of the family and institutionalization of family support in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, which is followed by an overview of transition experiences of these countries with special reference to various impacts on families. This provides a general background against which specific family support policies in the countries are examined in section 5. Section 6 discusses the implications of these policies for the family, its relationship with the state and society in the social contract and how these relations shape the emerging welfare model in the three countries. The paper is concluded with the summary of key findings in section 7.

## **2. Concept of the Family and Family Support Policies**

In international statements, the family is primarily understood as a natural form of human organization (UN 1948, 1989, 2015). In this sense, the family is characterized as a variety of kinship grouping (Bender 1967), within which members can be related by birth, marriage or adoption.

Families are distinguished from households. Households also include persons who carry out domestic functions (Goody 1972) and may consist of people who are not part of the unit comprising the conjugal couple and their children, such as lodgers or servants.

Membership within the family may often include several households in terms of shared consumption, production and ties of intimacy (Pine 1996).

Increasingly, with the development of new theories of kinship, social structure and the changing roles of men and women, as well as new practices of relationships, an established view of the “natural” family is being challenged, and it has become to be seen more as a culturally and historically specific symbolic system (Pine 1996). As a geocultural system, the family is assumed to leave imprints from its customs, traditions and history despite structural and institutional change (Therborn 2004). Furthermore, recent developments in reproductive technology have drawn attention not only to the reproductive capacity of women and the nature of family life, but also to the very meaning of what it is to be human (Bryson 2005). For some, families have become a matter of choice rather than of origin, thus capturing the commitment of a chosen relationship rather than a fixed relational status assigned at birth or through law (McCarthy and Edwards 2011).

Thus, the family can be understood as a multidimensional concept that involves natural, cultural, spatial and temporal aspects and is subject to various changes in the external environment and internal arrangements. For the purpose of this paper, the family is characterized here as a social unit whose members are connected by kinship, marriage, adoption or other arrangements such as cohabitation.

The family lies at the core of family policy, which can be defined in terms of government actions directed towards achieving specified outcomes through a range of policy instruments that shape the development and well-being of families, where these outcomes can be related to fertility, employment, poverty reduction, gender equality, education or health.<sup>1</sup> In the current paper, family policy is treated as an integral component of social policy, which is focused directly on support of families with children and aimed at contributing to the well-being of the family as a unit.<sup>2</sup>

Family policies are often understood to encompass the following policy arrangements based on three major factors.

- i. Time: this includes parental leave policies that assure time for parenting, including paid and job-protected leave following childbirth or adoption, and during children’s illnesses or school transitions, as well as measures such as

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<sup>1</sup> There are two major approaches to defining family policy in the literature (Gauthier 1996; Hantrais 2004; Kamerman and Kahn 1978; Zimmerman 1998). According to one approach, family policy is considered to be a subcategory of social policy which deals entirely with the family, as opposed to social policy which considers the problems of individuals and communities in society in general without placing emphasis on their family status (Titmuss 1974). Family policy in this sense includes all the measures undertaken by the government that are directed towards the family. The other approach to family policy sees it in a broader sense as equivalent to social policy, defining it as all government actions which affect the family directly or indirectly. The primary objective of family policy in this sense is to help individuals and families achieve well-being, whether economic, social, physical or psychological, in order to transform social relations, and attain integration and democratic citizenship (Zimmerman 1992, 1998). The latter approach, however, has been questioned for its broadness, as it implies all possible state programmes and measures and thus makes it difficult to identify the actual subject matter of family policy.

<sup>2</sup> Family policy may be explicit or implicit (Gauthier 1996; Kamerman and Kahn 1978; Kamerman 2009; Kaufmann 2002). The former includes policies (such as pro- or anti-natalist, income security, employment, health or childcare) that are deliberately designed to achieve specific objectives regarding children, individuals in their family roles or the family unit as a whole. Countries with explicit family policy today include, for example, the Nordic countries, France and Ireland. Implicit family policy entails measures (related, for instance, to immigration or transport) that may affect families, yet not directly target them. A system of explicit and institutionalized family policy implies a legal recognition of the family as a social institution that plays a major part in maintaining social cohesion (Zimmerman 2001).

flexible workplace arrangements that help parents reconcile their work and family commitments.

- ii. Services: this includes early childhood care and education policies that provide services to support the development of children; other services related to the provision of health, housing, care (including for the elderly and people with disabilities) and psychological support; and in some countries also family planning and contraceptive services.
- iii. Resources: this includes policies and regulations that are concerned with income, taxation and pensions; benefits related to employment, housing, tax and maternity; child and family allowances; as well as in-cash contributions towards the cost of childcare and education.

In addition to these policies, there are also family-related laws and regulations that affect the formation and composition of families, as well as the way in which they function. Changes to these policies and regulations can have direct implications for the sustainability of the family, as well as its individual members, and the relations among them.<sup>3</sup>

In line with the categorization of family policies in terms of time, services and resources, this paper focuses on three family policy types, that is, (i) parental leave policies, (ii) childcare services, and (iii) family allowances and child benefits.<sup>4</sup> I further adopt the term of family support policies (rather than strictly family policies) to accommodate existing institutional arrangements and relevant policies and programmes on family support in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. The Family within Welfare Regimes

With the emergence of new risks and challenges over past decades linked, among others, to decline in the quality and amount of employment, population ageing, child and elderly

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<sup>3</sup> While family policies are generally shown to help families achieve better outcomes, there has been criticism about the nature of these policies and the way in which they are implemented. For instance, the structure of many family policies is often age-based, which is not necessarily conducive to intergenerational harmony (IFFD 2014). Advocates for the recognition of older people as contributors to development contend that policies related to ageing are not well integrated into family policies in many countries (UN 2002). Furthermore, many of these policies tend to narrowly focus on families with children, limiting their scope to parents and their young offspring only. Pronatalist policies are particularly limited in this way, as they are designed to support women to have children, but once the children are a few years old, the policies do little more, as they have achieved their goals. Some policies (such as cash transfers for mothers, child and family allowances) are also challenged by feminists who argue that providing these benefits can often reinforce the gender stereotype of women as natural care providers and the traditional division of labour, particularly in developing countries (Kabeer 2008; Molyneux 2007; UNRISD 2010). The provision of social services and benefits under family policies in a number of countries has been found problematic and sometimes discriminatory on grounds of gender identity and sexual orientation (Cahill and Tobias 2007). Concerns have also been raised among the proponents of a family-centred approach, who contend that most laws, policies and programmes target individuals rather than the family as a unit (IFP 2014). Some have further pointed out that parenting support as a specific domain of policy is often neglected in family policy legislation (Daly et al. 2015). When addressing these issues, one should keep in mind that family policies tend to be embedded in pre-existing cultural, institutional and political structures (Skevik 2013). As families are changing, family policies need to adapt to these changes, too. The challenge for family policy is therefore to address these complex issues in a balanced way so that it could contribute to promoting and enhancing the well-being of all family members throughout their lifecycle.

<sup>4</sup> While the examination of the full range of family policies including health care, pensions, taxation, housing and a number of family benefits would have provided a more comprehensive picture of the welfare system and the role of the family in it, this goes beyond the scope of the current paper.

<sup>5</sup> Family support has been defined by some as services oriented to the relational well-being and functioning of families and children (Pinkerton et al. 2004), or a set of activities directed towards better family functioning and child-rearing and other family-related activities in a system of formal and informal relationships and resources (Daly et al. 2015).

care, as well as the reconciliation of work and family life,<sup>6</sup> the role of the family has been brought more to the forefront (Esping-Andersen 1999). It has been maintained that the malfunctioning of families is closely related to the problems that beset welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1999). In many countries, for instance, parents experience severe difficulties in finding adequate childcare, which can result in significant losses of welfare, as the inability to combine work and family life can increase the risk of poverty. The consequences of family instability occurring in various parts of the world present another social risk. Single parenthood, for example, is associated with a higher incidence of poverty in all the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (Bonoli 2007). In addition, social security systems in most countries assume stable family unions, and divorces can frequently result in loss of entitlements to social benefits for one or both partners. Under such circumstances, the division between public and private domains is being reviewed and renegotiated (Bawin-Legros and Stassen 2002), and the terms of the social contract are being revisited. The construction of a new social contract in such a context, therefore, has to take into account the changing nature of family life, as well as new risks that families are facing today (Esping-Andersen 2011).

It is clear that family policies cut across nearly every activity of the welfare state, and families in turn are affected by nearly any social policy reform (Bothfeld and Rouault 2015). In line with this, there has been increasing attention to the relationship between family change and welfare state change (Lewis 2006), as well as family policy within debates on welfare states (Yerkes 2014), with attempts being made to integrate family policies into welfare regimes (Albertini and Kohli 2013).<sup>7</sup> In particular, Esping-Andersen (1999) integrated the family dimension into his influential, albeit controversial (Korpi 2000; Ferrarini 2006), typology (Esping-Andersen 1990). In the revised version he made a distinction between familialization and de-familialization of welfare, which is claimed to be an important axis of differentiation between welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002). The former promotes support within the family, and the state is supposed to intervene only when such supporting networks have failed. An example of familialist policies could be parental leave with a long duration of payment. De-familialization, on the other hand, refers to the extent to which families' welfare and caring responsibilities are eased through the state or market provision of required services, as in the case with accessible and affordable child or elderly care.

Four main family policy regimes are identified based on Esping-Andersen's (1999) typology (adapted from Gauthier 2002, and Guo and Gilbert 2007).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The need to reconcile work and care may not necessarily be new to post-industrial societies. This risk was previously absorbed by families or to some degree by welfare states through, for instance, social protection for single mothers or state-subsidized care facilities for the elderly (Yerkes 2014).

<sup>7</sup> As a distinctive policy arena, family policy emerged in the 1970s, with the Scandinavian countries being a pioneer in prioritizing family services. Since the late 1990s, other advanced welfare states have started to bring family policies to the centre of the social agenda (Bothfeld and Rouault 2015; Fleckenstein and Lee 2014), focusing on the enhancement of labour market participation through work-family reconciliation and female employment (Lewis 2009; Orloff 2006), as well as childcare and early childhood education. In particular, it has been argued that the policy attention in recent years on the reconciliation of work and family life in some European Union countries is not so much due to the need for greater gender equality or improved quality of public childcare, but more because of the need to increase the size of the labour force (Jenson 2008; Morgan 2012). At the same time, it is recognized that such de-familialization supports female labour supply and contributes to the reduction of poverty risk among families (Bothfeld and Rouault 2015).

<sup>8</sup> Various scholars have categorized advanced Western states into distinctive family policy regimes based on different strategies for supporting families (for examples of typologies, see Anttonen and Sipilä 1996; Daly 2001; Daly and Lewis 2000; Ferrarini 2006; Gornick and Meyers 2003, 2004; Hantrais 2004; Kangas and Rostgaard 2007; Korpi 2000; Leitner 2003; Pfau-Effinger 2005, 2011; Sainsbury 1999; Thévenon 2008; van Hooren and Becker 2012). Despite

- i. The Social-Democratic regime is marked by universal state support for families, a high level of support for the reconciliation of work and family life, and a strong commitment to gender equality and child well-being. This regime is represented by family policies in the Nordic countries. Due to generous family policies, social democratic regimes exhibit the highest degree of de-familialization.
- ii. The Conservative regime tends to provide a medium level of support to families that depend on parents' employment status; it also focuses on the model of a traditional family and in some cases, regulates the reproductive behaviour of citizens (through, for example, pronatalist policies). This regime characterizes policies in countries such as France, Germany and the Netherlands. Some maintain that conservative regimes show a modest level of de-familialization.
- iii. The Liberal regime provides a low level of support to families that targets vulnerable families through means-tested benefits, and entails market intervention, particularly in relation to childcare. This regime is represented by relevant policies in Australia, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States. The liberal approach to family policy has a low level of de-familialization.
- iv. The Southern European regime is seen as highly fragmented along occupational lines and involves a combination of universal and private services and benefits. The family in these states is often treated as a key provider of welfare. Such an approach is found in countries like Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain. The level of de-familialization here seems to be lower than in liberal regimes, at least in terms of public spending on family support.<sup>9</sup>

While various studies have tried to categorize post-communist states,<sup>10</sup> the findings have been inconclusive.<sup>11</sup> Some researchers argue that these states moved towards a liberal regime with certain conservative elements (Deacon 1992; Esping-Andersen 1996). Seeing post-communist family policies as a monolith, some other scholars have emphasized the common trend of refamilialization (Hantrais 2004; Pascall and Lewis 2004). Others, however, have found it problematic to locate post-communist societies within any of the existing types or group them into a single homogenous category due to institutional differences (Kangas 1999), and variations in social and economic performance (Manning 2004). Another group of scholars maintains that despite some differences, there are a lot of similarities between these countries in terms of historical, institutional and socioeconomic characteristics and therefore it is plausible to categorize them as a post-

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different typologies, the principles that shape family policies are often found to correlate with the principles that underlie welfare state regimes (Gornick and Meyers 2003; Javornik 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Some researchers understand welfare state types as idealized constructions that differ from empirical cases (van Hooren and Becker 2012). In practical terms, countries are often hybrids with characteristics of several ideal types (Esping-Andersen 1997), and grouping into different categories is much more nuanced when considering specific policies (Saxonberg 2013). Furthermore, welfare states and their policies may undergo changes, as in the case with Austria or Germany, for instance, which represented typical conservative welfare states but have diverged from this path recently (Blum 2014; Pfau-Effinger 2011). In particular, Austria is seen to be moving to an ambivalent mix of traditional conservative and new social-democratic family policy measures (Blum et al. 2014).

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Aidukaite 2004, 2011; Billari 2005; Cerami 2006; Cook 2007, 2010; Deacon 1992; Davidova and Manning 2009; Fenger 2007; Haggard and Kaufman 2008; Inglot et al. 2012; Kornai 1992; Mellens 1999; Saxonberg 2013.

<sup>11</sup> For an overview of different categories see, for instance, Aidukaite 2011.

communist welfare model,<sup>12</sup> albeit with a peculiar institutional hybrid (Cerami and Vanhuysse 2009).

While the transition experiences of Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan have attracted significant interest within the scholarly and development community, little research has been done on family support policy in these countries. Furthermore, most researchers who attempted to situate family policy within welfare regimes have mainly analysed the experiences of advanced Western states or transition countries in Central and Eastern Europe,<sup>13</sup> whereas only a few studies have focused on Russia and to a much lesser extent on Kazakhstan and Mongolia.<sup>14</sup> This paper aims to contribute to the family and social policy debates by showing that Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia represent a hybrid welfare model that comprises elements from each of the above type.

## 4. The Family in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Social Contract

### *Definition of the family in Soviet and post-Soviet legislation*

In the Soviet Union, the family was primarily seen as a social mechanism of reproducing human force (Encyclopaedic Sociological Dictionary 1995), and was referred to as a “small social unit whose members are connected by marital or parental relationship, common household, and mutual moral responsibility and help” (Kharchev 1979:75). Marriage and biological kinship thus constituted the basis of the Soviet family concept. Taking care of the family was one of the most important tasks of the state, which shared its responsibility with society to help parents, seen as equal partners, to bring up their children (Code of Marriage and Family of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic 1969).

