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Framing policy designs through contradictory emotions: The case of Czech single mothers.[1]

Anna P. Durnová[2]

Eva M. Hejzlarová[3]

Abstract

In public policy scholarship on policy design, emotions are still treated as opposed to goals, and their presence is assumed to signal that things have gone wrong. We argue, however, that understanding how and for whom emotions matter is vital to the dynamics of policy designs because emotions are central to the capacity-building of policy intermediaries and, with that, to the success of public policies. We examine the case of Czech single mothers in their role as intermediaries in "alimony policy". Our interpretive survey provided single mothers an opportunity to express the way they experience the policy emotionally. The analysis reveals that the policy goal of the child's well-being is produced at the cost of the mother's emotional tensions and that policy designs defuse these emotional tensions, implicitly. These contradictory emotions expressed by mothers show us a gateway to problematizing policy designs in a novel way, which reconsiders construing policy design as a technical, solution-oriented enterprise to one in which emotional tensions intervene in policy design and are essential for succeeding.

Keywords: discourse, emotions, goals, interpretive approaches, single mothers, policy design

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Introduction

This article seeks to mount a challenge to the widely-shared view in policy studies that emotions are deviating policy makers from success. Although policies are always animated by emotions, the current language of public policy reduces them to the expression of 'interests' and defuses them by the design and implementation of more or less universally applicable rules and policy measures. We put forward the example of single mothers regarding Czech alimony policy to show that the existence of contradictory emotions held by mothers makes design assumptions problematic, because it negatively impacts upon both policy outcomes and the legitimacy of policies in general. We therefore propose an argumentative arena how to proceed in policy making when emotions are clearly expressed and also contradictory.

According to Czech policy documentation, the main goal of alimony policy is that "the child's well-being" is covered by the alimony. The eventual emotional tensions of mothers in dealing with the situation lead, however, to poor policy impacts in the achievement of this goal and invite us to reconsider the design of the policy. Our case shows, first, that "child's well-being" needs to be understood beyond the measure of the alimony: as a long-term structure designed through technical-financial and emotional needs of both the child and the parent (see also Zelizer 2005), because otherwise the policy goal remains unfulfilled (see also Hejzlarová 2014). This implies, second, that although the current policy design makes mothers the main policy intermediaries in the achievement of the child's well-being (being more often given the child into custody[4]), it leaves them with a lot of emotional work to do and throws them often into poverty (Alternativa50+ 2016[5]). This points us to the necessity to build a new kind of policy language that includes the emotional situation at hand in order to enable capacity-building for mothers in their function of policy intermediaries or to even recast their role of intermediaries.

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[4] One of five children in the Czech Republic lives only with one parent, and in 90% of the cases with mothers. (Cf. Statistical survey of Alternativa50+, January 2016.)

[5] It is important to add that about 1 million of Czech population suffers from poverty (being under the "poverty margin" related to income). The difference related to single-parents families is remarkable. Whereas 9% families are concerned by the poverty, in single-parents families it is 31.7% (see http://alternativaplus.cz/2015/05/neuplne-rodiny-jsou-vice-ohrozeny-chudobou/).

We first summarize the up-to-date interpretive research in policy studies that has emphasized that policy design is an "oscillating" activity (Hoppe 2005), or a discursive activity framing actors and classifying the values that come along with it (see Fischer 2009, Fischer et al. 2015, Stone 1997 or Yanow 1996 and 2003). This perspective has the aim of suggesting doorways towards more emotion-sensitive policy designs reflecting the policy process in the complexity in which it is practiced and experienced. We then move to the particular case of Czech alimony policy, where we show two dominant, contradictory emotions in mothers' experience of this policy: "pride-shame" and "anger-resignation". The current policy design does not provide any framework for supporting mothers in the emotional work resulting from these contradictory emotions, which leads to poor policy outcomes for both women and the children. The case of single mothers invites us to reconsider the way in which policy designs are thought of as rationalizing instruments that defuse emotions, and to suggest a broader picture of policy designs in which emotional tensions co-produce policy designs and are essential for succeeding.

