Anna Philippova

**Child benefits policies: comparative analysis of Russian regions**

Family and child policies are among the basic components of social policy. In our research we focus on family and child policies in Russian regions. We calculate child benefits packages for a set of model families of every region.

Child benefits package includes all transfers targeted at families with children (except of lump-sum benefits which do not significantly affect family welfare). We estimate costs of child benefits packages for model families – typical families which differ in earnings, employment status (employed, unemployed or economically inactive) and demographic structure (couples or single parents, with different number of children).

Our research is based on methods widely used by Sheila Kamerman and Alfred Kahn (1982, 1983), Sheila Kamerman, Shelley Phipps and Asher Ben-Arieh (2010), Jonathan Bradshaw and co-authors (1993), Jonathan Bradshaw (2012), Jonathan Bradshaw and Naomi Finch (2002) for comparative analysis of child benefits systems in different countries. Research on child benefits packages in Russia was conducted by Lilia Ovcharova et al. (2010, 2011). The novelty of our research is in studying child benefits packages in regions of Russia.

We compare child benefits packages between Russian regions to analyze priorities of regional family and child policies and find out which types of families gain from regional child benefits systems and which remain vulnerable to the risk of poverty. Moreover, for every region of Russia we compare the child benefits package with the level of subsistence minimum and the average wage that let us estimate the effectiveness of regional policies.

Method of model families used in the paper has its limitations and advantages. It provides information on benefits that families should receive rather than information on benefits that they actually get. This selection of family types is inevitably disputable. They were chosen to illustrate and compare the impact of child benefits policies on a range of types of families, but it has to be recognised that some of these family types are more or less common in different regions.

However, it provides recent data of family and child policies intentions and clarifies characteristics, similarities and differences of child benefits systems in various regions of Russia.

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