While the principle of equal responsibilities of both parents towards children has remained in post-Soviet family legislation in Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan, there have been several common innovations in the three countries with regard to the concept of the family. In all these contexts, the family has generally been defined as persons who are related by kinship and property, as well as personal rights and obligations that arise from marriage.<sup>15</sup> Thus, according to this definition, kinship, marriage and property represent key elements that form the family relationship in post-Soviet Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan. While kinship points to the importance of the natural underpinning of the family, property seems to underscore the material base as a significant attribute of a modern family.<sup>16</sup> If an approach to the family as a kinship relationship has apparently been inherited from the Soviet Union, the inclusion of property in the definition seems to reflect the new post-Soviet reality. The presence of private property during the Soviet time was seen as having a negative effect on intra-family relations, as it was believed to

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<sup>12</sup> Aidukaite 2009; Cerami 2006; Fenger 2007.

<sup>13</sup> Central and Eastern European countries here are referred to as those that form part of the European Union.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Chernova 2012; Hodges et al. 2007; Kravchenko 2008; Maltseva 2012; Rivkin-Fish 2010; Spoorenberg and Byambaa 2009; Teplova 2007.

<sup>15</sup> Federal Law 134 of the Russian Federation of 24 October 1997 “On subsistence minimum in the Russian Federation”; Law 321 of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 17 December 1998 “On Marriage and Family”, Family Law of Mongolia 1999.

<sup>16</sup> This is further evidenced by an article on prenuptial agreement in the Family Code of the Russian Federation 1995, Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Marriage (Matrimony) and Family” 2011, and Civil Code of Mongolia 2002.

cause material dependence between family members which could potentially lead to inequality within the family unit and in society as a whole. Since Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia have embarked on a transition to a market-oriented economic system, private property has become an essential determinant of the family's socioeconomic status. Another major feature in new family legislation in the three countries is a more explicit focus on rights, including those of children. In all these countries, the family is supposed to be under protection of the state, and at the same time, family members are expected to assume mutual moral obligations towards each other.

While these definitions are intended for the purpose of specific laws in the countries under examination, empirically it is evident that a greater variety of family forms currently exist in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, which include married couples without children, single parents, or cohabiting partners with or without common children.<sup>17</sup> Thus it can be argued that the family in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia today is characterized by several dimensions, that is, natural, legal, material and moral, which determine both the internal dynamics within the family and external relationships with other actors.

### ***Institutionalization of family support in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia***

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union the three countries under examination have undertaken various steps to the institutionalization of family support. In Russia, the concept of national family policy was introduced in 1991, and five years later it acquired an official status in the Decree 712 of President of the Russian Federation "On main directions of state family policy". In 2014, the Russian government adopted the Concept of State Family Policy for the period until 2025. According to this concept, family policy is an integral part of social policy of the Russian Federation aimed at the development of the institution of the family as the fundamental basis of Russian society. The preservation of family values, enhancing the role and prestige of the family, as well as improving the quality of life for families, are highlighted among its primary objectives.

While family policy per se is not formally institutionalized in Kazakhstan and Mongolia, there exist other institutional mechanisms which are aimed at contributing to family well-being. Family policy in these two countries is primarily associated with population and demographic policy, where the main priority is stimulating the birth rate, improving living conditions of families and strengthening family relations. As part of measures to support the family whose well-being is seen as "the foundation of stability in society and the successful development of the state",<sup>18</sup> in 2014 the government of Kazakhstan issued a "National action plan to strengthen family relationships, and moral, ethical and spiritual values in the Republic of Kazakhstan for 2015–2020".<sup>19</sup> It is carried out jointly with the National Commission on Women Affairs and Family and Demographic Policy under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and in partnership with civil society and private sector. The plan entails measures to strengthen the institution of the family,

<sup>17</sup> The Concept of State Family Policy of the Russian Federation for the period until 2025 adopted in 2014 acknowledges that the modern Russian family significantly differs from the traditional one in terms of its structure and composition. However, it does not provide a definition of the family.

<sup>18</sup> Speech of Secretary of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 4 March 2015 "Protect the greatest value". [http://www.akorda.kz/ru/secretary\\_of\\_state/secretary\\_of\\_state\\_speeches/statya-gosudarstvennogo-sekretarya-respubliki-kazahstan-gabdykalikovoi-berech-velichaishuyu-cennost](http://www.akorda.kz/ru/secretary_of_state/secretary_of_state_speeches/statya-gosudarstvennogo-sekretarya-respubliki-kazahstan-gabdykalikovoi-berech-velichaishuyu-cennost), accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.mzsr.gov.kz/node/314914>, accessed on 15 February 2016.



protect motherhood and childhood, support aged parents and encourage parents' responsibility for raising children.<sup>20</sup>

The key family support institution in Mongolia is the Children and Family Development Department under the Ministry of Population Development and Social Protection (until 2012 the Ministry of Social Welfare and Labour). Together with national strategies and action plans on the support of families, these mechanisms aim to create a favourable environment for Mongolian families, improve living conditions for children and families and enhance Mongolian values on family, culture and traditional customs. In 2003, the Mongolian government adopted "State Policy on Family Development" which is considered to be a legislative and policy basis for supporting families. This policy was later integrated into the Family Development and Demographic Policy (2011–2015), aimed at creating favourable conditions for strengthening the family as a harmonious unit and increasing the country's population.

From this it is clear that the three countries under examination all acknowledge the importance of the family. The institutionalization of family support in the form of family policy in Russia and family support mechanisms in Kazakhstan and Mongolia points to the formal recognition of the family as a social institution of public interest in these contexts.

### ***The family in the Soviet social contract***

The Soviet social contract was based on the reciprocal nature of expectations governing the rights and obligations of state and society (Cook 1993). On the one hand, society expected the state to provide economic and social security. On the other hand, the state expected society to submit to the authority of the state under conditions of limited political and economic freedom (Remington 2013). The state fulfilled its responsibility through the provision of universal welfare, engaging in multiple roles as an owner of the means of production, the main employer and a provider of social protection.<sup>21</sup> The system of social provision that included free education, health care, childcare and pensions was universal in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, with coverage often close to 100 per cent. Social programmes operated under the conditions of a full employment economy, where work was both a right and an obligation. State benefits, first of all a wide range of subsidies, focused on the population at large rather than on specific disadvantaged groups. Although inefficiencies existed and public resources were quite limited and sometimes misallocated (ADB 1997; McAuley 2008), a comprehensive range of social services provided by the state to families in the three countries constituted an essential part of the Soviet social contract (Ishkanian 2006).

Family policy in the Soviet Union, which was primarily identified with social policy (Darmodehin 2000), was viewed as part of the existing social contract serving statist interests and was formulated without participation of society (Cook 2014). It was often developed with the explicit motives of increasing childbearing and mobilization of labour

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<sup>20</sup> To promote gender equality in family relations, Law 223-IV of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 8 December 2009 "On state guarantees of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women" was issued, which is aimed at the transition from a traditional patriarchal family to an egalitarian family in the country. This shift, among others, implies equal sharing of responsibilities between men and women in raising children.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Deacon 1992, 2000; Fajth 1999; Milanovic 1993.

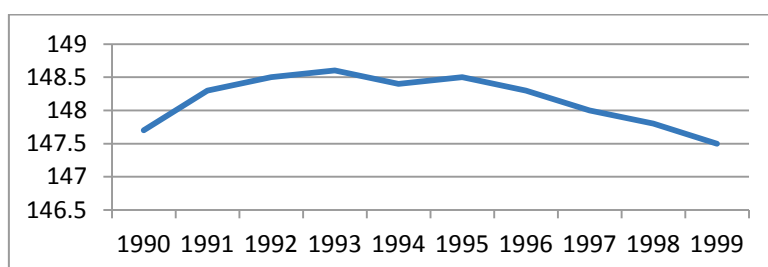
through the support of female employment (Fodor 2002; UNICEF 1999). Under this policy approach, family ties were weakened and traditional family solidarity was replaced with social solidarity, thereby blurring the boundary between the public and private spheres (Hantrais 2004). This resulted in the subjugation and atomization of the family unit. The state enlarged its sphere of control, putting in place a form of paternalism and patriarchy that dominated family life, and discouraged individual participation in public affairs, offering protection in the form of policy measures in return for obedience and subservience (Mezei 1997). The cradle-to-grave welfare system of the Soviet Union and state obligation, both moral and ideological, to help society resulted in citizens adopting a passive behaviour (UNICEF 1994). For example, many parents seemed to think that their task was to have children and the state would take care of all other aspects of life.

### ***First chapter of the post-Soviet social contract 1991–1999: Family destabilization***

The dissolution of the Soviet Union with its highly centralized system of social guarantees marked a new stage in the development of welfare systems and the construction of a new social contract. The transition to a market-oriented economic system led to profound changes in the organization of welfare, placing new and heavy demands on the welfare system (Cook 2010; Davidova and Manning 2009). The previously existing social contract was broken, and the conditions specified for the contract ceased to exist. The Communist party no longer held sole control over, or responsibility for, policy outcomes, and no longer demanded compliance from society (Cook 1993).

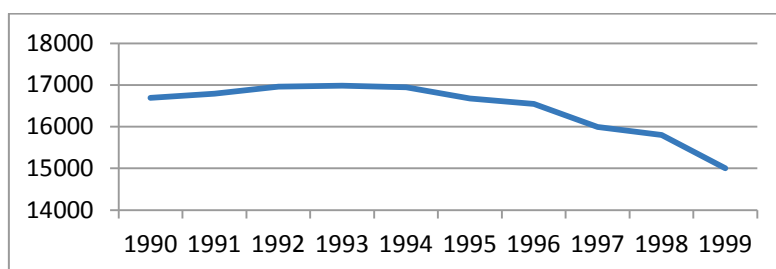
The early years of the transition proved difficult for societies and economies, affecting families in all the three countries, who faced a number of risks and challenges. One of the major social risks was associated with demographic changes. The fertility rate was falling rapidly across these countries throughout the 1990s. Due to falling fertility, as well as rising mortality, Russia and Kazakhstan saw a natural decline of the population throughout the 1990s (figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1: Total population in Russia (millions), 1990–1999**



**Note:** Unless specified, all data on Russia are generated from the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation that are available here: <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016. **Source:** Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation.

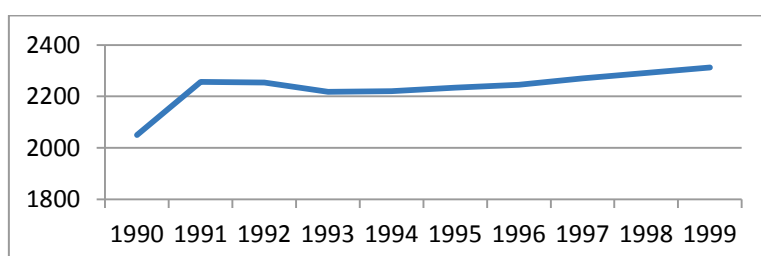
**Figure 2: Total population in Kazakhstan (thousands), 1990–1999**



**Note:** Unless specified, all data on Kazakhstan are generated from the Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, that are available here: <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016. **Source:** Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

By contrast, the population of Mongolia saw a gradual increase since 1994 (figure 3).

**Figure 3: Total population in Mongolia (thousands), 1990–1999**



**Note:** Unless specified, all data on Mongolia are generated from Mongolian Statistical Information Service that is available here: <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016. **Source:** Mongolian Statistical Information Service.

Despite its steady, albeit slow, population growth, the population density in Mongolia has been the lowest among the three countries. In 1990, it constituted only 1.4 people per square kilometre, compared to 5.9 in Kazakhstan and 8.7 in Russia (UN DESA 2013), with little change seen in 2000. Despite the differences in population numbers, all the three countries are among the world's most sparsely populated.

Another demographic issue that has implications for families is ageing, the combination of decreasing fertility and increasing longevity.<sup>22</sup> In Russia, the population of men over 60 years old and women over 55 has been increasing steadily since 1991 and throughout the 2000s, amounting to 28.7 million in 1991 and reaching 35 million in 2015, that is, 24 per cent of total population (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation

<sup>22</sup> The average life expectancy has been increasing steadily in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia during the past couple of decades. Over the period of 1995–2014, it rose from 65 to 71 years in Russia (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2015a); from 64 to 72 years in Kazakhstan (Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016), and from 64 to 70 years in Mongolia (Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016). In 1995, the average life expectancy for men was 58 years in Russia and Kazakhstan and 59 years in Mongolia, while by 2014 it reached 65 years in Russia, 66 years in Mongolia and 67 years in Kazakhstan (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2015a; Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016; Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016). With regard to women, over the period of 1995–2014, the average life expectancy in Russia, which was initially higher than in the other two countries, increased from 72 to 76 years (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2015a). In Kazakhstan, it grew from 69 to 76 years (Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016), whereas in Mongolia, it saw a more significant increase by 11 years, from 64 to 75 years, over this period (Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016). To put this in international terms, life expectancy on average in OECD countries reached 81 years in 2013, a gain of more than 10 years since 1970, with women living about five years longer than men, that is, 82 years versus 77 years (OECD 2015a).

2015b). According to the data from Kazakhstan's 1999 and 2009 Population Censuses, overall there was an overall rise in the number of persons aged 60 years and older, that is, from 1.49 million to 1.56 million, over the period of 1991–2009, which accounted for 10 per cent of the total population in 2009. In Mongolia, the proportion of persons aged 60 years and older constituted 127,700<sup>23</sup> in 1991, declining to 124,300 in 1999, but rising since then to 185,200 in 2014, that is, 6.2 per cent of total population (author's calculation based on data from Mongolian Statistical Information Service). The challenge of ageing, which families in these countries face, concerns not only the provision of resources and care services to support the elderly but also interactions across generations and the sustainability of the institution of family. In Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, where the system of social care services for senior citizens has been rather underdeveloped, it is evident that many families with children, as well as the elderly themselves, have to rely on intra- and inter-family forms of support.<sup>24</sup> Kazakhstan and Mongolia, in particular, have historically enjoyed strong inter-generational links where the elderly have constituted an important part of family welfare. Although the tradition of adult offspring and other relatives providing support for older persons remains quite strong in the three countries, this support is rapidly shrinking as a result of declining family sizes, and in the case of Mongolia, a particularly high degree of rural-to-urban migration caused by rural poverty and unemployment.

Following the collapse of the Soviet economy, government support for families in the three countries was severely cut back. The reorganization of the national welfare system in the 1990s in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia included the decentralization of health and education, introduction of privatization and insurance mechanisms instead of state-funded welfare benefits, and elimination of subsidy programmes. While many benefits were cut and in some cases means testing was implemented, the structure of the universalist system remained in Russia and all existing guarantees were preserved (Cook 2007; Pailhé and Sinyavskaya 2009). The case for universality was in fact inherent in the provision of rights for all citizens by the Russian Constitution (Chandler 2013). This is in contrast to Kazakhstan and Mongolia, both in constitutional and practical terms, where the Soviet universalist principle of providing assistance had been largely replaced in favour of means-tested support targeting the most needy groups.

