

TWO

Global Discourses of Need

Mythologizing and Pathologizing Welfare in Hungary

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When I began this research on the Hungarian welfare system, I thought of myself as a "hardened" ethnographer. Having just completed grueling ethnographic research in the California juvenile justice system, I was confident that I could handle anything I encountered in Hungary. As it turned out, my previous experience did not prepare me for a crumbling welfare state that was replete with pain and dislocation. On the one side were the clients who struggled to keep themselves afloat materially, socially, and emotionally. On the other side were welfare workers—women who were frustrated by work they found unfulfilling. It was difficult to watch these workers become increasingly powerless and lash out defensively at clients. I knew they were not malicious or mean-spirited women. Yet, when confronted with abysmal working conditions, they reacted in understandable (although not commendable) ways. At the everyday level, there was no one to blame. There were no clear-cut bad guys; there was just a lot of pain and suffering.

My struggle to cope with these experiences of loss pushed me beyond the world of welfare agencies in two directions. First, I became unwilling (and unable) to limit my study to welfare offices alone. Instead of conducting a "traditional" ethnography of a single site, I insisted on multilocality—that is, on taking the whole terrain of Hungarian welfare as a "field" of sites. This meant that I spent a considerable amount of time conducting the research; I worked in my field of sites for over eighteen months. It also meant that, as I did

the research, I continually maneuvered from agency to agency, from research institutes to welfare offices, and from welfare "experts" to welfare workers. Through this maneuvering, I first became aware of a disjunction between ideology and practice. I attended welfare conferences and heard celebratory speeches about Hungary's new autonomy, but then I watched as local government officials scrambled to adhere to International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank demands. I met Hungarian academics who celebrated the opening up of the "civil society," but then I read their research reports that propagated the welfare models of the international organizations funding them. And I attended training sessions where welfare workers were told that means-testing would rationalize their workloads, but then I returned to the pandemonium of welfare institutions. Thus, by remaining multiply situated, I connected different welfare sites to uncover the gap between ideology and practice.

Another disjunction between ideology and practice surfaced through my second movement beyond the current world of welfare agencies. Faced with the suffering of the present, like many clients, I turned to the past. Initially, I thought I could simply interview caseworkers about the work of their predecessors. Yet the accounts relayed in these interviews were rarely satisfying; they were more like ideological commentaries on state totalitarianism than concrete reflections on state practices. This prompted me to conduct my own historical excavation, which took me beyond "traditional" ethnography into ethnohistory. After gaining access to welfare agencies' archives, which consisted of millions of records stretching back to the inception of state socialism, I randomly sampled 1,203 case files. In interpreting these historical records, I ran into a methodological problem: how could I justify a comparison of the past, based on caseworkers' records, and the present, based on my own observations? I confronted the problem by supplementing my observations with an analysis of case files from the past and the present, which gave my data some consistency over time. I also approached these data in similar ways—eliciting caseworker and client accounts as expressed in their words and/or actions and as acted out in front of me and/or in written statements. It was through this mediation that I encountered yet another disjunction between ideology and practice: in actual practice, the state socialist welfare apparatus had given clients more room to maneuver than either the ideology of the past

or the present would lead us to believe. Once again, multilocality in time *and* space enabled me to unearth ruptures in past/present ideologies and practices.

Hence, my analysis of global discourses of need grew out of an ethnohistory of the field of Hungarian welfare. From this wider lens, I reveal how Hungarian social scientists were lured into an ideological flirtation with global policemen from the IMF and World Bank—a flirtation that eventually evolved into material appropriation and discursive co-optation. From this field perspective, I also expose how these discursive exchanges translated into institutional changes that altered the terms, the organization, and the connotations of welfare. Finally, I argue that the practical and discursive space surrounding clients has contracted, leaving them increasingly stigmatized and pathologized. In short, this paper debunks the euphoria associated with the political transition in Eastern Europe, and shows how rapid democratization limited clients' ability to articulate and defend their interests.