The issue of single parents and alimony policies is a large one and our article has not the ambition to deal with all its relevant aspects. Despite the indisputable contribution of feminist debates in explaining the marginality of women's' voices in debates such as these (Annesley, Engeli and Gains 2015, Cidlinská and Havelková 2010, Repo 2011, Vohlídalová 2014), we provide a different reading here. We focus on the way in which contradictory emotions put mother's marginality in operation and how this makes problematic the contemporary practice of policy design, where gender aspects needn't necessarily be the only example. Our analysis cannot go into psychological details of the evoked emotional tensions nor do we aim at pretending that each and every single mother must suffer from these tensions. Our example lays bare the presence or performance of contradictory emotions in policy discourse, which deliver us important insights on the practical relevance of policy outcomes. We propose, towards the end of our paper, a novel notion of a policy design, in which citizens are not mere winners or losers of public

policies and in which the contradictory emotions are thought as key for success because they can show us how to redesign policy as to include marginalized groups.

Including emotions in policy designs

That most policies lack clarity of goals and use rather vague language is scarcely new in studies on policy design. In their motley projects of establishing policy instruments and policy schemes (see, for example, Clemons and McBeth 2001, Jan and Wegrich 2003 or Schubert and Bandelow 2003) policy scholars have called for both clarifying the complexity of goals (see e.g. May 2012 or Brodkin 1990) and for purifying policy language (mainly the work of Paul Sabatier, see, for example, Sabatier 2007). Policy design has been in that sense painted as a crucial tool for policy success because policy designs shape policy instruments, offering clear administrative shapes to policies (see e.g. May 2012 or Brodkin 1990) and structuring the way the policy is carried out in a more general, symbolic, manner (Le Galès 2016, Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007, Schneider & Ingram 1993, Stone 1997).

In particular, the public policy research on assumptions and values has brought important insights to this because it showed that policy designs are both embedded in, and enacted through, assumptions and values that inform the dispositions of actors who take part in the creation of policy instruments (see Bobrow and Dryzek 1987, Ingram 1987, and Peters 2011). Interpretive approaches to public policy (Gottweis 1998 and 2006, Stone 1997, Wagenaar 2011 or Yanow 1996) have sharpened the issue of values and assumptions by focusing on policy language, and by showing language is not a surplus structure to communicate policies but that it co-produces values and assumptions inside these policies through discourses. Explaining how policies are enacted by discourse of both institutions and actors (Fischer 2003, Griggs and Howarth 2004 or Howarth 2010) has been conceived as an important explanatory tool to understand particular development of policies, their eventual misunderstandings,

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paradoxes (Stone 2001) and contestations (Yanow 1996) as they are manifested in discourses on these particular policies.

However, none of these studies have focused on emotional accounts of assumptions and values and the related production of policy knowledge. On the one hand, this absence was apparent in the way mainstream works on policy design have identified goals around "interests" supporting actions pursued by actors (see, for example, Howlett 2009, 2015) and have opposed them to "wishes" and "anxieties", or other emotional accounts of knowledge. These concepts have painted political actions as "rational ones" (see, for example, Clemons and McBeth 2001) in the first place, causally following each other (Capano 2009, Howard 2005, Howlett, Ramesh and Perl 2009). Such a contrast between emotions and so-called "rational" actions goes partly back to the Weberian tradition, still very influential in public policy works, which conceives the administrator as the rational figure without passions, which would distract him from pursuing his goals (Weber 1926). If this figure displays emotions, then these are translated into "interests" reflected in particular policy designs.

On the other hand, while interpretive approaches in policy studies[6] have challenged the mainstream view mentioned above by arguing for an interdependence between rational and emotional accounts of knowledge in their general works on discourse - and even though they have in fact called for contesting the view of policy design as a goal-directed rational process, through the lenses of discourse[7] - emotions have not been given any special analytical emphasis in interpretive works. Only some studies have concerned emotions, but treated them as extra phenomena accompanying the actual policy discourse, especially when negotiation or deliberation runs out of steam or produces contestations (see,

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[6]There have been different labels in the last decades used for these approaches such as "post-positivist", "interpretive" or "critical". We use here the word "interpretive"; for the overview of these labels see e.g. Durnová and Zittoun 2013 or Wagenaar 2011.

[7] Although this is not the place to provide another reflection on the role of discourse in public policy, it should be emphasized that studies highlighting goal-directed rationality in public policy have agreed that approaches through meanings and ideas can enhance our understanding of policy dynamics (see the discussion in Daigneault 2014) and that a discursive approach is an important and "competing perspective" among mainstream public policy research (Peters 2011).

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for example, Fischer 2009 or Newman 2012, Jupp 2016) or when emotions are used in policy language as being inherent to the specific policy field, such as health care innovation (as shown in Orsini 2012, for autism or Gottweis 2007, for stem cell research).