These drastic changes in economy and social provision resulted in sharp increases in unemployment and poverty, deeply affecting the living conditions of society as a whole

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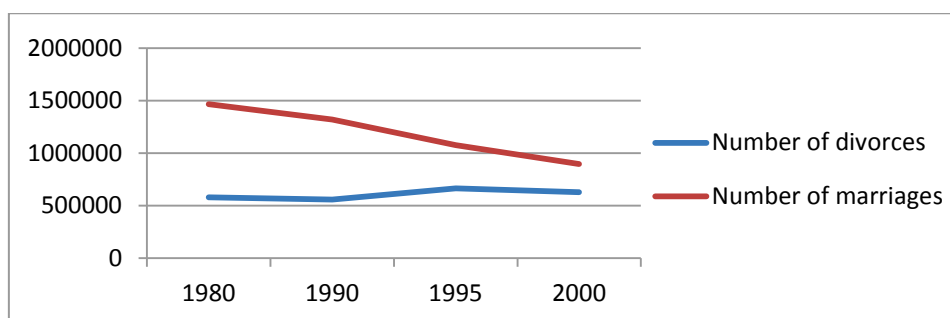
<sup>23</sup> Numbers used in this paper have been rounded to the nearest thousand, million or billion, where appropriate.

<sup>24</sup> In Russia and Kazakhstan, for instance, some steps are being taken towards developing alternative forms of care for senior citizens and providing state support to families caring for the elderly, as well as creating private social care housing as an alternative to state institutions. In contrast to limited social care services for the elderly, these countries have a well-developed system of institutional care for children inherited from the Soviet Union. It has been seen as a viable coping strategy for vulnerable families despite its negative effects on children's development (ODI 2009; UNICEF 2012). Over the past decade, efforts have been made to promote alternative care arrangements for children through, for example, foster family care in Russia, which did not exist in the region (Ismayilova et al. 2014). In Kazakhstan, the government is planning to develop "compact children's villages", which in the long term are seen as a replacement of orphanages with "necessary conditions for happy childhood and comfortable upbringing" (Speech of Secretary of State of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 4 March 2015 "Protect the greatest value"). In Mongolia, as part of Law on Social Welfare the government introduced the Community-Based Welfare Services Programme in 2005, which devolved primary responsibility for the development of social welfare services to individuals, private entities and non-government organizations (ADB 2012). These services include home-based care for older persons and children in difficult circumstances, among others. While such deinstitutionalization of state child institutions into family-based care has been justified by a child's right to grow up in a family environment (UNICEF 2007), and the move from formal to community-based elderly care is seen as more adequate and cost-efficient (Bussolo et al. 2015), it can be interpreted as the state's withdrawal from its social obligations, a tendency that can be observed more globally (Kulmala et al. 2014).

and families in particular across these countries.<sup>25</sup> Inequality also significantly increased, widening the gap both between and within rural and urban areas, and in terms of disparities in income and access to health and educational services (ISSA 2013; Falkingham 2000). Responsibility for supporting families shifted away from the state to families themselves who had to rely on mutual assistance<sup>26</sup> by intensifying intergenerational transfers, financial and in kind. It was argued that financial support from relatives, for instance, was essential for the survival of families in the early transition period in Russia and was comparable to the most common types of social assistance such as housing subsidies and child benefits (Korchagina and Prokofieva 2007). Private transfers, which played a significant role in Kazakhstan (Falkingham 1999), represented a particularly large portion of income for Kazakhstani families during this period. This was done in exchange for compliance with communal and family norms and an understanding that the community would take precedence over individual interests (Abazov 2007). In Mongolia, hardships experienced by families caused children's neglect, school dropouts and children abandoning home, for the first time giving rise to the problem of "street children".

The stresses of poverty, instability and uncertainty had negative impacts on the structure of families and intra-family relations in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. The processes happening in the 1990s in Russia were interpreted by some as signs of irreversible crisis of the family as a social institution, in its reproductive, social and economic functions (Antonov 1999; Matskovskij 1995). The number of single-parent families as well as one-child families increased, and divorces, cohabitation without marriage, and out-of-wedlock children and orphans became more numerous. The data from the 1989 and 2002 Russian Population Censuses reveal that the proportion of families with children in the total number of households in Russia decreased from 61 per cent to 52 per cent during this period, constituting 21.3 million in 2002. The number of marriages fell by nearly 40 per cent in the period of 1980–2000 (figure 4), while the number of children born outside marriage increased from 10 per cent of births to 23 per cent from 1970 and 1996 (Ivanova and Miheeva 1999).

**Figure 4: Number of divorces and marriages in Russia, 1980–2000**



Source: Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation.

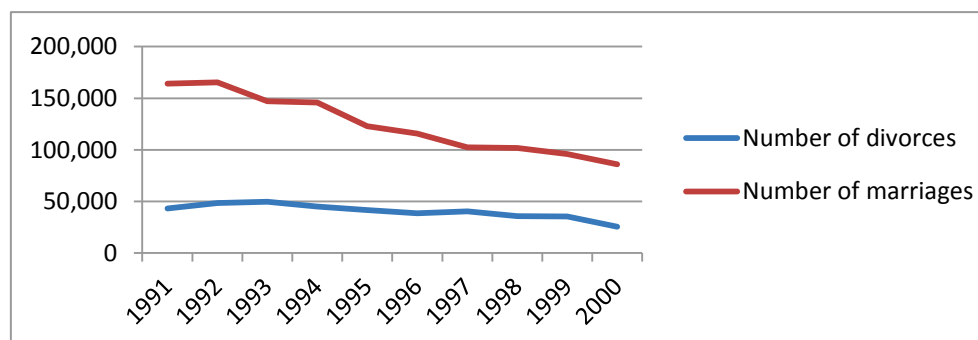
In Kazakhstan, extramarital births, single-parent families and deferred age of marriage also became prevalent during transition (Government of Kazakhstan 2012). Although there was a decreasing tendency of divorces until 2000, the number of marriages in Kazakhstan,

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Bruun and Odegaard 1995; Ovcharova and Popova 2005; Rossabi 2005; Schmidt 1995.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Ferge 2001; Gladnikova 2007; Hantrais 2004; Mezei 1997.

similar to Russia, was falling rapidly throughout the 1990s, constituting a 48 per cent decrease over the period of 1992–2000 (figure 5). The data from the 1999 Kazakhstan's Population Census show that the total number of families in the country decreased by nearly 8 per cent, from 3,825 to 3,527, over the period of 1989–1999. It also indicates that the number of families with one child increased from 28 per cent of total number of families in 1997 to 32 per cent in 1999, while the number of families with two, three, and four or more children decreased from 24 per cent to 21 per cent, from 9 per cent to 7 per cent, and from 4 per cent to 3 per cent, respectively, over the same period.

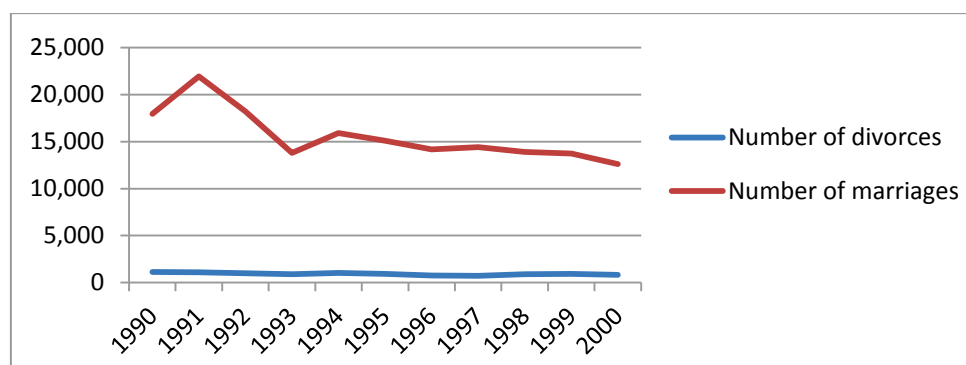
**Figure 5: Number of divorces and marriages in Kazakhstan, 1991–2000**



Source: Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Compared to Russia and Kazakhstan, the rate of divorces in Mongolia during this period remained quite flat, rising from 1.6 per cent of the total population in 1989 to 2.7 per cent in 2000 (2010 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia), while the number of marriages decreased by 8.8 per cent during the period of 1993–2000 (figure 6).

**Figure 6: Number of divorces and marriages in Mongolia, 1990–2000**



Source: Mongolian Statistical Information Service.

Furthermore, the number of families in Mongolia had been growing steadily since the start of the transition period. While there were 427,834 Mongolian families prior to transition in 1989, by 2000 the number had increased by nearly 30 per cent to 553,990.<sup>27</sup> Despite the growing number of families, their size and composition have been changing, with more families becoming nuclear.

<sup>27</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

In response to these challenges, the three countries undertook a number of measures and introduced various benefits to support families. The Russian government, for instance, established a unified system of state benefits to families with children (Federal Law 81 of the Russian Federation of 19 May 1995 “On state benefits to citizens with children”). In 1996, it created the foundations for the formation of state family policy by approving the Presidential Decree 712 “On main directions of state family policy”. The *de jure* policy was aimed at partial compensation for the costs of childbirth and facilitation of combining parenthood and employment (Pailhé and Sinyavskaya 2009). At the core of these measures was the idea of maintaining the affordability of childbirth in the context of existing traditional gender roles in the family. However, the *de facto* government support for families with children declined throughout the transition period, while the costs associated with the birth and upbringing of children increased significantly (Pailhé and Sinyavskaya 2009). It was argued that the support for families was chaotic and inconsistent (Elizarov 2011). Although the Presidential Decree 712 stated that spending on family and maternity benefits must be at least 2.2 per cent of GDP, these standards were not met. While in 1990 the share of expenditure on these benefits as a share of GDP was around 2 per cent, it declined to 0.8 per cent in 1995 and further to 0.2 per cent in 2005 (appendix 1).<sup>28</sup>

One of the family support measures that the government of Kazakhstan adopted during this period was the establishment of the Council on Family and Women Affairs and Demographic Policy in 1995. Three years later it was reorganized into the National Commission on Family and Women Affairs with extended rights and authorities. In 1997, the President of Kazakhstan called for a broad pronatalist policy to curb the decline in population.<sup>29</sup> With regard to Mongolia, in order to address the growing poverty level in the country, the Mongolian government introduced the Poverty Alleviation Programme (1994–2000). However, it did not bring the expected outcomes, with a main reason being ineffective job creation and lack of sufficient provision of social welfare (Rossabi 2005). To help children in difficult circumstances, the Mongolian government implemented the National Programme of Action for the Development of Children (1993–2000) and adopted the Law on the Protection of the Rights of Children in 1996, which aimed to improve their education and health through social assistance. Despite these efforts, the measures taken were seen as having a modest contribution to reducing overall poverty among families and improving the livelihoods of children, particularly those without homes.

Thus during the period starting from the dissolution of the Soviet Union up until the end of the 1990s, the three states under examination could only fulfil their minimal obligations towards society. The support provided was limited in size and, in the case of Kazakhstan and Mongolia in particular, it often targeted selected groups. It was clearly insufficient to fulfil the state’s obligations and responsibility to protect the family.

<sup>28</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016. To put this in international terms, OECD countries spend on average 2.55 per cent of their GDP on family benefits, with significant variations existing across countries. For instance, public spending on family benefits is 4 per cent of GDP or more in Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom but is 1.5 per cent of GDP or less in Canada, Chile, Mexico, the Republic of Korea and the United States (OECD 2015b).

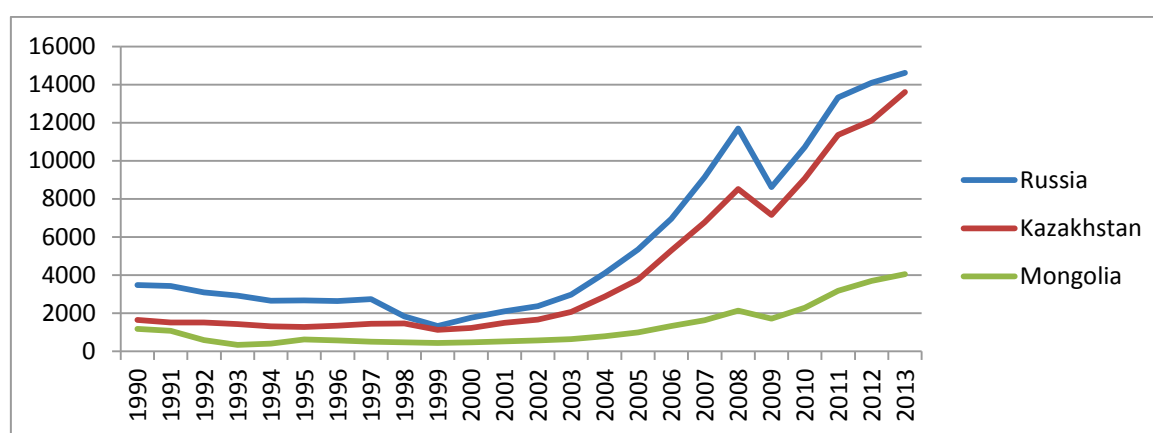
<sup>29</sup> Message of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 10 October 1997 “Kazakhstan 2030: Prosperity, safety and improvement of welfare to all Kazakhstanis”.



## Second chapter of the post-Soviet social contract 2000–2007: Family revival

From the early 2000s up until the 2008 global economic crisis, the three countries experienced a period of steady economic growth (figure 7), which was largely due to the booming commodity sector. In the case of Russia and Kazakhstan, major commodities include oil and gas, while in Mongolia the principal export minerals are coal and copper. Each country established funds, that is, the Stabilization Fund of the Russian Federation in 2004 (divided into the Reserve Fund and the National Welfare Fund in 2008), the National Fund of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2000 and the Mongolian Development Fund in 2007 (replaced by the Human Development Fund in 2009), which allowed the respective governments to consolidate revenues and use them to meet the social needs of the population.

**Figure 7: GDP per capita in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, 1990–2013**



Source: World Bank Indicators.

This period was marked by the movement of social problems from the political periphery to the centre of the governments' socioeconomic agenda. In this context, a number of social programmes were launched across the countries to support families. In the second half of the 2000s, the Russian government introduced a set of Priority National Projects in health care, education, housing and agriculture, which entailed deep interventions into markets and a selective revival of state building (Cook 2010). The principal direction of state action towards families was stimulating the birth rate, reducing mortality rates and facilitating employment for women with children. Among these measures, significant resources were allocated to the Maternal (Family) Capital programme initiated in 2007. The increase in revenues of the funds affected social provision positively, both qualitatively and quantitatively. From 2000 until 2008, the federal budget of the Russian government showed a surplus, enabling not only the repayment of budget debts to citizens such as salaries, pensions and family benefits but also their enhancement (Government of Russia 2012). Social expenditure constituted 7.5 per cent of GDP in 2007.<sup>30</sup>

The Kazakhstani government placed strong emphasis on human capital development and improving citizens' well-being, especially of families and children. The pronatalist policy that was proclaimed in the late 1990s had been reinforced by a state-provided baby bonus

<sup>30</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.