On March 12, 1995, after days of negotiations with the Hungarian government, four men in expensive suits boarded a plane from Budapest to Brussels. As they departed, Prime Minister Gyula Horn appeared on Hungarian television to announce the "Bokros csomag," a proposal to restructure the Hungarian welfare system by means-testing all cash benefits. The repercussions of the announcement were felt throughout Hungary; in stores, workplaces, and pubs all talk revolved around the plan. Yet nowhere were the effects felt as acutely as in local welfare offices, where female clients converged *en masse*. In one office, clients gathered around caseworkers' desks, demanding an explanation for the proposal. Caseworkers nervously tried to justify the plan, arguing that means tests were not so bad and were used all over the world. Unconvinced, clients protested that the plan would leave them more vulnerable and powerless. One woman even staged a sit-in at a caseworker's desk, ordering her to call Prime Minister Horn to revoke the proposal. In effect, these clients viewed the reform proposal as a curtailment of their social rights; they contested reform which they believed would undercut their social protection and well-being.

In sharp contrast to the angry protests launched by female clients, social scientific analyses of democratization in Eastern Europe tend to be infused with euphoria. Unlike the scholarship on the economic transition, which acknowledges the conflicted nature of privatization and debates the desired outcome in property forms, the scholarship on democratization is less cautious and more optimistic. There is little debate over the desired goal—the

transmutation of "the party/state into a liberal state" and of "the people into civil society."¹ Similarly, the virtues of democratization go uncontested by these scholars; they presume that the blossoming of political parties and movements will offer East Europeans more space for the articulation of interests and the formation of social identities.² To the extent that scholars of democratization exhibit caution, they worry that the political freedom unleashed in the region will meet an institutional vacuum, and thus become channeled into right-wing politics or nationalism.³ Should this scenario be avoided, and liberal political institutions implanted, then the virtues of democracy will prevail.

The optimism in the democratization literature is even more pronounced in the scholarship on the welfare state transition. Here one finds a consensus that the collapse of state socialism marks an end to "bureaucratic state collectivism."⁴ While welfare scholars recognize that economic liberalization underlies welfare restructuring and cuts in welfare funding in the post-1989 period, these shifts are obscured by their celebration of the "democratization" of the state. At the political level, these scholars see new space for political contests over whose social needs will be met by the state.⁵ At the policy level, they foresee new opportunities for citizens to become involved in the conceptualization and implementation of provisions to satisfy their needs.⁶ And at the institutional level, they project a flourishing of new social initiatives of self-help and philanthropy as well as the pluralization of welfare agencies.⁷ Scholars working on Hungary exhibit even more optimism—with one theorizing that the "bourgeois activity by citizens in the interstices of Kadarism" equipped Hungarians to become active subjects in the post-1989 welfare regime change.⁸ In short, these scholars assume that the expansion of political citizenship will breed new forms of social citizenship, and that the extension of political rights will lead to the enlargement of social rights in the region.

The opening up of "civil society" did have profound effects on Hungarian welfare, but they were not of the sort imagined by these optimistic East Europeanists. Once pried open, this social realm was quickly filled by a global discourse of need—a poverty discourse that embodied new assumptions about what the population needed and how to meet those needs.⁹ Ascendant worldwide, this poverty discourse surfaced in contexts as diverse as North America, Latin America, Scandinavia, and Western Europe. Yet this discourse of need was not a disembodied phenomenon; it did not float around the world, mysteriously rearranging welfare states as it journeyed. Rather, it was produced and transmitted by a collection of transnational policing agencies and actors. Armed with neoliberal economic theory, these men in expensive suits from the IMF and World Bank spanned the globe, counseling governments about "appropriate" levels of social spending. They arrived in Hungary with prepared modes of argumentation:

they claimed market economies could not work with "encompassing" entitlement criteria that subject the state to soft budget constraints; they deployed Hungary's large foreign debt to instill fear of an economic collapse; and they proposed "welfare with a human face" through poverty programs and means tests. These men had power. They bolstered their poverty discourse with loans and debt-restructuring plans. And they justified their blueprints by referring to "success" stories of countries they had visited in the East, West, North, and South. Their discourse of need was global in its appeals and effects; the homogenization of welfare systems was an openly stated goal.

While this discourse of need was a global force, it had to be indigenized and planted in local soil as it traveled. In Hungary, this implantation process involved both global and local actors. This paper analyzes the dynamics of this discursive transfer and its effects on Hungarian welfare clients. Although the poverty discourse that seeped into postsocialist Hungary was certainly part of the economic liberalization project to trim the welfare state, its implications were decisively political as well. This discourse was first translated into Hungarian through an interactive process that locked into local expert systems—Hungarian social scientists latched onto this discourse to serve their own ideological and material interests. Once localized, the poverty discourse had concrete institutional effects: It altered the conditions of welfare work and transformed caseworkers into eligibility workers; it narrowed the practical and discursive space available for female clients to protect their well-being—what I term "client maneuverability"; and it heightened clients' subjective sense of stigmatization. Hence, my analysis challenges the optimistic claims so often advanced by scholars of Eastern Europe, the self-described "transitologists"—revealing how welfare restructuring undermined the democratic project of increased social participation and led to a contraction, rather than an expansion, of the space in which Hungarian clients could defend their interests.¹⁰