Now, we argue in the present article for a change in this view of policy design and the practice of policy making and, in doing so, build on two bodies of research. First, the last two decades of research on emotions in the field of social movements (Goodwin and Jasper 2003, Jasper 2006, 2011) has revealed that goals can be in a conflictual position to each other. Observing emotion in both these particular goals and in their reciprocal relation can bring us further in the explanation of complex social actions (as suggests also Goodwin 2001). This finds resonance in the larger spectrum of works advancing the understanding of emotions as elements of policies because these reveal social hierarchy (Kemper 1997, Lupton 1998, Hochschild 2003, Sauer 1997 or Wallace 2010) and should be thus regarded as parts of social practices, influencing how actors come together (see for example Birkland, 1998, using the term "focusing events"[8] for emotional accounts of policy practices).

Second, there are works within policy studies that have actually supported the results of this conceptual and theoretical work carried out in social movement research because they show how, in particular social policy fields, emotions do enter as evaluative components of policies (see Hunter 2003 and 2015). In a nutshell, how actors feel about a policy issue shapes how they set their agenda and what instruments they create (e.g., Greene, 2002; Taylor, 2006; Stenner and Taylor 2008)[9]. If the aforementioned interpretive approaches imply openness toward the role of practice and discourse as elements identifying the way policy designs are formulated (see Fischer and Gottweis 2012, Hajer 2005,

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[8] A focused framing of emotions has been manifested by feminist scholars who have raised the issue of emotions in studying the layers of knowledge production and have contributed to the current debate about emotions as part of rationality (Ahmed 2004, Fonow and Cook 1991, Martin 2001). These examples have, nevertheless, ultimately only strengthened the assumption that emotions are issue-specific and need not be considered by researchers working on other issues.

[9] Also Maor's (2012) analysis of intuitions in policy evaluation shows that emotions as judgements of events play a crucial part in both formulating and evaluating policies.

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Hajer & Wagenaar 2003, Howarth 2010, Lejano 2012 or Zittoun 2010) then we can mediate between them and the recent work on emotions in social policies. This means to open the investigation toward how the presence of emotions - that are unstable, contradictory, uneasy to express - affects policy practices (see also Durnová 2013 and Durnová 2015). Emotions are both the conceptual and analytical pathways to understand the role of power and meaning in policy designs.

The case of Czech single mothers shows, in that context, that by displaying only interests - without emotions related and embedded in them - the policy analyst cannot explain the whole story. Czech policy practice is fundamentally different from what the policy documentation presupposes. Viewed through the interest-focussed policy language of the latter, Czech mothers seem to be comfortable with the situation as there are no political arenas articulating interests other than those confirming the current legislation (Hejzlarová 2014). The mother's goal is the child's well-being, for which she is ready to bring sacrifice in terms of additional jobs, and/or reducing her own needs. This goal is supported by the other goal, which is to "manage their situation as a single parent". Viewed through a goal-directed rationality, these two goals are in harmony: no signs of public complaints, no signs of policy arenas demanding revision; only mothers that deal - somehow- with the situation.

So why, then, is there a majority of Czech single mothers having long-term financial difficulties? Why is there a high correlation between single mothers and those treated by social services? Why do single mothers choose a precarious way of working? Why, if the partner does not pay alimony, do mothers not sue their partners for skipping the alimony? Whereas interest-focussed policy language can answer this by the argument that there are always policy receivers upset and unhappy about their situation - such as these single mothers who are eventually overloaded by the related emotional work - we show here that the emotional situation of mothers is relevant for the whole policy outcome. We argue that the emotional situation of single mothers has severe implications for other related social policy fields (such as

poverty policy) and what is more, it contributes to the general view of policy design as comprising policy solutions that are disconnected from people's lives (see Hoppe 2005, 1999).

Contradictory emotions within the Czech alimony policy

The policy concerning single mothers in the Czech Republic is defined by the Czech alimony policy, having as a goal "the child's well-being" (see Epravo.cz 2009). The principle of "alimony" in the Czech Republic has been designed on the basis of the Family Law (94/1963 Sb.), according to which both parents contribute to the maintenance of their children according to their abilities, capabilities and assets. The term "alimony" was not explicitly anchored in the law.[10] Nevertheless, post-1989 judicial practice has revealed that alimony is not "just about nutrition" and that it includes all possible needs to satisfy the physical and the mental well-being of a child, especially material (clothes, shoes, toys) and cultural (means for the expanding and deepening of education to develop interests and hobbies; as also stated explicitly in Výživné 2009).