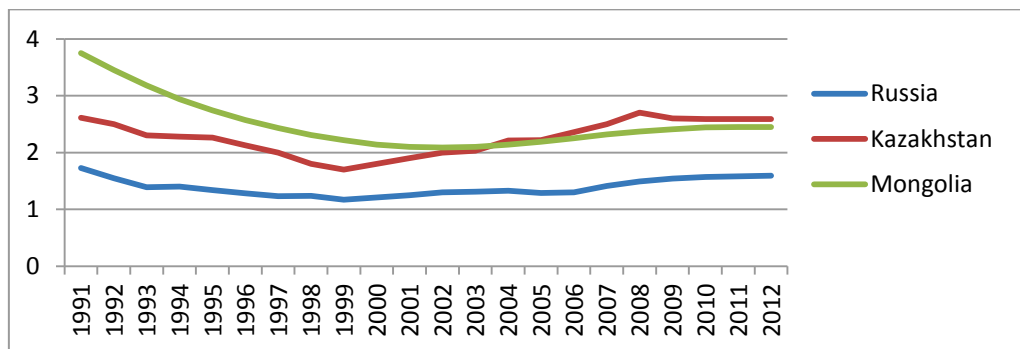
scheme (Kulzhanov and Rechel 2007), as well as family-oriented social benefits. Key issues of concern were addressed through national planning processes, including the National Development Strategy, the Targeted Social Assistance programme (2002 onwards) and the Children of Kazakhstan programme (2007–2011). The Targeted Social Assistance programme has been the government's key anti-poverty programme, which focused on citizens with monthly income below the poverty line (that is, 40 per cent of the subsistence minimum). The policy commitments in Kazakhstan were also backed by a steady increase in public expenditures in the social sector. Social spending was rising since 2001. While in 2001 it amounted to tenge (KZT) 197.2 billion, in 2013 it reached KZT 2336.4 billion, which was 36 per cent of the total budget in 2013, or 7 per cent of GDP (Government of Kazakhstan 2014).

Similar to the efforts of Russian and Kazakhstani governments, Mongolia launched a series of social assistance and allowance programmes with the double objective of increasing household income and encouraging population growth. As part of this process, in 2001 Mongolia established the National Committee on Support of Families and adopted the National Programme on Support of Families (2001–2006), whose main objective was combatting poverty through better access to education, health services and job creation. One of the major programmes introduced during this period was the National Programme for Household Livelihoods Support (2002–2012), which specifically helped to raise poor families from poverty. Around 20 laws were developed and amended during this period to bring more focus on the issues of families and children in particular (for example, Law on Protection of the Rights of Children 1996, and the Law on Monetary Assistance to Children and Families 2006). In 2002, the government launched the National Programme of Action for the Development and Protection of Children (2002–2010), and in 2005 it introduced the Child Money Programme (2005–2010) to improve the living conditions of families with children. In the second part of the 2000s, nearly half of resources contributed to the Mongolian Development Fund, that is, tugrik (MNT) 140 billion, were allocated to families and children (Government of Mongolia 2007). Total social expenditure in Mongolia almost tripled during 2000–2006, accounting for 17 per cent of GDP in 2006, with spending on social security and welfare constituting nearly half of the total social expenditure (ADB 2008).

As a result of these measures, significant changes occurred in the livelihoods of families in the three countries, contributing to reduction in unemployment and poverty, particularly in Russia and Kazakhstan. The countries have also seen an increase in fertility (figure 8), which can be attributed to the improvement of the overall economic situation, favourable shifts in the age and sex structure of the population (as in the case of Russia), as well as the set of family support measures introduced in the second half of the 2000s.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> There exists insufficient evidence that income transfers to families with children in the form of family or child allowances have any major impact on fertility (Gauthier and Hatzius 1997; Sleetbos 2003; UNICEF 2015). Experience in countries like France, New Zealand and the Nordic countries, for instance, has shown that it is likely that the package of policies which helps reconcile work and family commitments (including flexible workplace practices, parental leave arrangements and early childhood education and care services) has a positive effect on fertility (Bussolo et al. 2015; OECD 2011).

**Figure 8: Fertility rate in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, 1990–2012**

Source: World Bank Indicators.

Despite state support, families in Kazakhstan continue to be seen as a major provider of services and resources to its members (Sidorenko and Zaidi 2013). The data from 2009 Kazakhstan Population Census show that a third of the country's population depends on financial aid from relatives or friends as their source of livelihood (which primarily refers to economically inactive population including children), another third relies on income from employment as their source of living, and 15.4 per cent of the population on social transfers, of which 10.8 per cent receive pension benefits (Government of Kazakhstan 2011). The results of a major household survey conducted in Russia in 2003 showed that the proportion of families receiving financial assistance from relatives constituted 22 per cent, of which the largest part were single-parent families and large families (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2003).<sup>32</sup>

It can thus be argued that the economic development in the 2000s that led to the improvement of social welfare in the three countries created conditions for discussing the formation of a new social contract. The well-being of families was put at the centre of the social contract in these countries, as evidenced by the range of social programmes, as well as legal and financial commitments that the governments in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia made during this period. Although the amount of support was still rather modest for some of these programmes and existing flaws in coverage and implementation mechanisms, along with the quality of services, were deemed insufficient to ensure good living standards for all families, the governments' actions can point to the revival of families in this chapter of the post-Soviet social contract.

### ***Third chapter of the post-Soviet social contract 2008–2016: Family strain***

The period 2008–2016 has been marked by two financial crises that led to an economic downturn in the three countries. While the 2008 crisis was a global one caused by failures in financial regulations, the 2014 crisis has mainly been associated with Russian economy and primarily caused by the fall in oil prices. Since 2014 and throughout 2015, Kazakhstan and Mongolia have also experienced a slowdown in economy activity due to reduced revenues from commodities (EBRD 2015).

<sup>32</sup> The family also plays an important role as a welfare provider over the life course in Europe (Heady and Kohli 2010). The findings in Albertini and Kohli (2013), for instance, point to the existence of substantial intergenerational family transfers across European welfare regimes, with some variation found in terms of the likelihood and intensity of such transfers, along with their aims and meanings.

In response to the 2008 global financial crisis, the governments in Russia and Kazakhstan adopted a range of anti-crisis measures to support families, which included an increase in the size of child and family benefits along with their indexation, retraining programmes for unemployed women with children (Kazakhstan's Employment Roadmap), as well as targeted support to vulnerable groups such as low-income families, elderly and young people. The share of social expenditure as the percentage of GDP in Russia increased from 7.5 per cent to 12.4 per cent over the period of 2007–2010 but fell to 11.8 per cent in 2012.<sup>33</sup> While the Mongolian government stopped extensive in-cash social welfare benefits to families and children, since 2010 it introduced “wealth benefits” for all citizens from the mining revenues via the Human Development Fund (2010–2012). In 2012, however, they were replaced with a combination of targeted cash benefits for large families, single parents, vulnerable children, and low-income and nomadic herder families. At the same time, the government reinstalled the Child Money Programme for all children under the age of 18.

Despite the state measures and the progress achieved in the improvement of living conditions of families in the three countries in the 2000s, poverty is still widespread among families with children, particularly in rural areas, who remain to be at the highest risk of poverty. In Russia, for instance, although the percentage of the population living on less than USD 2.50 a day was estimated at 0.1 per cent in 2012,<sup>34</sup> the share of families with children under 16 years old in the total number of families with incomes below the subsistence minimum accounted for 62 per cent (Government of Russia 2014a).<sup>35</sup> Low wages and informal employment continue to contribute to poverty, especially among large families, and rates of poverty vary substantially among regions and urban and rural areas.

In Kazakhstan, while the proportion of people with income below the subsistence minimum of the total population has been decreasing steadily since 2001 falling from 46.7 per cent to 2.8 per cent in 2014,<sup>36</sup> 34 per cent of the population was considered poor in 2009, with nearly half of them living in rural areas (UNICEF 2015). According to Kazakhstan's 2009 Household Budget Survey, the low level of education, unemployment and the large size of families increase the risk of poverty in the country. In Mongolia, while the poverty rate has been decreasing steadily over past years, an estimated 21.6 per cent of the population still lived below the national poverty line in 2014,<sup>37</sup> with nomadic families experiencing the highest poverty incidence.

In contrast to its response to the 2008 crisis, the Russian government has undertaken a number of austerity measures following the 2014 crisis aimed at “reducing inefficient spending”.<sup>38</sup> These include suspension of the indexation of some social benefits

<sup>33</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>35</sup> In 2014, the minimum subsistence level of the population was rubles (RUB) 8,050 (USD 245) in Russia (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016), KZT 19,068 (USD 120) in Kazakhstan (Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016), and MNT 151,880 (USD 90) in Mongolia (Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016).

<sup>36</sup> Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>37</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>38</sup> “Medvedev ordered to consider the indexation of wages and social payments.” <http://m.rg.ru/2015/05/29/medvedev-site-anons.html>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

including the Maternal (Family) Capital in 2016 (Federal Law 371 of the Russian Federation of 14 December 2015), and reduction in the amount of social benefits or the number of recipients.<sup>39</sup> In line with this, the government has further reaffirmed its approach to social provision based on the principle of targeting and means testing.<sup>40</sup>

Unlike Russia, the government of Kazakhstan introduced measures to strengthen support to families through increasing social payments including pensions, social benefits such as childbirth allowances and monthly child allowances, as well as salaries to state workers (by up to 28 per cent to those in health system, 29 per cent in education and 40 per cent in other areas).<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, in his 2015 Message to the people of Kazakhstan, the President of Kazakhstan announced a new programme on “Free vocational education for all” to be implemented in 2017 as part of government efforts to improve human capital seen as a priority of social policy.

With regard to Mongolia, in 2016 the government started to develop a new National Programme of Family Development, which is targeted at poor families. The development and continuation of other existing family support policies and programmes, as well as the revision of Family Law, are currently under discussion in the Mongolian parliament.

Nonetheless, the ongoing economic downturn, along with changes in political processes that family support measures often depend on, make the livelihoods of families in the three countries rather unstable and vulnerable, and threaten to reverse the progress made during the 2000s. As a result of the decline in economic activity, poverty is likely to increase, especially among families with children. This is precisely what has already happened in Russia. The trend of steady poverty reduction throughout the 2000s, which saw the official poverty rate in Russia reaching 11 per cent, or 16 million people, in 2014 (Government of Russia 2015), was reversed in 2015, with 16 per cent of the population, that is, 23 million people, officially considered poor in 2015 (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2015c). In addition, social processes such as migration and urbanization, particularly in Mongolia and Kazakhstan, can further affect the lifestyles of families, together with their composition and structure.

## 5. Family Support Policies in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia

The section below focuses on a detailed examination of three types of family support policies in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, that is, (i) parental leave policies, (ii) childcare services, and (iii) family allowances and child benefits.

<sup>39</sup> “The transition to the principles of targeting and means testing.” <http://posobie-expert.ru/posobiya-v-2016-godu/#adresnost-nuzhdaemost>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>40</sup> Federal Law 388 of the Russian Federation of 29 December 2015 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation with regard to improvement of social support on the basis of the principle of targeting and application of means testing criteria”.

<sup>41</sup> Law 426-V of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 30 November 2015 “On republican budget for 2016–2018”. <http://www.mzsr.gov.kz/content/в-казахстане-с-1-января-2016-года-повысится-зарплата-гражданских-служащих>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

## ***Parental leave policies***

There are two main types of parental leaves in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia: maternity leave and childcare leave (leave for a parent or another close relative to look after a newborn child that starts after the maternity leave). As part of childcare leave, there also exists paternity childcare leave.<sup>42</sup>

### ***Maternity leave***

During the Soviet time, paid maternity leave in Russia and Kazakhstan constituted 16 weeks or 112 days (8 weeks before childbirth and 8 week after childbirth) (Great Soviet Encyclopedia 1978), while in Mongolia, it comprised 15 weeks or 101 days (45 days before childbirth and 56 days after) (Labour Act of the Republic of Mongolia 1991). Since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the period of maternity leave was extended in all the three countries. In the early 1990s, the standard period for maternity leave in Russia increased to 20 weeks or 140 calendar days (10 weeks before childbirth and 10 weeks after).<sup>43</sup> In Kazakhstan, it constitutes 18 weeks or 126 calendar days (10 weeks before childbirth and 8 weeks after) (Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007). The maternity leave in Mongolia was extended in 1999, making 17 weeks or 120 days (Labour Code of Mongolia 1999) (see summary in table 1).

Maternity leave is job-protected and paid across the countries. In Russia, it is paid at the rate of 100 per cent of annual salary in the covered period (Labour Code of the Russian Federation 2001). Since 2011, the size of the payment has been determined based on the average wage of the two-year period preceding the maternity leave. In 2016, the maximum lump sum payment for the entire period of maternity leave is rubles (RUB) 248,164, while the minimum cannot be less than RUB 28,571 based on the minimum monthly wage, which is RUB 6,204 in 2016.<sup>44</sup>

Kazakhstan developed its own system of estimating the size of benefits, including maternity payment. The size of the lump sum payment provided to women for the entire leave period is determined by multiplying an average monthly wage by an appropriate coefficient of the number of leave days, which is 4.2 for 126 days of the maternity leave, and deducting 10 per cent of compulsory pension contribution.<sup>45</sup> In 2013, amendments were made to the Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan in relation to women whose average monthly wage exceeds 10 minimum monthly wages (see below). The minimum monthly wage amounts to KZT 22,859 in 2016.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Paternity childcare leave is regarded here as being part of childcare leave, that is, a prolonged period of leave designed to enable a father to look after a newborn child, and is distinguished from paternity leave, that is, a short period of leave allowing a father to assist a mother following childbirth which exists in a number of countries. For instance, paid paternity leave ranges from less than a week in Brazil and Luxembourg to two weeks in Australia, Denmark and the United Kingdom, and 20 days or more in Lithuania and Portugal (ILO 2014a). Around a third of OECD countries, including Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany and Japan, do not provide paternity leave. To encourage involved fatherhood, some countries introduced a “father quota” or “father bonuses” that can be used only by fathers on a use-it-or-lose-it basis, which is longest at 3 months in Iceland (OECD 2015b). National legislation in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia does not include provision for paid paternity leave as a separate parental leave measure.

<sup>43</sup> Federal Law 81 of the Russian Federation of 19 May 1995 “On state benefits to citizens with children”

<sup>44</sup> Federal Law 376 of the Russian Federation of 14 December 2015 “On amendments to Article 1 of Federal Law “On the minimum wage”. Information on the types and size of various family and child benefits in Russia is available here: <http://posobie-expert.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>45</sup> Law 405 of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 25 April 2003 “On compulsory social insurance”.

<sup>46</sup> Law 426-V of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 30 November 2015 “On republican budget for 2016–2018”. [http://egov.kz/wps/portal/Content?contentPath=%2Fegovcontent%2Fassist\\_for%2Farticle%2Farticle\\_mci\\_2012&lang=ru](http://egov.kz/wps/portal/Content?contentPath=%2Fegovcontent%2Fassist_for%2Farticle%2Farticle_mci_2012&lang=ru), accessed on 15 February 2016.

Maternity leave in Mongolia is paid in the form of a maternity benefit, which accounts for 100 per cent (for mothers for whom insurance is mandatory) or 70 per cent (for mothers who are voluntarily insured) of wage over past 12 months (Law on Pensions and Benefits provided by the Social Insurance Fund 1992; Law on Social Insurance 1994).