THE POLITICS OF DISCURSIVE INDIGENIZATION

In order to grasp the full extent of this contraction in space, some historical context is needed. We must go back to the "state" of Hungarian welfare under late socialism—an era often overlooked in euphoric accounts of the transitologists. During the last two decades of state socialism, the Hungarian welfare regime developed into a strong system of social entitlements and guarantees. At the core of this system was a series of full employment and work-related provisions that linked Hungarians' access to socialized goods and services to participation in the labor force.¹¹ Until the mid-1980s, the Hungarian state guaranteed all Hungarians employment. In fact, it required Hungarians to participate in wage labor—those who did not avail

themselves of the right to work were deemed "publicly dangerous work avoiders" (*közveszélyes munkakerülés*) and subjected to fines and even imprisonment. On the more positive side, the national state subsidized most basic necessities and provided the population with numerous socialized goods and services. These included subsidized childcare, housing, education, and transportation. At the enterprise level, workers had access to additional benefits. While the availability and the quality of these goods and services varied by workplace, many workers were given subsidized eating facilities, childcare, housing, clothing, household goods, and vacation packages through their workplaces. The principle underlying all of these benefits was that Hungarians' social contributions as workers entitled them to material supports and a basic standard of living.

Moreover, beginning in the late 1960s, a subsystem of welfare arose on top of this work-based system to tie eligibility to motherhood. This maternalist welfare apparatus consisted of four key provisions. First, after 1968, Hungarian mothers were entitled to three years of paid maternity leave (*Gyermekgondozási Segély/Díj* or GYES/GYED).¹² Available to all women regardless of their class or occupation, the grant guaranteed mothers reemployment in their previous positions upon completion of leave.¹³ Second, Hungarian parents with at least two children received family allowances (*családi pótlék*) attached to their wages. While the amount of the allowance varied by family size, it constituted 10 to 15 percent of the average monthly wage. Third, Hungarian mothers had their own system of short-term leave provisions: once a month they could take a "housework holiday" from work, and six to eight times a year they could take paid child-care leave.¹⁴ Finally, beginning in 1974, mothers could apply for special childrearing assistance (*Rendszeres Nevelési Segély*). These were income-maintenance funds given to women as rewards for "good" mothering.¹⁵ None of these provisions were allocated according to material need.¹⁶ Rather, this welfare regime was based on encompassing entitlement criteria linked to recipients' social contributions as workers and/or mothers.

In effect, the state socialist welfare regime was just the kind of expansive welfare system that provokes anxiety in representatives of the IMF and World Bank. Yet the first attack on this system did not come from global policemen; it was launched locally. And this early attack did not fault the welfare regime for its bloated size; it criticized the regime for not going far enough to meet the population's needs. In the mid-1980s, years before the official "collapse" of state socialism, Hungarian social scientists began to critique the existing welfare system for failing to address material problems adequately. Many of them based their critique on studies that revealed a dual system of stratification emerging: at the top were new entrepreneurial classes with access to the second economy, while at the bottom were Hungarians without the skills or resources to secure second-economy

incomes.¹⁷ The latter group, constituting over 30 percent of the population, began to experience real pauperization. Other social scientists discovered inequalities among Hungarian families, as female-headed households and urban families slipped into poverty in the early 1980s.¹⁸ Still others unearthed poverty in their studies of Romani communities and in their work with poor-relief groups like SZETA.¹⁹ In summary, Hungarian sociologists revealed that different social groups were falling through cracks in the welfare system, with their social problems going unresolved. As a result, they called for the creation of targeted policies and institutions to meet the material needs of the impoverished.²⁰