For a better understanding of the situation of Czech single mothers, there are several aspects to be outlined at the outset. First, alimony is the central policy instrument for regulating the life of single parents in the Czech Republic and it is also the dominant narrative in the related public debate. Through this, the situation of single mothers is seen as an economic issue without providing space for social or emotional aspects (see FEMA 2014). Second, as mothers are more often given custody of children than fathers (Alternativa50+ 2016), this policy instrument makes them main policy intermediaries (as thought of, e.g., by Maor 201 or Brodkin 2011) without providing any capacity-building for them[11]. This absence becomes visible on the third aspect related to the fact, that skipping the alimony is (after car burglary) the

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[10] The extent of alimony was decided by courts and according to the individual decisions of judges. It reflected property conditions of family members but also regional specificities (in Prague, average alimony was higher than in the regions). Decision-making also lacked any methodological consistency, which led to considerable differences in the amounts awarded.

[11] " My feeling is that everything is designed for the child, not for me" (Doris E)

most frequent criminal act in the Czech Republic (Policie ČR 2014[12]) and 90 per cent of single parents suffering from this are women (Alternativa50+, 2016). In such a practice, women's position in the alimony policy is one of "managing somehow the situation", as our respondents often put it, with a lot of emotional work to do and often with no support from the surroundings.

Our analysis goes therefore deeper in how the situation gets managed, and what emotion mothers recall, and points out two particular shortcomings in the current policy design. First, the current solely economically framed concept of "alimony policy" presupposes a single mother being in a secure long-term employment situation, well-paid and embedded in a range of social networks and financial resources, that enable her to cover any eventual incongruences in her everyday situation (such as baby-sitting if the child is ill and cannot go to school/nursery, or emotional networks if she finds herself overloaded entirely). However, the data on single parents' situation show that such a picture is rather illusory (Bicaková and Kalíšková 2016, Formánková and Křížková 2014; Kalíšková and Münich 2012) because mothers do not have these resources and their condition is basically dependent on alimony. This becomes problematic as they are often confronted with missing alimony payments or with situations where the alimony does not cover the totality of the child's needs (see also Cidlinská and Havelková 2010, Hejzlarová 2014).

The second shortcoming is that although the alimony policy counts - in some of these situations - on a range of poverty prevention programs (such as "child support payments"), these programs are, again, designed as immediate help without any capacity-building for mothers or some other sorts of programmes that would address the emotions present. Although the success of the policy goal relies on the mother's management of the family, her own situation is left out. Evocative in this context is that the poverty prevention programmes can start only if the mother sues the father for skipping the alimony. However, litigation demands supplementary emotional work linked, for example, to the organisation of the child's

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[12] In 2014 there were 13,939 cases of delinquency.

custody during that process (see also Hejzlarová 2014) and so mothers do not sue their partners. Mothers report in general that these kinds of discussions with the partner are emotionally demanding or come at the cost of the relationship with the child, which leads some of them to abstain from demands for revision of the alimony or launching the legal process.

Our analysis shows that the current policy design does not reflect mothers' everyday management of the situation because it does not provide space for these related contradictory emotions, which leads to poor policy outcomes and raises the question of the overall policy legitimacy. We reveal two emotional contradictions mothers are struggling with: the tension between "anger and resignation" and the tension between "shame and pride". Whilst searching for the names of the emotions we both relied on how the interviewees called their emotions themselves (yet we did not succumb to the idea of "authentic voice or emotion") and on our reflections about the material[13]. We argue that identifying these contradictory emotions, first, explains mothers' marginal position in the related debates and, consequently, the absence of any demands for revision of the policy. Second, this raises for us the question of how we design policies once we accept the existence of contradictory emotions that intervene on the level of policy intermediaries and thereby affect the policy outcome. We suggest that emotions should be taken into the policy language in order to uncover the underlying judgements of both policy actors and policy intermediaries who carry these goals out in practice and to point out that they operate through an emotional boundary (as suggests also Jupp, 2016, for the UK context of family policies).