### *Childcare leave*

In Russia, partially paid childcare leave until a child is one year and unpaid leave until a child is two years were introduced in the early 1980s. Since the beginning of the 1990s, paid childcare leave was extended to 1.5 years, and unpaid leave up to three years, to which either of parents or another close relative is entitled (Labour Code of the Russian Federation 2001).<sup>47</sup> Until 2007, the size of the childcare allowance was RUB 700 (USD 25) regardless of the number of children.<sup>48</sup> Since then, it is calculated according to the number of children and childcarer's income. The childcarer, whether the mother, father or grandparent, can now receive a monthly childcare allowance that constitutes 40 per cent of his or her average wage (according to amendments to Federal Law 81 of the Russian Federation of 19 May 1995 "On state benefits for citizens with children"). The allowance can be no more than RUB 21,555 and no less than RUB 2,909 for the first child, and RUB 5,817 for the second and subsequent child in 2016.<sup>49</sup> The move towards progressively higher childcare benefits for each subsequent child can be interpreted as an additional incentive to stimulate population growth.

Similar to Russia, the duration of unpaid childcare leave in Kazakhstan is three years, to which a mother, father or close relative is entitled (Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007). A monthly childcare payment during the leave is provided only to the mother until the child reaches one year,<sup>50</sup> which is half a year shorter than in Russia, and is equal to 40 per cent of average monthly income over past 24 months.<sup>51</sup> Prior to 2013, this payment was provided regardless of family income; however, since then, a limit has been set for families in which a childcarer's average monthly wage is more than 10 minimum monthly wages. Thus in 2016, the maximum childcare payment cannot exceed KZT 91,436, and the minimum cannot be less than a monthly childcare allowance for the child's first year (that is, a state allowance provided to non-working citizens).<sup>52</sup> The monthly childcare allowance (that is, the allowance for a non-working parent) is progressively graded by child order and constitutes 5.76 monthly calculation index (MCI)<sup>53</sup> for the first child (estimated KZT 12,217), 6.81 MCI for the second (estimated KZT 14,445), 7.85 MCI for the third (estimated KZT 16,650), and 8.9 for the fourth and subsequent children (estimated KZT 18,877) in 2016.

<sup>47</sup> Certain categories of parents are entitled to compensation from the employer in the amount of merely RUB 50 per month when a child is 1.5–3 years old.

<sup>48</sup> National currency is converted based on historical rates for January of relevant year at <http://www.oanda.com/currency/historical-rates>. Due to sharp currency fluctuations in Russia and Kazakhstan in 2015–2016, national currency in the three countries is not converted into USD for 2015–2016.

<sup>49</sup> "Maternity leave" <http://posobie-expert.ru/dekretnyj-otpusk/>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>50</sup> In Kazakhstan, a distinction is made between childcare payments and childcare allowances, with the former provided for working citizens and the latter for non-working ones.

<sup>51</sup> Information on the types and size of childcare payments and other benefits in Kazakhstan is available here: [http://egov.kz/wps/portal/Content?contentPath=/egovcontent/social/fam\\_support/article/allowance&lang=ru](http://egov.kz/wps/portal/Content?contentPath=/egovcontent/social/fam_support/article/allowance&lang=ru), accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>52</sup> See footnote 51 for more information.

<sup>53</sup> The MCI is an index in Kazakhstan that calculates social benefits, including family allowances, pensions and other payments. It came into force in 1996 and is set annually. In 2016, it is KZT 2,121 (Law 426-V of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 30 November 2015), which is an increase compared to KZT 1,982 in 2015.

In Mongolia, all pregnant women and mothers with infants are entitled to a monthly childcare allowance for the period of 12 months (Law on Social Welfare 2012), which amounts to MNT 40,000 (USD 20). A father is entitled to receive the allowance only if a mother dies after giving birth to a child (Law on Social Welfare 2012). Upon request, a father in Mongolia can also be entitled to a period of what is called “the week of baby linen” following childbirth that consists of five days paid as part of the monthly salary. This is not an official regulation, as it is not included in a Mongolian law or policy, but is merely an unwritten administrative provision.<sup>54</sup> Prior to 1991, unpaid childcare leave was provided until the child turned two, which was extended to three in 1999 (Labour Code of Mongolia 1999). This leave can be granted to either parent.<sup>55</sup>

In addition, a mother or a father in Russia and Kazakhstan, regardless of their employment status, is entitled to a lump sum childbirth allowance. In Kazakhstan, however, this entitlement can be granted to a father only when the mother passes away. The lump sum childbirth allowance in Russia is RUB 15,513 in 2016.<sup>56</sup> In Kazakhstan in 2016, it is 31.41 MCI (KZT 66,621) for the first three children, and 52.35 MCI (KZT 111,035) for the fourth and subsequent children (according to amendments to Law 63 of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 28 June 2005 “On state benefits to families with children”).<sup>57</sup>

Although there is a legal provision in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia for equal responsibility of the parents for rearing their children,<sup>58</sup> in practice it is very rare for fathers in the three countries to take paternity childcare leave to look after a child. This can largely be attributed to the nature of family support policies and gender role stereotypes in these national settings.

**Table 1: Summary of periods for child leave provision in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia**

	Russia	Kazakhstan	Mongolia
Paid maternity leave	20 weeks (140 days)	18 weeks (126 days)	17 weeks (120 days)
Paid childcare leave	1.5 years (mother or father)	1 year (mother)	1 year (mother or single father)
Unpaid childcare leave	3 years (mother or father)	3 years (mother or father)	3 years (mother or father)

Source: Author's elaboration.

### *Flexible workplace arrangements*

Flexible forms of employment have existed for employees with children since the Soviet time and are still applicable. During childcare leave in Russia, for instance, a parent or another close relative is entitled to working part-time or from home while maintaining a

<sup>54</sup> Information provided by a representative of the United Nations Population Fund Office in Mongolia.

<sup>55</sup> In international terms, average paid maternity leave across the OECD is about 18 weeks. Prolonged period of paid childcare leave of around two years or more can be taken by a mother or a father in countries like Hungary and Poland (OECD 2015b).

<sup>56</sup> “Maternity leave” <http://posobie-expert.ru/dekretnyj-otpusk/>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>57</sup> [http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=30015071](http://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=30015071), accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>58</sup> Family Code of the Russian Federation 1995; Code on Marriage and Family of the Republic of Kazakhstan 1998; Mongolian Family Law 1999.

right to state social insurance (Labour Code of the Russian Federation 2001). To promote flexible forms of employment, including for parents, the Russian government adopted a law in 2013, which introduced distance work that allows employees to work outside of employer's location using the Internet and other types of communication.<sup>59</sup> In Kazakhstan, part-time work arrangements also exist for a mother or a father with a child under the age of three, with additional breaks allowed for feeding until the child is 1.5 years (Labour Code of the Republic of Kazakhstan 2007). In Mongolia, women with a breast-feeding child can also be entitled to reduced working hours or transferred to less hazardous work, with relevant flexible arrangements available for single fathers (Labour Code of Mongolia 1999). However, flexible or part-time arrangements are not widely used by employees with small children in these countries (see, for example, Pailhé and Sinyavskaya 2009 for Russia). As there is a shortage of preschools for small children, parents (mainly mothers) prefer to stay at home to look after their child rather than take part-time employment, which is low-paid. Furthermore, many women tend to take a childcare leave up to three years old, as entitled by law, in order to spend time with their child, which is still seen as a social norm in these societies.

### **Childcare services**

Childcare services were widely accessible and affordable during the Soviet time. The number of preschool institutions, along with the number of children attending them, increased throughout the 1970s and 1980s in the Soviet Union, reaching its peak in 1990. In 1970, there were 65,000 preschools and 5.6 million children attending these institutions, and in 1990, these figures went up to 87,900 and 9 million, respectively (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2005).

Since the 1990s, however, childcare facilities, along with the number of children enrolled in preschools, were steadily declining in the three countries. A sharp fall in demand for preschools was mainly attributed to falling fertility, unemployment and the decline of income during the early transition period. Much of the enterprise-based childcare stopped functioning, as enterprises cut back on social facilities under pressure for profitability. Since 1990, the number of preschools in Russia dropped by nearly half over the following 20 years, while the number of children attending these institutions did so within the following decade.<sup>60</sup> In Kazakhstan, the coverage of children attending preschools in 1991 was estimated at 70 per cent (Government of Kazakhstan 2012). Throughout the 1990s, many kindergartens and maternity centres were closed or privatized. By 2000, the number of preschools in Kazakhstan declined by nearly 88 per cent.<sup>61</sup> Since 1990, the number of preschool education facilities in Mongolia decreased by almost half within the following five years. In 2002, preschool-age children made up 17 per cent of the Mongolian population, but 62 per cent of these children had no access to preschool services, including two-thirds of children of herder families or low-income families.<sup>62</sup> An increasing rural-urban migration and urbanization put strains and imposed a growing burden on urban preschools and other social services (Government of Mongolia 2002).

<sup>59</sup> Federal Law 60 of the Russian Federation of 5 April 2013 "On amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation".

<sup>60</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>61</sup> Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>62</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.



**Table 2: Number of preschools in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, 1990–2014**

	1990	1993	1995	2000	2003	2005	2010	2012	2013	2014
Russia	87,900	78,300	68,600	51,300	47,800	46,500	45,100	44,300	43,200	50,900
Kazakhstan	8,743	8,053	5,058	1,089	1,106	1,179	4,781	7,221	7,661	8,467
Mongolia	909	723	660	653	687	729	839	945	1,067	1,171

**Note:** The number of preschools in Russia in 2014 includes educational institutions providing early childhood education and childcare, of which 41,300 are kindergartens (Government of Russia 2015). The data for Kazakhstan from 2010 include mini-centres. The data on preschools in Mongolia refer to kindergartens. **Source:** Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation and Government of Russia (2015); Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Mongolian Statistical Information Service.

In the 2000s, as the fertility rate was increasing, demand for preschool services in Russia and Kazakhstan was growing. The number of preschools, however, continued to decrease, leading to an acute shortage of places. In 2012, the coverage of children aged one to seven years in various forms of preschool institutions in Russia comprised 62 per cent (UNECE 2014). The number of children on the waiting list for preschools in Russia grew six times from 193,000 in 1999 to 1.2 million in 2006, and doubled since then amounting to 2.4 million in 2012 (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation), while in 2014, this number reached 2.7 million.<sup>63</sup> In Kazakhstan, the number of children on the waiting list for preschool institutions was estimated at more than 260,000 children in 2010.<sup>64</sup>

**Table 3: Number of children in preschools in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, 1990–2014**

	1990	1993	1995	2000	2003	2005	2010	2012	2013	2014
Russia (million)	9.0	6.8	5.6	4.4	4.3	4.5	5.4	6.0	6.3	6.8
Kazakhstan	1,067,800	747,400	407,200	133,200	156,500	185,400	390,800	584,300	634,500	727,500
Mongolia	97,212	59,909	64,086	79,300	90,300	91,400	122,100	150,200	167,900	183,000

**Note:** The number of children in Russia in 2014 includes children in educational institutions providing early childhood education and childcare (Government of Russia 2015). The data on children in preschools in Mongolia refer to those in kindergartens. **Source:** Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation and Government of Russia 2015; Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Mongolian Statistical Information Service.

The Russian government has taken a number of measures to fulfil its constitutional obligation to provide accessible and free education, including at the preschool level. In 2007, it introduced a partial compensation to parents for their payment of state preschool services: 20 per cent of preschool costs are compensated for the first child, 50 per cent for the second child, and 70 per cent for the third and subsequent children. In 2012 and 2013, as part of the Federal Target Programme for the Development of Education in 2011–2015, subsidies at the amount of RUB 1 billion were provided for each year for additional places for preschool children (Government of Russia 2014b). Regions have adopted “road maps” as a special measure to increase the availability of places for preschool children through the construction of new institutions and reconstruction of old or existing ones. This measure has mainly targeted children aged three to seven years (UNECE 2014). In 2014, the level of availability of preschool education for children of this age nationwide reached 93 per cent (Government of Russia 2014c). In accordance with the Decree 599 of President of the Russian Federation of 7 May 2012 “On measures to implement state policy in the field of education and science”, the Russian government

<sup>63</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>64</sup> Speech of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 9 December 2013 “On the status and priority areas of education and science in the Republic of Kazakhstan”.

is undertaking measures to eliminate the shortage in preschools for children aged three to seven years and achieve the 100 per cent availability by 2016. In 2013–2014, RUB 100 billion was allocated for this purpose (Government of Russia 2014a). Fees for state preschool institutions on average are low and affordable, with benefits and subsidies provided for low-income and large families, but state preschools in Russia tend to be overcrowded, while the quality of services is quite poor (Savitskaya 2005). Although private preschools are growing, average families are not able to afford them.

The situation with preschools in Kazakhstan, which, as in Russia, was characterized by a massive deficit in the 1990s–2000s, began to change in the late 2000s. In the first decade of the 2000s, the number of preschools stayed between 1,000 and 1,200, but since 2010 there has been a considerable increase in these institutions, reaching over 8,000 in 2014, with nearly 728,000 children.<sup>65</sup> This progress has mainly been attributed to the programme “Balapan” (box 1).

#### **Box 1. Programme “Balapan” in Kazakhstan (2010–2014, 2015–2020)**

“Balapan” is a state programme designed to address the shortage of preschools and provide quality preschool services to children. In its first phase (2010–2014), the main priority of the programme was to provide coverage to children at the age of three to six years. This age group was prioritized because of the need to prepare children for schooling and also because of the mothers’ return to the labour market. Among the key objectives of the first phase of the programme were to achieve 70 per cent coverage of children in preschool institutions, including full coverage of children at the age of five to six years by 2015, and to provide qualified personnel to preschools. The implementation of the programme involved public-private partnerships and included the (re)construction of state preschool institutions and the opening of new mini-centres (type of preschool institutions) and private kindergartens. The costs of both state and private preschools have been shared between the state and families. The state has covered the child’s actual staying in the preschool, while parents have paid for food and additional services. In 2010–2013, expenditure on the programme amounted to KZT 165.9 billion, with additional KZT 52.1 billion provided in 2013.<sup>a</sup> The programme contributed not only to the increase of preschools through the construction of new kindergartens and nurseries (ILO 2014b), but also to the increase in the actual number of children attending them. In 2013, the actual coverage of children of preschool age accounted for 73.4 per cent, with 25 per cent of all kindergartens being private, an increase by 1.7 times compared to 2010.<sup>b</sup> The coverage of children aged three to six in 2010–2013 doubled from 36 per cent to 72 per cent, and so did the number of preschools (Government of Kazakhstan 2013). In view of the high birth rate and ongoing population growth in the country, in 2014 the government decided to extend the programme until 2020. It now aims to achieve the 100 per cent coverage of children in preschools by 2020. For 2014–2020, KZT 190.5 billion was allocated to the implementation of the programme.<sup>c</sup>

a. Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

b. Speech of Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan of 9 December 2013 “On the status and priority areas of education and science in the Republic of Kazakhstan”.

c. “The Government of Kazakhstan extended the programme “Balapan” until 2020” [http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan\\_news/programmu-balapan-2020-goda-prodlilo-pravitelstvo-kazahstana-248475/](http://tengrinews.kz/kazakhstan_news/programmu-balapan-2020-goda-prodlilo-pravitelstvo-kazahstana-248475/), accessed on 15 February 2016.