Initially, this poverty work was an oppositional move, an attempt to use social democratic politics to critique actually existing state socialism. Hence, sociologists' reform proposals of the mid-1980s rarely called for the destruction of the entitlement system *per se*. Rather, they drew on West European and Scandinavian social democratic welfare models to argue for a system that coupled social entitlements with poor relief.²¹ Yet as these sociologists formulated their proposals, another discourse of need began to surround them, seeping into Hungary through its increasingly porous borders. This was the discourse of need articulated by the IMF and World Bank, both of which had stepped up their policing of the Hungarian economy to guide it toward liberal capitalism. These agencies entered Hungary much earlier than they did other countries in the region; they surfaced in Hungary in 1982, but did not reach Poland until 1986 and Czechoslovakia until 1990. Beginning in the late 1980s, these agencies issued a series of policy reports designed to convince Hungarians to develop more restrictive eligibility criteria. Using Western mythologies of how welfare states "should" operate, they pushed to introduce means tests and a discretionary welfare state. It was here that these global and local forces converged. This poverty discourse soon found its way into local sociologists' reform programs. Sociologists used this discourse as ideological ammunition—appropriating it to bolster their critique of socialist welfare and to argue for the creation of more discretionary social policies.²²

Just as Hungarian sociologists mobilized internationally recognized poverty discourses in their local struggles, the reverse was also true: international policing agencies used sociologists' poverty work to market their welfare agenda. In their research reports published in the late 1980s and early 1990s, these agencies based many of their reform proposals on the empirical work of Hungarian sociologists. On the one hand, they drew on sociological analyses of the bureaucratic privileges embedded in the socialist entitlement system to call for the creation of a more targeted system. Without clear means tests and income tests, they argued that the Hungarian welfare system would continue to operate according to informal bargaining

that put the poor at a disadvantage.²³ On the other hand, they pointed to studies suggesting that universal entitlement criteria were unduly advantageous to the wealthy, who could afford to pay "market price" for subsidized goods and services.²⁴ Here these agencies proposed "welfare with a human face"—arguing that replacing expansive entitlement criteria with more restrictive ones would protect the poor and vulnerable.²⁵ Hence, these agencies selectively appropriated local social scientific work. They ignored sociologists' commitment to social entitlements, but endorsed their ideas about poor relief. While their political goals may have been different, there was a (partial) ideological affinity between international agencies and Hungarian professionals.

What began as ideological flirtation between these global and local forces evolved into a full appropriation by the early 1990s. By this time, the global discourse of need had become fully absorbed by local expert systems. The nature of their relationship changed—it became less ideological and more material. Many of Hungary's most prominent welfare experts joined the payrolls of the IMF and World Bank. They received money to produce studies in line with these agencies' policy recommendations. For instance, the Hungarian Institute of Sociology conducted regular social policy studies for these agencies. Sociologists did micro-level investigations of the new patterns of social inequality in the transition period.²⁶ These studies showed that large sectors of the population were slipping into poverty and that universal welfare policies were ineffective in halting this slide. Thus, they made a case for means tests to alleviate new forms of poverty. Sociologists also conducted studies that made similar arguments at the macro-level.²⁷ Using comparative data on welfare expenditures, they argued that Hungarian expenditures were inconsistent with the country's level of economic development.²⁸ They attributed this to Hungary's inability to apply a consistent "principle of need" to welfare allocation.²⁹ They claimed that these rates were economically disastrous and "morally offensive" since they lacked "solidarity" with the poor, the weak, and the needy.³⁰ Needless to say, these were just the kind of arguments that the agencies funding this research yearned to hear.

In addition to funding local research, international agencies also subsidized the emergence of new journals and educational institutions to further ground this global discourse of need. Here a series of other international agencies and foundations entered the picture. What has become the most influential Hungarian social-policy journal, *Esély*, was established with the financial support of groups as diverse as the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, the European Union, and the Soros Foundation.³¹ This journal publishes the work of Hungarian and Western welfare scholars and operates out of Hungary's first degree-granting Department of Social Policy and Social

Work at the University of Budapest (ELTE). Founded in the late 1980s, this department relies so heavily on international support that the department chair holds the title of "European Union Chair of Social Policy."

Since the formation of this department, over a dozen smaller schools of social work have sprouted up in Hungary. They also receive funding from abroad. The curricula of these schools include required courses on means-testing and poverty regulation. Many students learn about these subjects from their visiting professors from Western Europe and the United States—faculty brought to Hungary by international agencies and foundations. Others learn about these topics from their U.S., French, and British textbooks—books translated into Hungarian with the funds of international agencies and foundations. A social worker once showed me the core textbook used in her school. Written by a UCLA professor, it devoted three chapters to the detection of welfare fraud, instructing social workers to search for expensive items such as Nike sneakers and CD collections while on home visits. "This is a problem I face every day in Hungary," the social worker ironically remarked. "Real helpful."