Material and methods

The interpretive survey focusing on Czech single mothers was conducted between 2009 and 2010 and consisted of focus groups and semi-structured interviews. We have contextualised the survey through the

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[13] "I am very mad on our State" (Doris C); "The trial was really shameful for me" (Doris E.); "We do have a deal but he doesn't pay… And I don't' care anymore. Because if I have started to deal with it, then she would have lost her relationship with her dad, and I don't want this to happen." (Doris G)

media debate on alimony policy from 2009 onwards and by including all relevant policy documents. Contrary to conventionally conducted qualitative surveys that rarely exceed the frame of checking up and evolving common beliefs regarding this group, our interpretive survey design provided the single mothers an opportunity to express their problems in the way they experience them. The research idea was inspired by feminist methodology (Ramazanoglu, Holland 2002) and reflections upon emotions both on the sides of the interviewees and ours (Ribbens, Edwards 1998). First, this design empowered the respondents in the role of an "expert" of daily-life as a single mother, which allowed us to go deeper into the single mothers´ situation and in women´s lives including their emotional tensions (as also argued by Ivanoff and Hultberg 2006: 127). Second, the focus on the mother's emotional experience enabled us to go beyond the common evaluation of the policy and opened to us a path for a more general reflection on how policies are designed and how emotions coproduce this design (see also Anderson 2017 or Hunter 2013).

We conducted 16 interviews. The participants were contacted through snowball sampling. The interviews were conducted during the period from October 2009 to July 2010 – some took place in cafeterias, some in participants´ workplaces and homes. These semi-structured interviews focused on the problem situations of single mothers´ lives. The interviews were recorded and lasted from 40 to 60 minutes. There were four single mothers who haven´t been married, seven divorced, two widows, one married and one undergoing divorce at the moment (formally still married). In some cases, a confluence of two categories appeared – one participant was a widow with respect to the father of her first child and divorced with the father of her second child (The detailed characteristics of the participants can be seen in Table 1 in Appendix 1). With respect to the aim of the research we sought diversity in the interviews. We didn´t want to frame needs and feelings in advance but let the single mothers tell us their stories, how they felt or feel in their situation.

Two focus groups were conducted. The first took place in Prague (10/2009) and there were five participants. The second focus group took place in Ústí nad Labem (5/2010) with eight participants. Both

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the focus groups lasted for 90 minutes. The focus group as a way of gathering data was chosen in order to identify the specifics of single mothers as a group. The focus group was applied as a tool to reveal through the dynamic of the interaction "the little-researched aspects of women´s daily existences, their feelings, attitudes, hopes and dreams" (Madriz 2003: 365). It also heightened the comfort of the women because they felt more safety in a group and it also allowed them to share their emotional experiences, which is important for marginalised groups.

In all our empirical data, we define emotion as a communicated experience that is transmitted in each piece of data by the respondents (Durnová 2013). In a nutshell, we frame emotions as the tension between the individual dimension of expression (verbal or non-verbal) and its collective interpretation (affirmation, opposition, support, etc.) (see, for example, Durnová 2015 or Larsen 2010). To expand on this, we include a more dynamic notion of a discourse as a trace of these interactions (document, transcript, discussion, fieldwork notes). Discourses are embedded in the context of the respondent's situation or that of the documents and thus they also eventually include tensions and incongruences. Emotional tensions then appear as a respondent's expressions of what is appropriate/inappropriate to feel in particular situations. In our examples, mothers told us they felt "ashamed" by their situation in various moments, while being "pride of managing that all" the other day (Sarah D). Or they spoke about how "angry" they were about the height of alimony but decided to let it go as they didn´t want to ruin their everyday life and balance they had achieved (Monica B).

Emotions behind goals: why they matter to policy designs

As already mentioned above, dealing with the skipping of alimony by one of the parents and negotiating the appropriate amount of alimony are the two main agendas discussed by our respondents. These are also the most present topics in the related media debate and expert discussions mentioned earlier. In both these aspects the gap between what the policy design presupposes and what the actual practice is becomes particularly visible. With its impact on alimony, the policy design implies that mothers are intermediates

that merely fulfil the policy goal of a child's well-being by receiving the alimony and who, in case it does not come or the amount does not correspond with child's needs, report this to institutional authorities.

However, mothers often do not report nor do they claim dissatisfaction with the amount paid by ex-partners. If alimony insufficiently covers the needs of the child, they prefer to search for another job or even two (see also Alternativa50+ 2016). For some mothers, this means working 54 hours per week (which is quite revelatory for Czech society, as shown by Höhne 2010: 35). In a similar vein, mothers often do not sue their ex-partner for skipping alimony because they do not want to break the relationship of their kids with the father. This unsatisfying character that we revealed in the interviews has no support in public debate nor much less in any public political initiatives of mothers. Rather, mothers prefer to take a position of "invisible stakeholders" (shown in Hejzlarová 2014)[14] who remain on the periphery of the policy agenda, even though they are key for the policy's success.