The extension of the programme Balapan is in line with the New Economic Policy of Kazakhstan outlined in the Message of President of Kazakhstan of 11 November 2014 “Path to the future”,<sup>66</sup> where he highlighted the development of social infrastructure, including preschool institutions and kindergartens in particular, as one of the key priorities in the coming years. The expenditure of KZT 90 billion has been foreseen to address the deficit of places over the period of 2015–2017.<sup>67</sup> While the state is committed

<sup>65</sup> Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>66</sup> <http://www.parlam.kz/ru/presidend-speech/35>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>67</sup> “Over 1.4 million square meters of social rental housing will be built in Kazakhstan by 2020” <http://www.primeminister.kz/news/show/26/do-2020-goda-v-kazahstane-budet-postroeno-bolee-14-mln-kv-metrov-sotsialnogo-arendnogo-zhilja-/27-11-2014>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

to provide necessary support, the involvement of the private sector is seen as essential to achieve desirable outcomes.

In Mongolia, the number of preschools started to increase since the early 2000s. In 2006–2007, around 95,000 children or 60 per cent of preschool age children, compared to 88,000 children in 2002, were enrolled in 740 preschools (Government of Mongolia 2006). State-owned institutions comprised 87 per cent, 8 per cent were private, and the remaining belonged to different entities that provided preschool services to their employees (Government of Mongolia 2006). By 2013, the number of preschools increased by nearly 30 per cent compared to 2006.<sup>68</sup> In 2008, the Mongolian parliament passed the Law on Preschool Education which created a legal basis to provide all children with access to services provided by early childhood educational institutions. In 2016, a new Law on Childcare came into effect in Mongolia, which is aimed at providing children from two to six years old with access to kindergartens, as well as to special childcare centres run by individuals. It is expected that over 6,000 private childcare centres will be established following the adoption of this law (UN et al. 2015), which intends to help address the shortage of preschools and enable stay-at-home parents (primarily, mothers) to work.<sup>69</sup>

A distinctive feature of Mongolian preschool education services is the availability of alternative forms of preschools that exist in addition to mainstream preschools. They include mobile *ger* (portable felt tent) kindergartens, groups in shifts, hourly enrolment, mobile training to reach out to children of nomadic herding families, travelling teachers and mobile summer preschool programmes. These alternatives provide equal opportunities to children of herders and some other social groups who are unable to attend preschool establishments, and play an important role in expanding access to preschool education for disadvantaged children (Government of Mongolia 2006). As a result, the preschool enrolment rate increased by 11 per cent, reaching 41 per cent over the period of 1997–2006.<sup>70</sup> In 2010, 60 per cent of all *baghs* (subdistricts) had ger kindergartens (Government of Mongolia and UNDP 2011). Nearly 33,000 children attended alternative training programmes for preschool education in 2009 (Government of Mongolia and UNDP 2011).

**Table 4: Number of alternative preschools in Mongolia, 2009–2013**

	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Shift classes	423	473	322	302
Mobile groups	529	711	666	708
Mobile teacher classes	104	42	42	22

Source: Mongolian Statistical Information Service.

<sup>68</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>69</sup> In international terms, on average across OECD countries around 33 per cent of children under the age of three were enrolled in childcare in 2010 (OECD 2015b). The enrolment rate was less than 10 per cent in Bulgaria, Mexico and Poland, while over 50 per cent of children of this age used childcare facilities in countries like Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and the Republic of Korea. Furthermore, in two-thirds of OECD countries, at least 70 per cent of children aged from three to five attended preschools in 2010. The enrolment rate was nearly universal in Belgium, France and Spain, whereas the rate of participation in Canada, Switzerland and Turkey was around 50 per cent or below (OECD 2015b).

<sup>70</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

The duration of these alternative preschool programmes, however, is rather short, as mobile kindergartens, for instance, tend to operate only in the summer, and their quality is quite poor, partly due to the lack of official regulations on the provision of such services (UNESCO 2011). Therefore, nomadic children do not have a sustained exposure to preschool education. The provision of childcare support to this category of children thus presents a major issue for Mongolia in view of the fact that 213,000 families—26 per cent of the total of 823,000 families in Mongolia—pursued a herding lifestyle in 2014.<sup>71</sup>

### **Family allowances and child benefits**

Since 1990, the entire system of financial assistance to families in Russia was revised where the size of allowances was now determined by different coefficients of minimum wages,<sup>72</sup> and some of them depended on various factors including family income (Zakharov 2006).

In the 1990s, key family benefits in this country included lump sum childbirth benefits, monthly childcare and child allowances. Monthly child allowances were differentiated based on the age of children, regardless of their socioeconomic status, but since 1999 only low-income families with children were eligible for this type of allowance.<sup>73</sup> The size of the allowances was rather low, with no further increase in the second half of the 1990s. In 2007, the monthly child allowance was based on the number of children. Although initially it was a universal income support measure (Chandler 2013), it was now seen as another measure aimed at encouraging people to have children. Since 2016, monthly child allowances have been changed to child allowances that should be paid quarterly rather than monthly.<sup>74</sup> This amendment can be seen as part of austerity measures introduced by the Russian government amid the ongoing (as of February 2016) economic crisis.

In Kazakhstan and Mongolia, benefits were targeted at vulnerable families, including low-income and large ones. The number of recipients was also reduced, and in-kind privileges or subsidies were replaced with monetary compensations limited in value. Targeting proved ineffective, with 60 per cent of poor families receiving no public transfers in Kazakhstan (World Bank 1998).

Since the 2000s, following an improvement in the economy, a range of family benefits and child allowances were introduced in the three countries, along with a significant increase in the size of some benefits. In Russia, spending on family and maternity benefits increased steadily throughout the 2000s, but its share in GDP was still quite low (appendix 1). One of the major programmes launched during this period in Russia was the Maternal (Family) Capital (box 2).

<sup>71</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>72</sup> For example, the monthly childcare allowance until a child is 1.5 years was set at one minimum wage if a mother was working prior to childbirth, or half a minimum wage if she was not.

<sup>73</sup> Federal Law 171 of the Russian Federation of 17 July 1999 “On amendments to Article 16 of Federal Law, ‘On state benefits for citizens with children’”.

<sup>74</sup> Federal Law 388 of the Russian Federation of 29 December 2015 “On amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation with regard to improvement of social support on the basis of the principle of targeting and application of means testing criteria”.

### Box 2. Maternal (Family) Capital Programme in Russia (2007–2016, 2017–2018)

The Maternal (Family) Capital is a programme designed to encourage people to have children and implemented in accordance with Federal Law 256 of the Russian Federation of 29 December 2006 “On additional measures of state support for families with children”. In modern Russian history, there is no equivalent of programme of this scale. The programme has a distinctly pronatalist orientation: the state encourages having children, particularly a second and subsequent child. Annually indexed and non-taxable, the value of this benefit increased from RUB 250,000 (USD 9,400) in 2007 to RUB 429,000 (USD 12,300) at the federal level in 2014 (RUB 100,000–150,000 at the regional level). In 2015, it constituted RUB 453,000 and remained so in 2016, exceptionally without indexation.<sup>a</sup> It is paid in the form of a voucher/certificate to families with a second or subsequent child, whether born or adopted, regardless of family’s income status. In addition to mothers of two or more children, single fathers of adopted children or children themselves (upon the loss of both parents) are entitled to the Maternal (Family) Capital. While the voucher is issued to a specific individual, that is, the mother (or an adoptive father), the intended main beneficiary is the family unit. The voucher can be used for three purposes: (i) improvement of housing conditions (buying an apartment, building a house or paying mortgage), (ii) children’s education (including early childhood education), and (iii) contribution to mother’s pension fund (so as to increase the amount of her retirement income). In 2015, the government prepared amendments to the law, according to which families can use it to pay for services of “individual entrepreneurs” such as private preschools and nannies.<sup>b</sup> If approved, this measure will likely contribute to reducing waiting lists for state kindergartens and further support the incomes of families with children. During the period of 2007–2015, 6.5 million families received state certificates for the Maternal (Family) Capital, the vast majority of which were used to improve housing conditions.<sup>c</sup> The total amount of funds that were transferred from federal budget to implement the programme increased from RUB 41.95 billion in 2009 to RUB 300.9 billion in 2014 (Government of Russia 2015). Following the message of President of Russia to the Federal Assembly of 3 December 2015,<sup>d</sup> the programme was extended until 2018.<sup>e</sup> According to preliminary estimates, expenditure from the federal budget on this programme could amount to RUB 324.2 billion in 2017 and RUB 340.6 billion in 2018.<sup>f</sup>

a. Federal Law 359 of the Russian Federation of 14 December 2015 “On federal budget for 2016”.

b. “Department Director Svetlana Petrova: Families can use the maternity capital for the services of private kindergartens and nannies,” <http://www.rosmintrud.ru/social/family/183>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

c. “Since 1 January the opportunities for using the maternity capital expanded,” <http://www.rg.ru/2016/01/01/matkapital-site.html>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

d. Message of the President to the Federal Assembly, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/50864>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

e. Federal Law 433 of the Russian Federation of 30 December 2015 “On amending Article 13 of Federal Law, ‘On additional measures of state support for families with children’”.

f. “Russian State Duma passed a bill in three readings on the extension of the maternity capital programme for 2017–2018” <http://www.rosmintrud.ru/social/demography/70/>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

With regard to Kazakhstan, in 2005 the government adopted a new law, “On state benefits to families with children,” which introduced lump sum childbirth allowances, monthly childcare allowances until a child reaches one year to families regardless of income, and monthly child allowances to low-income families to be paid until the child turns 18. In 2008–2009, the number and size of benefits were increased, including childbirth and childcare allowances, child benefits and birth payments (Government of Kazakhstan 2010). Spending on family benefits increased steadily during the 2000s (appendix 2).

To address the acute problem of families with children living in poverty, the Mongolian government introduced the Child Money Programme in the mid-2000s.

**Box 3: Child Money Programme in Mongolia (2005–2010, 2012 – ongoing as of February 2016)**

The Child Money Programme was first designed as a conditional cash transfer programme aimed at reducing poverty and improving the quality of life among poor families with children. In particular, it provided monthly cash allowance of MNT 3,000 (USD 2.50) in 2005 to families with children living under the minimum subsistence level. While this is a small amount, it made an important contribution to reducing poverty among these families (UNICEF and Government of Mongolia 2014). In 2009, the programme covered 932,000 children under the age of 18, with MNT 32.2 billion spent by the state budget (ADB 2009). In 2010, the programme was terminated but was reinstated in 2012 in the form of a universal and unconditional benefit for all children under 18 years. It is financed through the Human Development Fund, offering monthly transfers of MNT 20,000 (USD 10). In 2014, it reached 994,000 children, which is nearly 100 per cent coverage of children 0–18 years, with MNT 238.4 billion spent on the programme in 2014.<sup>a</sup> While the benefit is still very low to cover all costs associated with raising children, and its sustainability is subject to political processes, it is credited for being the only non-OECD country to provide a universal and unconditional child grant.<sup>b</sup>

a. Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

b. “Universal child benefits: The curious case of Mongolia” <http://www.developmentpathways.co.uk/resources/universal-child-benefits-the-curious-case-of-mongolia/>, accessed on 15 February 2016. While several OECD countries have implemented child grants with universal coverage, relevant programmes in developing countries have mainly focused on the poorest parts of the population. Argentina is another example of a non-OECD country that provides a universal child grant called *Asignación universal por hijo* (AUH), but the grant is conditional on the fulfilment of health and education commitments and is targeted at poor families with children (Rabinovich and Diepeveen 2015).

Following the adoption of the Law on Monetary Assistance to Children and Families in 2006, a number of other benefits were introduced in Mongolia to support families in looking after children and contribute to the reduction of the financial costs of childrearing and childcare. As part of the “Newborn Child” programme (2006–2010), a lump sum cash allowance of MNT 100,000 (USD 85) was paid for every newborn child. In 2009, a total of 234,000 children were covered by this programme, with MNT 23.4 million spent on it (ADB 2009). The “New Family” programme (2006–2009) provided a lump sum benefit of MNT 500,000 (USD 420) to newly-wed couples upon their marriage registration. A total of 35,550 families benefited from this programme in 2009, with MNT 17.8 million spent (ADB 2009). As a result of this programme, the number of marriages increased by over three times, from 14,711 in 2005 to 48,996 in 2006.<sup>75</sup> As part of the government’s Action Plan (2008–2012), additional child allowances and benefits for large families progressively graded by child order were introduced in 2008. However, in 2009 due to the decline of state budget, these programmes were halted and in-cash social benefits were abolished (Government of Mongolia et al. 2010).<sup>76</sup>

## 6. Discussion

### *Implications for the institution of the family*

A large range of family support measures in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia that promote childbearing, family creation and better quality of life for families with children point to the pronatalist approach in family support policies in these countries (see appendix 4 with the summary of key policies and programmes in the three countries). As a result of these measures, there has been an increase in fertility and marriages, as well as the improvement of living standards for many families. For instance, the number of marriages in Russia rose by nearly 37 per cent over the period of 2000–2014, from

<sup>75</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>76</sup> Most OECD countries provide benefits to families with children, and in over half of these countries, family benefits are universal regardless of family income, while Austria, France and Germany provide additional income-tested benefits to low-income families, families with small children or unemployed parents, respectively. In some countries like Iceland, the size of the family benefit does depend on family income (OECD 2015b).

897,000 to over 1.2 million,<sup>77</sup> while in Kazakhstan it increased by 85 per cent, from 91,000 in 2000 to 168,000 in 2013.<sup>78</sup> In Mongolia, the number of marriages nearly tripled during the implementation of the “New Family” programme (2006–2009), from nearly 15,000 to 43,000 over this period.<sup>79</sup> Government actions to support families, however, have mainly focused on providing financial assistance to families, taking into consideration factors such as family income, the type and size of the family, and the number of children, while other forms of support such as the reconciliation of professional and parental responsibilities and social infrastructure for children and the elderly have largely remained marginal to state concerns. Despite the progress made in encouraging people to have children and creating families, a substantial proportion of families with children in the three countries continue to be vulnerable to poverty, with low wages, unemployment and unequal access to quality social services, which prevent families from achieving better livelihoods.

There seems to be a growing tension in the institution of the family in the three countries due to norms, policy and reality. The social norm that is still prevailing in modern Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia is that a mother’s role is to care for the children as well as other family members, whereas a father’s role is to provide income to support the family. This male breadwinner norm has been reinforced by the limited supply of quality and affordable care services, especially for small children, the long period of childcare leave taken primarily by women and wage differences between men and women.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, despite the declared equality in parental responsibilities in the three countries, family support policy has mainly focused on support for mothers and children, but not for fathers. In Kazakhstan and Mongolia, in particular, a father can be granted a childbirth and childcare allowance, respectively, only when the mother passes away. None of the countries have a legal provision for paid paternity leave. While fathers in Russia are entitled to paid paternity childcare leave for the period of up to 1.5 years, and in all these countries there is unpaid three-year childcare leave for both parents along with flexible or part-time workplace arrangements, in reality fathers in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia are often reluctant to make use of these benefits. Men who try to be involved fathers often face obstacles because of the conservative ideology of family support policy and the mechanisms for its implementation, as well as the general societal perception about traditional gender roles.

In addition, financial assistance in the form of family allowances, childcare and child benefits is rather low and does not compensate for the earnings forgone due to unpaid care work,<sup>81</sup> whereas income from one parent is not enough to sustain a decent standard

<sup>77</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>78</sup> Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>79</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>80</sup> An average monthly wage in Russia, for instance, was RUB 24,700 (USD 820) for women and RUB 33,300 (USD 1,100) for men in 2013 (Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation 2014); in Kazakhstan it was KZT 87,700 (USD 570) for women and KZT 129,400 (USD 850) for men in 2013 (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://economy.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016); and in Mongolia it was MNT 733,000 (USD 430) for women and MNT 860,000 (USD 500) for men in 2014 (Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016).

<sup>81</sup> Unpaid care work includes housework and care of children, elderly or ill persons without explicit monetary reward. In nearly all societies, including Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia, women perform the largest amount of unpaid care

of living for the whole family. This is particularly true of the period when a child is around 1.5 to three-years old in Russia, and from one to three years in Kazakhstan and Mongolia, that is, the period when the paid childcare leave comes to an end and before parents can send a child to a preschool, as most childcare facilities in these countries are available to children from three years onwards. As a result, such families face a higher risk of falling into poverty. Combining work and family life, particularly when a child is small, is problematic, as the labour market is dominated by full-time and standard employment, with a limited number of part-time jobs.<sup>82</sup> Some mothers have to return to the labour market as soon as their child is a few months old to regain income to support the family. This could also be due to the fear of losing their professional skills or even the job itself, despite the fact that the job is protected by law for the period of leave. In this situation, parents have to rely on intergenerational support in caring for children. Such support, however, is not always available or feasible.

This tension contributes to further weakening of the family in these countries, as evidenced by the continuing negative changes in the structure of the family. In Russia, the total number of families consisting of two or more persons decreased by 2 per cent during the period between 2002 and 2010, from 41.6 million to 40.7 million families, which constituted 28 per cent of the total population (Russian Population Census 2010). Of these family units, around one-third (30.5 per cent) were families without children, a quarter (24 per cent) were single mothers and 3 per cent were single fathers. Among families with children that accounted for 42 per cent of the total number of families, one-child families composed the majority, that is, 67.5 per cent.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, Russia was estimated to have the highest divorce rate in the world in 2013 (UNSTAT 2013). Although it has been declining since 2002 when it reached its peak, over 50 per cent of marriages taking place in Russia today are likely to end in divorce (Elizarov and Kochkina 2014).<sup>84</sup>

While the number of families in Kazakhstan increased by 5.6 per cent in 2009, compared to 1999, amounting to 4.4 million, the number of two-parent families dropped by 13.2 per cent and that of single-parent families increased by 6.8 per cent (Government of Kazakhstan 2011). The most widespread type of families in the country was the nuclear type, which constituted nearly 53 per cent of the total number of families in 2009 (Government of Kazakhstan 2011). The same year, single mothers and single fathers made up 10 per cent

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work, which in addition to foregone earnings implies significant financial costs, lost opportunities, as well as physical and emotional stress (UNRISD 2010).

<sup>82</sup> In many countries, particularly in developing regions, women work in the informal sector, which on the one hand can provide greater flexibility in terms of workplace arrangements, but on the other hand can deprive them from social protection. While the transition period in Russia has been accompanied by a rise in informal employment that has been seen as an important mechanism to adapt to negative shocks (Gimpelson and Kapeliushnikov 2014), the percentage of women in the informal sector in total non-agricultural employment is low, constituting 10.9 per cent in 2010 compared to 13.3 per cent for men (ILO 2013). In Kazakhstan and Mongolia, where in contrast to Russia the rural economy is still large, informality is heavily concentrated in agriculture, while the share of non-agricultural informal employment is smaller (see, for example, Rutkowski 2011 for Kazakhstan). In Kazakhstan, for instance, 62 per cent of all informal workers were employed in agriculture, whereas informal employment outside agriculture represented 18 per cent of total non-agricultural employment in 2009. Of this, women accounted for 49.1 per cent in non-agricultural informal employment compared to 50.9 per cent for men (Rutkowski 2011).

<sup>83</sup> Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation, <http://www.gks.ru>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>84</sup> According to surveys conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (Всероссийский центр изучения общественного мнения) and the Public Opinion Foundation (Фонд Общественное Мнение), the main causes of divorce in Russia include internal conflicts, poverty, alcoholism and drug addiction, as well as domestic violence (see, for example, "Infidelity and poverty are to blame for divorces" <http://www.rg.ru/2013/07/18/razvod.html>, accessed on 15 February 2016). All these factors put strain on families and result in their instability.



and 1.6 per cent of the total number of families, respectively, with the number of families consisting of single fathers increased by 60 per cent compared to 1999 (Government of Kazakhstan 2011). The data from the latest Kazakhstan Population Census have also revealed that families with children in 2009 reached 2.4 million, or 64 per cent of the total number of families with two or more persons. Out of this number, the largest proportion were families with one child (28 per cent), followed by families with two children (20 per cent), and families with three children and more (16 per cent). Furthermore, since 2000 the number of divorces in Kazakhstan nearly doubled, reaching 52,700 cases in 2014, whereas the number of marriages showed a decline from 168,000 in 2013 to 159,000 in 2014.<sup>85</sup>

A similar trend in the continuing shrinking size of families is found in Mongolia. In 2009, for instance, 62 per cent of the total number of families were nuclear, and 11 per cent were single-parent (2010 Population and Housing Census of Mongolia). Furthermore, the number of single-mother families increased by 28 per cent from 63,7000 in 2003 to 81,700 in 2013, and that of single-father families saw an increase of 40 per cent from 18,200 to 25,400 during this period.<sup>86</sup> Although the number of families was growing steadily throughout the 2000s, increasing by 43 per cent from almost 554,000 in 2000 to 794,000 in 2013, of these, the number of large families (four children and more) fell by 56 per cent over the period of 2003–2012, from 53,500 to 23,500 units.<sup>87</sup> The number of divorces in Mongolia began to rise steadily since 2001, amounting to 3,750 in 2014 compared to 650 in 2001, which is almost a five-fold increase.<sup>88</sup>

### **Revisited social contract**

There seems to have been a shift in the relationship between the state, society and family within the social contract over past years in the three countries. The state has officially recognized that it will no longer take the sole responsibility for providing support to society, and this responsibility will now have to be shared. The governments in Russia and Kazakhstan, for instance, have explicitly called for an activation of citizens' labour potential through productive activities and the development of the economic independence of the family through a new system of social provision. In the case of

<sup>85</sup> Committee on Statistics, Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan, <http://www.stat.gov.kz>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Data received from a representative of the Mongolian National Statistics Office.

<sup>87</sup> Mongolian Statistical Information Service, <http://www.1212.mn>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>88</sup> It should be pointed out that the negative trends associated with families in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia are not limited to these three countries and seem to characterize a more broadly apparent trend globally. In almost all OECD countries, for instance, marriage rates have declined, while divorce rates have increased over past decades, and cohabitation has gradually become an alternative to marriage (OECD 2015b). The decline in marriage rates since 1970 has been particularly significant in Hungary and Portugal, but was limited in Denmark and Sweden where the number of marriages was already relatively low. A substantial increase in cohabitation is evident in the Nordic countries where it has often replaced marriage, even when the couple have children. For example, in Iceland and Norway, more than 25 per cent of children in two-parent families live with cohabiting parents (OECD 2015b). Furthermore, the share of children in single-parent families, along with those born outside of marriage, has also increased. The former reached over 20 per cent in Chile, Ireland and the United Kingdom, and the highest proportion was found in the United States where more than one in four children live in single-parent families, while the number of out-of-wedlock children surpasses 50 per cent in countries like Estonia, France and Mexico (OECD 2015b). Such family instability gave rise to discourses of "crisis in the family" (Moore 1994; Chant 2002), "crisis in masculinity" (Chant 2000; Nurse 2004) and "parenting deficits" (Goldson and Jamieson 2002). Caution, however, is needed for how such "crises" are perceived. Concerns about the crisis in the family, for instance, have mainly been articulated by those for whom there is only one ideal form of the family (Jelin and Díaz-Moñoz 2003). This could be seen differently, as these authors argue, if one recognizes the diversity of family types and a shift to more flexible arrangements within the family that is becoming increasingly common today. Furthermore, some researchers maintain that the erosion of the family, at least in European states, is likely to be transitory (Esping-Andersen and Billari 2015). Data from some studies on family attitudes and values have pointed to people's preferences towards family behaviours (Scott 2006; Scott and Braun 2006), with evidence around the world showing the continued importance of family ties and kinship support (Kabeer 2007).

Russia, low-income families with children can receive support from the state if they are willing “to undertake active steps to overcome poverty”.<sup>89</sup> In Kazakhstan, this system implies the provision of targeted social assistance to low-income families, provided that beneficiaries actively participate in the programmes that promote employment, social adaptation and activation; otherwise, the assistance may be suspended.<sup>90</sup> In both countries, this is carried out by signing a social contract between the state and citizen, which makes provisions for mutual obligations of the parties.<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, Kazakhstan also plans to develop a new Employment Roadmap and other large-scale retraining and skills development programmes, which promote the Society of Universal Labour seen as “a basis of efficient economy resilient to external shocks”.<sup>92</sup> In a similar vein, the Mongolian government encouraged a change from passive and dependent lifestyle to an active self-responsible approach that fosters self-development among citizens (Mongolian Family Development and Demographic Policy 2011).<sup>93</sup>

This shift seems to point to a new form of the relationship between the family, state and society, which promotes partnership with the state rather than reliance on it. The underlying principle of self-responsibilization that serves as the basis of this relationship entails the move from “helping those in need” (passive mode) to “helping those in need if they help themselves” (active mode). In view of the state’s decreasing capacity to fulfil its role in relation to the family, this partnership now involves an increasing cooperation with non-state organizations, including civil society and private sector, in providing social services.<sup>94</sup> It

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<sup>89</sup> Federal Law 258 of the Russian Federation of 25 December 2012 “On amendments to Federal Law ‘On state social assistance’”.

<sup>90</sup> Resolution 396 of the Government of Kazakhstan of 24 April 2014 “On approval of the concept of social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030”.

<sup>91</sup> While this kind of social protection mechanism has provided an opportunity to improve the living conditions of nearly a quarter of poor families in Russia, it is not seen to be sufficient to eradicate poverty (Prokofieva et al. 2014). This is because, first, it tends to apply only to families with unemployed members of working age. In contrast to countries like France where such a system has been in place for several decades (OECD 2007), the main factor causing poverty in Russia is not necessarily unemployment per se but rather low wages (Government of Russia 2015; Prokofieva et al. 2014). In this situation, working people can also find themselves in poverty, and the activation of labour potential alone is unlikely to solve the problem. Second, to make families self-sufficient, it is also necessary to develop social services for families with children and the elderly.

<sup>92</sup> Message of President of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the people of Kazakhstan of 30 November 2015 “Kazakhstan in a new global reality: growth, reform, development”.

<sup>93</sup> The principle of self-responsibilization which now underpins family support policies in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia is somewhat similar to the European Union’s social investment approach in the sense that social policy with a productive factor should enable families to be responsible for their own well-being, primarily through active participation in the labour market (Jenson 2009; Jenson and Saint-Martin 2005; Morel et al. 2012). The concern for families has become a major building block of this approach (Jenson and Saint-Martin 2005). It represents a new kind of social-democratic concept for post-industrial European welfare states (Vandenbroucke et al. 2011; Van Kersbergen and Hemerijck 2012), where social policies need to be revised in response to the new types of social needs, including a greater variety of types of family (Nygård and Krüger 2012).

<sup>94</sup> Federal Law 442 of the Russian Federation of 28 December 2013 “On the basis of social services for citizens in the Russian Federation”; Resolution 396 of the Government of Kazakhstan of 24 April 2014 “On approval of the concept of social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030”; Mongolian Community-Based Welfare Services Programme. To incentivize these partnerships, the Russian government, for instance, introduced new regulations and changes to laws, which are aimed at stimulating the competition in social services, supporting private investors in implementing projects in the social sphere and providing subsidies to non-profit organizations engaged in the provision of basic social services. Federal Law 464 of the Russian Federation of 29 December 2014 “On Amendments to Part Two of the Tax Code of the Russian Federation”, for example, is designed to create a favourable tax regime for such organizations. In 2014, the government allocated subsidies in the amount of RUB 846.9 million to support relevant non-profit organizations (“A report on the results and main directions of the work by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation for 2015–2017” <http://www.rosmintrud.ru/ministry/about/reports/2>, accessed on 15 February 2016), and proposed an additional RUB 168.5 million in 2015 to subsidize projects that attract private partners in social services (“Social policy: main changes from 1 January 2015” <http://www.rosmintrud.ru/social/social/232>, accessed on 15 February 2016). Furthermore, in his 2015 Message to the Federal Assembly, the President of Russia announced further measures to support socially oriented non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which include a special programme of presidential grants and a gradual provision of up to 10 per cent of state funds allocated to implement social programmes.

remains to be seen what results these arrangements will bring to families. In the meantime, the family has to take an active role in ensuring its own well-being and of its members.

### ***The nature of the welfare model***

What kind of welfare model is emerging in contemporary Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia in view of the role that the family plays in these countries and the level of support provided to families by the state?

A number of features that characterize family support policies in the three countries point to the liberal model. First, families in these countries have seen a shift from a passive state-reliant mode to an active self-responsibilization mode. While the state in these countries provides a wide range of family benefits and child allowances, most of them are targeted at needy families and tend to be based on various factors. In line with this, President of Kazakhstan in his 2015 Message to the people of Kazakhstan reiterated that the role of the state in the social sphere should be limited to the targeted support of vulnerable groups. In Russia, childcare allowances, for instance, are differentiated according to family income and the number of children, while most benefits in Kazakhstan and Mongolia are primarily provided to low-income or large families. Exceptions to this are the Maternal (Family) Capital in Russia and the renewed Child Money Programme in Mongolia, which, being universal in nature, are available to all families and children, respectively, regardless of their socioeconomic background. While the universality of social provision is characteristic of the social-democratic regime, these two programmes in Russia and Mongolia are mainly oriented towards increasing fertility and addressing poverty, accordingly, rather than supporting work-family reconciliation or gender equality. Unlike Kazakhstan and Mongolia, the principle of universalism in Russia has been embedded in the national constitution, but there has been a gradual and steady move towards targeted assistance to selected groups rather than society at large. This was reaffirmed in the 2015 Message of Russian President to the Federal Assembly, in which he underlined the importance to support the most vulnerable categories of the population and “finally move towards the fair principle of social support when it is given to those who really need it”. Therefore, whereas Kazakhstan and Mongolia could arguably be seen as more liberal than Russia in social provision, the variation is becoming increasingly less evident.