It would be disturbing, or counterproductive, to show "anger" to the ex-partner or to the stakeholder, revealed our respondents when interviewed about their experience with "alimony policy", and explained why they had eventually "resigned" to sue their partner for skipping the payments. Mothers speak also about their experiences of "pride" in being able to manage the situation themselves (for instance by taking another job) as well as about the "shame" that pervades their decisions when they think of their status as single mothers (especially when they are the ones having been let down by their ex-partners). Our analysis, therefore, goes deeper in these contradictory emotions appearing in their everyday management of the child's well-being.

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[14] At the very beginning of our research, the focus was put on problem structuring of the issue of alimony both by decision-makers and single mothers. In the case of decision-makers, we analysed four parliamentary debates in 2001, 2005, 2007 and 2010 and expected to provide answers about how alimony was perceived by single mothers, how it was perceived as a problem. The first focus group, where alimony was only a marginal theme, did not provide these answers as mothers did not reveal their eventual anxieties and did not reflect upon their position within the policy. The reflection about possible explanations of this impossibility to provide a view on the mother's perspective led to the establishing of a new concept of "invisible" stakeholders (Hejzlarová 2011). Stakeholders are described as "invisible" to the common analyst's eyes if they have neither power nor energy or some form of social capital to express their needs and interests in the public sphere.

While focussing on these tensions we see that there is no dominating emotion. The emotions reveal rather a mix of more or less intense emotions that are expressed verbally during both interviews and focus groups. This is mainly due to the fact that single mothers are a very heterogeneous group to deal with (with respect to financial sources, family background, social capital, etc.) and their expressions of emotions are strongly related to these characteristics, as well as to their life stage. For example, their situations were expressed differently relative to how long it had been since the break-up with the father of the child, and relative to whether their predicament was a consequence of their own decision or whether they feel more like victims, because they had been let down. Their situation might also appear different relative to the age of their children. This means not only that we are unable to emphasize one or two isolated emotions for single mothers, but also that emotions interfere with the mother's aim to deal, somehow, with her circumstances, to "manage it", as all of them state in the interviews.

Rather than emphasizing emotions separately, we therefore show emotional tensions that were expressed by the respondents in response towards particular situations. This goes also hand in hand with Jasper's observation (Jasper 2011) mentioned earlier that goals might be conflictual towards each other and that it is therefore crucial to look at how these goals interact in order to understand the underlying conflict. We thus identify two emotional tensions that explain mothers' marginal role as well as offering a more complex view on "alimony policy". First, the emotion of "pride" gets contrasted with the emotion of "shame", which the interviewees expressed in relation to their family circumstances and that was reported as being treated as failure by their environment. Analogously to that, second, we identify the tension between "anger", that either the State or the ex-partner does not do anything to improve mother's situation, and a "resignation" to any kind of protest because either mothers want to keep the energy for managing the everyday or because they want to preserve the relation of their child with the father. Both tensions merge in the goal of the "child's well-being", which is also the main goal stated by decision-makers.

<u>1. From anger to resignation</u>

In one case, we experienced a pure emotion of anger which was related to political demands: „*I am often angry with the Czech Republic. I see it as injustice because I shouldn´t suffer and my kid neither. This society gets it wrong and it is necessary to publish more articles to change the perspective on single mothers. We don´t do anything wrong, we just raise our children and shouldn´t be discriminated because we are doing a good job and that we can handle the situation.*" (Sarah B.) This interviewee makes a sharp, even ultimate statement, yet she does nothing in terms of action. She is angry but she has resigned to refrain from acting - politically or socially - because she wants to focus on her child. The pure emotion of resignation can be well-demonstrated on the case of Doris A. who doesn´t receive alimony regularly and often sues her ex-partner, but remains calm and restrained: *"I miss the money but I don´t rely on it. When he sends it, I take it as a bonus but I don´t count on it."* None of these emotions or tensions led to any policy- or politics-relevant activity.