Furthermore, the three countries are characterized by the limited availability of preschools and the shortage of places in these institutions. The coverage of children in various forms of preschools is far from being universal. Such limitations in the provision of childcare facilities cause tensions in combining professional and family responsibilities. In view of the ongoing economic downturn and retrenchment of state support, as evident in the case of Russia, women will inevitably shoulder additional burden of unpaid care work. Furthermore, the presence of small children substantially increases the time spent on unpaid care, and so does low family income, as women in low-income families allocate more time to care-related tasks than in high-income families due to limited possibilities for purchasing care services or lack of infrastructure (UNRISD 2010).

These countries are also seeing a growing participation of the private sector in childcare services. The implementation of the Balapan programme in Kazakhstan, for instance, involved private-public partnerships in constructing new kindergartens. Private preschools and childcare centres are also expanding in Russia and Mongolia but they are not easily

affordable for the majority of families. While the governments undertake measures to help families with the costs of preschools (for example, through partial compensation for state preschool services and a proposed payment for private preschools using the Maternal (Family) Capital voucher in Russia) and increase the availability of places for preschool children (for example, through the Balapan programme in Kazakhstan and the new Law on Childcare in Mongolia), the number of children who are not in preschools is still large, as evidenced by long waiting lists. The access to preschool education is particularly problematic for disadvantaged children in Mongolia despite the legal provision to ensure access to preschool services for all children and efforts in providing alternative preschool forms.

On the other hand, there is an emphasis on the importance of family values across the three countries, with the family still plays an essential role in providing welfare, particularly in Kazakhstan and Mongolia. The governments in these countries have repeatedly called for enhancing the role of the family and strengthening family relations in various statements, national strategies and action plans. This has been done primarily through encouraging people to have children in the context of traditional gender relations within the family. The long duration of unpaid childcare leave, which is mainly taken by mothers, and limited involvement of fathers in childcare further reinforces this. The latter is undermined by the lack of provision for paid paternity leave in the three countries and the fact that support to fathers in Mongolia and Kazakhstan is mainly focused on single fathers. While fathers in Mongolia are generally entitled to five paid days off after the birth of a child, this arrangement is not prescribed by law. In Russia, although paid childcare leave is available to either of parents until a child reaches 1.5 years, the amount of childcare allowance is quite low, and so is the payment provided to mothers during childcare leave in Kazakhstan and Mongolia. Monthly child allowances in Russia, for instance, which were initially designed as a universal income support measure, changed from being based on the age of children to the number of children and thus became another measure aimed at increasing the population. In response to ongoing budget pressure, these monthly child allowances are likely to change further into quarterly child allowances. In this situation, families are seen as an important provider of financial assistance and childcare services. These nuances in policies and programmes in the three countries share the features of the conservative regime.

Yet, female participation in the labour market has remained quite stable and relatively high throughout the transition period in these countries, constituting 75 per cent in Kazakhstan, 69 per cent in Russia and 60 per cent in Mongolia in 2014 (World Bank Indicators).<sup>95</sup> While the rate is lowest in Mongolia among the three countries, it is still higher than, for instance, in some continental European countries like Italy where the rate was 54 per cent in 2014 (World Bank Indicators). In Kazakhstan and Russia, female participation is higher than in France (67 per cent) but lower than in Sweden (79 per cent).<sup>96</sup> Furthermore, as part of governments' efforts to increase productive employment of the population, Russia and Kazakhstan recently implemented (re)training programmes for women during their childcare leave in order to facilitate parental and professional

<sup>95</sup> These data are generated from World Bank Indicators available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.TLF.ACTI.FE.ZS>, accessed on 15 February 2016.

<sup>96</sup> France, for instance, is characterized by a somewhat similar structural paradox in terms of the strength of the familialist ideology, at the core of which lies the recognition and promotion of the family as an institution, and women's high rate of participation in the labour force. This contradiction has been explained by the plurality of actors involved in policy-making processes and the mix of various policy instruments implemented over years (Revillard 2006).

responsibilities.<sup>97</sup> A substantial development of childcare facilities as part of Kazakhstan's Balapan programme and Mongolian Law on Childcare can also be seen as an additional measure to increase the labour productivity of women. This, together with the declared principle of equality between men and women in family responsibilities in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia (which is not however widely followed in practice) and the availability of father's rights to childcare (albeit selective in the case of Kazakhstan and Mongolia), seem to reflect some further elements of the social-democratic model.

From this analysis it follows that the current welfare model in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia represents a mix of approaches towards family and welfare. The dominant part is liberal, with some distinct elements of the conservative model.<sup>98</sup> To a much lesser extent, there are features of the social-democratic model, which can be seen as the remnants of the socialist regime. In view of the nature and level of support provided to families by the state in the three countries, it can be argued that family support policies in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia feature a low level of de-familialization. The fact that families are prompted to take a more active position in providing welfare to its members and be responsible for sustaining their own livelihoods, along with the emphasis on traditional family values, points to a trend towards refamilialization in these countries.<sup>99</sup>

## 7. Concluding Remarks

The concept of the family, along with families themselves, has undergone considerable changes in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia since the Soviet Union was officially dissolved 25 years ago. The major new elements that characterize the family today in these countries are its material constituent: an emphasis on individual rights, as well as a greater diversity of family forms in terms of structure, composition, living arrangements and socioeconomic status. In contrast to the Soviet paternalistic attitude to the family, which meant solely serving the interests of the state, the new approach to family support policy in these three countries entails more family autonomy and involves the partnership between the state, family and other actors. The current paper has pointed out that the existence of an explicit family policy in Russia and institutional mechanisms to support families in Kazakhstan and Mongolia reflect the importance of the family as a social institution in these national settings.

The process of constructing a post-Soviet social contract in relation to families can be roughly divided into three stages. The first stage (1991–1999) was characterized by family destabilization and minimalist support by the state; the second stage (2000–2007) saw the revival of the family and increased attention from the state, both quantitatively and [Copyright](#) qualitatively; and the third stage (2008–2016) has been marked by family strain due to the

<sup>97</sup> Decree 606 of President of the Russian Federation of 7 May 2012 "On measures to implement the demographic policy of the Russian Federation", Resolution 396 of the Government of Kazakhstan of 24 April 2014 "On approval of the concept of social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030".

<sup>98</sup> Resolution 396 of the Government of Kazakhstan of 24 April 2014 "On approval of the concept of social development of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2030" maintains that Kazakhstan's social model is developing according to basic principles of the continental welfare model with specific Kazakhstani national features. At the core of this model is a social partnership with shared responsibilities between the state, employers and citizens.

<sup>99</sup> The move towards refamilialization in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia seems to fall under the post-communist cluster identified by Hantrais (2004) who categorized family policies in Central and Eastern European states as refamilialized. For some, the case of Russia with its childcare and leave policies, for instance, shows the emergence of neo-familialist welfare model, in Mahon's (2002) sense, albeit with many limitations (Teplova 2007).

global financial crisis and ongoing economic downturn, together with changes in political processes in the three countries, which may put families back at the periphery of state support and exert pressure on livelihoods of their members. Further, it has been shown that the governments of Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia have adopted a pronatalist approach to family support throughout the transition period and within this approach implemented diverse policy measures. The major programmes include the Maternal (Family) Capital in Russia aimed at boosting fertility, the Bapalan programme in Kazakhstan designed to improve preschool services, and the Child Money Programme in Mongolia that intends to alleviate poverty among families with children. Family support policies implemented in the three countries, however, have not emphasized sufficiently the quality of care services for children and the elderly, work-family reconciliation and gender equality.

This paper has shown that the risks and challenges that families have confronted during transition, along with policy responses to these challenges, have had important implications for the relationship between the family, state and society in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia. The adaptation to these changes has created a dissonance in the three countries between the rhetoric of the centrality of the family within the social contract on the one hand and the reality of state interventions to support the family on the other. In a systematic comparison of family support policies, that is, parental leave policies, childcare services, and family benefits and child allowances, as well as a range of family-related laws and regulations, it has been found that these policies are characterized by selectivity, fragmentation and inconsistency across the three countries. There also seems to be insufficient integrity and coherence among different policies that together could contribute to better outcomes for the development of families, while paying due attention to the different needs of family members across age, gender and income. As part of their response, the governments of these countries have also claimed to provide space to new partners in the social sphere, shifting their responsibility to families themselves and other actors while remaining the main decision makers.

While there is still a lot that can be done to improve the livelihoods of families in multiple dimensions in these countries, the measures undertaken and the resources invested can nonetheless be treated as significant efforts by the respective governments amid risks and challenges that they have confronted during the transition period. Although these efforts have primarily pursued pronatalist goals, they have certainly contributed to some broader development outcomes, including poverty reduction and early childhood education. In order to strengthen the institution of the family in these countries and improve the well-being of its members, family support policies in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia should build on this progress and increase efforts to make sure that the progress is not reversed. These policies could focus on improving the access and quality of social services for children and the elderly (which is particularly pertinent to these countries in view of population ageing), creating family-friendly employment opportunities with equal amount of paid maternity and paternity leaves, eradicating poverty through increasing the size of wages, pensions and social benefits, and enhancing gender equality through reducing unpaid care work, investing in appropriate infrastructure (such as water and sanitation) and domestic technology, particularly in rural areas, and promoting shared responsibility within the family by encouraging fathers to engage in childcare and domestic activities. This all can yield future returns in terms of economic growth, human capital development and social cohesion.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Expenditure on major family and maternity benefits in Russia, 1991–2014 (million RUB)

	1991	1995	2000	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Family and maternity benefits, total (1995 - bln. rub.)	30 042	11 982	27 042	46 736	57 811	120 828	178 786	225 475	351 337	456 415	535 053	574 186	574 875
Of which													
Pregnancy and delivery	1 600	920	3 675	14 403	19 109	29 410	44 222	57 039	67 317	75 632	86 636	82 448	95 671
Childbirth	459	343	1 533	8 192	11 047	12 246	14 158	16 878	18 737	21 311	23 350	24 792	19 678
Childcare until child is 1.5 year	76	579	1 757	5 632	7 607	54 306	75 210	97 067	121 797	139 802	152 059	169 580	121 384
Monthly child allowance	27 907	10 124	19 936	18 135	19 624	24 090	32 611	40 898	43 607	45 228	48 846	46 601	46 447
Share of family and maternity benefits, in percentage													
In GDP	2.1	0.8	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.8

**Note:** The data on family and maternity benefits (total) for the years of 2010–2013 provided in 2015 Russian Statistical Yearbook differ from the data provided on the website of the Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation (as well as in 2014 Russian Statistical Yearbook) for these years. To provide the latest expenditure data for the year of 2014, this paper uses 2015 Russian Statistical Yearbook. **Source:** Federal State Statistics Service of the Russian Federation; 2015 Russian Statistical Yearbook.

### Appendix 2: Expenditure on major family benefits in Kazakhstan, 2003–2012 (million KZT)

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Child allowances until child is 18 years				5 414	6 523	7 593	8 525	9 140	8 700	8 550
Benefits to families with children	2 076	3 005	3 623	8 140	16 724	27 842	30 335	43 213	55 212	57 384
Of which										
Lump-sum childbirth allowances	2 076	3 005	3 623	4 287	4 221	11 855	13 620	15 157	19 751	20 084
Childcare allowances until child is 1 year				3 853	12 503	15 987	16 715	19 086	24 408	24 520

Source: UNICEF 2015.

**Appendix 3: Expenditure on family benefits in Mongolia, 2004–2014 (million MNT)**

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total expenditure on social welfare	24 365	42 026	75 401	115 291	218 667	244 210	99 313	131 875	181 445	233 244	241 793
Allowances and benefits	11 092	28 251	52 116	93 767	184 609	185 254	42 889	60 974	125 163	87 743	83 998
For caring children	5 706	5 737	5 646	1 485	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Allowances and benefits (since 2006), of which:	–	–	47 565	77 978	90 879	92 104	5 312	4 717	5 780	16 640	12 329
Benefits for newly married couples	–	–	11 814	29 724	17 447	17 775	765	3	–	–	–
Allowances for newborns	–	–	4 111	5 769	6 382	7 154	203	0.4	–	–	–
Cash benefits for children	–	–	26 249	33 223	32 761	32 177	29	0.9	12	–	–
Social welfare services	–	–	1 121	793	974	1 040	1 336	3 389	3 508	5 188	6 933
Cash benefits for children under 18 (since 2008)	–	–	–	–	89 958	89 740	53	1	53 264	228 995	238 432
Human Development Fund allowances (since 2010)	–	–	–	–	–	–	277 106	733 058	693 746	28 071	0

Source: Mongolian Statistical Information Service.



#### Appendix 4: Key family support policies and programmes in Russia, Kazakhstan and Mongolia in 1991–2016

	Family destabilization 1991–1999	Family revival 2000–2007	Family strain 2008–2016
<b>Russia</b>			
Parental leave	20-week paid job-protected maternity leave 1.5-year paid childcare leave for mother or father 3-year unpaid childcare leave for mother or father Flexible or part-time workplace arrangements for parent		
Childcare services		Partial compensation to parents for state preschool services (since 2007)	
Family benefits and child allowances	Maternity allowance  Monthly childcare allowance regardless of number of children  Monthly child allowance regardless of number of children/family income Lump sum childbirth allowance (for mother or father)	Monthly child allowance based on income	Monthly childcare allowance based on number of children and childcarer's income Monthly child allowance based on income and number of children (since 2016, quarterly child allowance)  Monthly cash allowance for large and low-income families (since 2013)
		Maternal (Family) Capital Programme (2007–2016, 2017–2018)	
<b>Kazakhstan</b>			
Parental leave	18-week paid job-protected maternity leave 1-year paid childcare leave for mother 3-year unpaid childcare leave for mother or father Flexible or part-time workplace arrangements for parent with small child		
Childcare services			Balapan programme (2010–2014, 2015–2020)
Family benefits and child allowances	Maternity allowance  Childcare payment regardless of family income Family benefits to low-income and large families		Childcare payment based on number of children and maximum 10 minimum monthly wages (since 2013)

		Lump sum childbirth allowance (for mother or single father) (since 2005)
		Child allowances until child is 18 years for poor families (since 2006)
		Targeted Social Assistance programme (2002 onwards)
		Children of Kazakhstan programme (2007–2011)
<hr/>		
<b>Mongolia</b>		
Parental leave	17-week paid job-protected maternity leave	
	1-year paid childcare leave for mother or single father	
	2-year unpaid childcare leave for mother or father	3-year unpaid childcare leave for mother or father
	Flexible workplace arrangements for women with breast-feeding child and single fathers	
<hr/>		
Childcare services		Alternative preschool forms for children from herding families and other disadvantaged social groups
<hr/>		
Family benefits and child allowances	Childcare allowance (to mother or single father)	
	Family benefits to low-income and large families	
		National Programme on Support of Families (2001–2006)
		National Programme of Action for Development and Protection of Children (2002–2010)
		National Programme for Household Livelihoods Support (2002–2012)
		New Family (2006–2009)
		Newborn Child (2006–2010)
		Child Money Programme (2005–2010, 2012–present)
		National Programme of Family Development targeted at poor families (since 2016)
		Cash benefits for children under 18, large families, newly weds, newborn children (2008–2011)
		Wealth benefits to all citizens (2010–2012)
		Targeted cash benefits for vulnerable families (since 2012)

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