The anger-resignation emotional tension is also easily visible among participants of the focus group in Ústí nad Labem, who were all clients of an asylum for single mothers´ families. These single mothers aren´t satisfied with their situation, they are facing considerable financial problems and they raise their political demands during the interviews. At the same time, they state that the public sphere is somehow out of their reach, as it has its own rules (Doris J: "*It is all already decided*"). Therefore, mothers assume that is impossible to influence public debate (no single participant of the focus group follows the elections; for all, Sarah F.'s statement is exemplary: "*There´s no time to do that.*"). It is both a symbolic and material inaccessibility, underlined by the image of a fantasy world: as Wendy C puts it: "*I think that with their* [decision makers´] *three-month salaries* (...) *we would live like princesses for half of a year*". This tension is directed towards the State but at the end of the day it remains a snake biting its

tail. The narrative behind it does make sense for the single mothers but, at the same time, it prevents their

interests becoming a relevant part of policy formulation.

Another example of the anger-resignation tension is the way some single mothers deal with their

ex-partners skipping the alimony. *"We have a deal but he doesn´t pay. (...) My daughter and her father*

have a nice relationship and I won´t step in it by calling the cops and executions," explains Doris G. The

same pattern is visible in the case of Monica B. who agreed on a lower alimony than she expected:

"(b)ecause when it gets jammed somewhere then it stops working everywhere. It´s a big compromise. But

I still put it that I do it for the children." Both women possibly experienced anger but they turned it into

resignation or reconciliation by giving priority to the father-child relationship before the alimony issue. At

the same time, the anger may come back if the financial problems of the family become critical. The

result in this case is symbolic control over the father-child relationship and relative comfort in their

everyday lives.

2. Shame and pride

According to our data, the emotion of pride may have two sources. The first source is the condition in

which the family experiences a relative comfort compared to the state they were in previously (for

example, domestic violence, and debt). Sometimes, pride comes up when communicating with/about the

ex-partner in order to send a message that quarrels with him are not worth it and that the single mother is

satisfied with the situation: *"I´m not doing that bad to keep begging him for the alimony."* (Monica B.)

The second source is the way they manage the issue. The purest example is provided by Doris F.:

"It was tough and demanding but I think it helped me a lot for life. That I coped with it. I experienced that

when I said ´No´ that it worked. I don´t fear anymore." Often the emotion of pride or satisfaction

appeared in the interview not in words, but hidden in vocal or facial expression, referring to some

particular domains of life that were secured. Nevertheless, this kind of emotion is fragile because the

single mothers´ circumstances consist of an unceasing balancing and negotiating between various interests, accompanied by the feeling that satisfaction has only a temporary character.

Not rarely, the single mothers´ situation is accompanied by the emotion of shame. One parent families are – contrary to their considerable number – considered to be a deviation from the desired norm and single mothers may experience the feelings of failure from the break-up of their relationship, from not being able to ensure a complete family for their children, and from not being able to succeed in all the aspects of their new lives. The tension between pride and shame thus relates to the idea of a responsible mother who herself succeeds or fails. The emotion is confined to the single mother and doesn´t cross the boundaries towards public policy recognition. A very similar tension can be seen in case of single mothers having shared custody who, on one hand, are satisfied (or even proud) with the conclusion in which their children "have both parents" and, on the other hand, are unhappy when they are not with the children as it conflicts with their notion of being good mothers (Vohlídalová 2014). Our finding is thus not limited only to our case but is anchored in the broader context of single motherhood.

Conclusion

Although mainstream policy studies agree upon the heuristic value of policy success, emotions are still not seen as relevant parts of it. Moreover, even interpretive approaches to policy analysis treat emotions rather as "extra" elements to actual policy making processes than phenomena related to the notion of policy design and policy practice (see the critique of deliberation practices in Durnová 2015). However, the contradictory emotions of Czech single mothers reveal for us a more complex picture of policies, in which emotions – as they are revealed in the verbal expressions of our inquiry – provide us with supplementary information on hidden values that underpin the everyday practice of policies and the situation of policy intermediaries.

With our analysis of the anger-resignation and shame-pride tensions, we advance the argument that policy designs based only on goal-directed rationality and which evacuate emotions are missing the more complex picture and, in our particular case, lead to poor policy impacts for both women and children. The Czech policy design presuming a single mother's life is based on the economically framed structure of alimony contributes to the mother's marginalisation or even poverty and has consequently a severe impact on the child's well-being. In this respect, we argue here that revealing emotional tensions and including them in the policy language may provide capacity-building tools, because the underlying values and beliefs of the single mother's situation come to the fore and can be addressed through policy instruments. In our specific case, this would imply to design the policy beyond the economic notion of the alimony and to include supporting capacity building to enhance the necessary management of the single-parent situation. The intervention inspired by our findings may also aspire to challenge the topography of the negotiations above alimony. This may include substantial changes in legal terminology which would for example remove some emotionally weighty terms such as "prosecution" in terms of asking your ex-partner to increase alimony. Similarly, the emotional safety may be improved by introduction of more specific rules regarding the calculation of alimony.

By encouraging policy studies to look towards the direction of emotion-sensitive analysis, we first suggest re-defining the notion of a policy goal as being *co-produced by the emotional tensions* of those who receive this policy and/or provide its realization (see also the work of Hunter 2015). Emotional situations allow us to understand other barriers which encourage particular groups to become invisible or which render them silent, rather than formulating requests on their own and their children's behalf, such as that mothers feel "ashamed" to show their policy requirements because they want to keep their "pride". Or that they might feel angry about their situation but they have neither time nor financial resources to do anything about it and so they become resigned and go on, because, after all, it is about the child's well-being.

This means that, second, we call for a novel notion of policy design, in which citizens are not mere winners or losers from public policies. Instead, the citizen's contradictory emotions expose the ultimately conflicting aspects of a policy. These conflicting aspects might help policy practitioners to locate the underlying conflicts within a policy (as for example the mothers doing the emotional work in the current Czech policy design) or uncover reasons for poor policy impacts (such as the earlier mentioned feminisation of poverty in the Czech case.)

In a broader sense, third, the call for a novel notion of policy design, enables a different argumentative arena challenging the predominance of economic views on policy designs (such as the central place of the "alimony" in our case) and rendering visible the constraints of goal-oriented approaches to policy designs. This argumentative arena is key for policy's success because it enables to sheer away the focus from the individual and her strategies toward collective responsibilities articulated and formulated through an emotional boundary between policy receivers and policy givers, and their intermediaries.

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Appendix 1

Table no. 1: Characteristics of interviewees

Nickname	Marital status	Number and age of children which need financial support	Family status[1]	Participant to focus group
Wendy A.	Widow	One child; 19 years	–	FG Prague
Wendy B.	Widow	One child; 2 years	Bringing up her grandson (legal vacuum)	
Wendy C.	Widow /Single	Five children; aged 25, 23, 18, 16, 3		FG Ústí n/L
Doris A.	Divorced/ Widow	Two children; aged 6 and 9	Doesn´t receive alimony	
Doris B.	Divorced	One child; 25 years	–	
Doris C.	Divorced	Two children; 12 and 10 years	Shared care	
Doris D.	Divorced	Two children; 13 and 15 years	Son (15) lives with his father	FG Prague
Doris E.	Divorced	Two children; 13 and 22 years	–	
Doris F.	Divorced	Two children; 10 and 12 years	–	
Doris G.	Divorced	One child; 15 years	Doesn´t receive alimony	
Doris H.	Divorced	Three children; 26, 21 and 12	Doesn´t receive alimony	FG Ústí n/L
Doris I.	Divorced	Four children; aged 22, 20, 12 and 9	Doesn´t receive alimony	FG Ústí n/L
Doris J.	Divorced	Three children; 17, 10 and 2		FG Ústí n/L

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[1] Family status covers the form of care and also an experience with alimony. Unless otherwise stated, 1) it is exclusive the mother caring for the child, 2) alimony (in case of single and divorced mothers) is paid, 3) father is recorded in birth certificate.

Doris K.	Married/Divorced	Four children, the youngest aged 4	Doesn´t receive alimony	FG Ústí n/L
Sarah A.	Single	One child; 14 years	Father died; recorded in birth certificate	FG Prague
Sarah B.	Single	One child; 4 years	Father isn´t recorded in birth certificate; doesn´t get alimony	
Sarah C.	Single	One child; 8 years		
Sarah D.	Single	Two children; 7 and 8 years	Doesn´t receive alimony regularly	FG Prague
Sarah E.	Single	One child; 1 year	Doesn´t receive alimony	FG Ústí n/L
Sarah F.	Single	Four children; aged 5, 4, 2 and 1	Doesn´t receive alimony	FG Ústí n/L
Monica A.	Married	Two children of school age	Undergoing divorce	FG Ústí n/L
Monica B.	Married	Two children; 5 and 8 years	Undergoing divorce; Shared care	FG Prague
Monica C.	Married	Two children; 1,5 and 4,5 years	Doesn´t live with her husband but he covers all her financial costs	

Source: Authors