Perhaps the clearest example of the indigenization of this global discourse of need occurred in the conferences organized and funded by international agencies. In these conferences, Western experts were deployed to teach Hungarians the tools of the welfare state trade. Held every few months, these gatherings were organized in similar ways: opening speeches by Western experts on the theory and practice of the targeted welfare state, followed by workshops in which Hungarians learned to administer such programs. The information transmitted in these meetings always flowed in one direction, from Westerners to Hungarians. Sessions included workshops on the "newest" techniques of means-testing in the West and on the "new assistance philosophy" in Western Europe, as well as roundtables on the relationship between poverty and child abuse. Some sessions bordered on the absurd. In one a Dutch expert spent an hour discussing how a new video system installed in her office detected clients' deep-seated "ambivalence" about work. The Hungarian audience sat in awe, staring at this woman as if she were from Mars.

Such absurdity aside, it was through these kinds of appropriation that the global poverty discourse was localized in Hungary. By subsidizing Hungarian research, policy journals, schools of social work, and conferences, local welfare experts were saturated by this discourse of need. Yet they did not reject it. Far from it—most Hungarian social scientists and welfare experts swallowed the discourse. They had an interest in swallowing. It gave them access to resources that were rapidly evaporating in the Hungarian state and academy. It also enabled them to carve out places for themselves in the welfare apparatus, as welfare analysts and policymakers. They became the "experts," the ones with the knowledge to formulate,

adjust, and administer the new discretionary programs of the targeted welfare state. Hence, in the newly "democratized" state sphere, global experts met up with "needy" local experts—with the former using the latter to ground their poverty discourse, and the latter using the former to secure and promote their own professional ascendancy.

REGULATING POVERTY, LIMITING CLIENT OPTIONS

This poverty discourse did not remain confined to policy journals, schools of social work, research institutes, or conferences. Once appropriated, this discourse was translated back into Hungarian to reshape the welfare apparatus itself. Out of the policy studies came new recommendations for the introduction of discretionary welfare programs. So, by the late 1980s, local welfare agencies were distributing benefits according to means tests; by the mid-1990s, national-level welfare benefits had been income-tested. Out of the schools of social work came new cadres of welfare workers trained to target and treat poverty. Hence, by the late 1980s, the institutional welfare apparatus had expanded to include networks of poor-relief agencies and social workers. Out of the international conferences came new institutional models and casework approaches. Thus, postsocialist welfare institutions began to employ new surveillance techniques to monitor clients' lives and livelihoods.

It was, of course, through this reworking of the Hungarian welfare apparatus that this poverty discourse was transmitted to clients. Within welfare institutions, female clients discovered that their needs would be assessed in strictly material terms. Clients learned this through the reorganization of casework and social work. They experienced it through the new means tests administered by welfare offices. They encountered it through the new techniques designed to survey their material lives—home visitors with assistance forms that included questions about the size of their flats, the value of their furniture, and their access to electronics, automobiles, and telephones. Together, these welfare practices grounded the poverty discourse in female clients' everyday lives. Their effects on clients' lives were far from the optimistic projections of East European welfare scholars. While providing new possibilities for "identity formation" and "interest articulation," these practices reduced the resources available to clients.

To understand the extent of this reduction in resources, we must once again return to the state socialist welfare system—this time from the perspective of its female clients. This welfare regime was distinctive not only because of the size of its policy apparatus, but also because it acknowledged women's multiple needs. By linking eligibility to clients' social contributions, this regime established a fairly broad terrain upon which clients could seek state assistance. This had implications for the discursive and insti-

tutional resources at their disposal. Discursively, this welfare regime offered an array of rhetorical possibilities for claims-making. It allowed clients to couch appeals for state support in several idioms; they could speak of their needs as workers, mothers, and/or family members. As workers, women could claim a series of benefits through their workplaces, such as subsidized housing, health care, vacation packages, and eating facilities. As mothers, women could obtain state support for their childrearing. They could demand more time, in the form of maternity and child-care leave, and they could claim special financial support, in the form of childrearing assistance. As family members, women could appeal for state support to fulfill their familial responsibilities—family allowances to offset the costs of childrearing; marital allowances to enable married couples to set up house; and elderly assistance to permit them to care for sick and aging parents. In the state socialist welfare system, female clients could frame assistance claims around a variety of social positions and needs.

Moreover, in this past regime, clients could make discursive connections among their different needs. At work, women often emphasized their responsibilities as mothers and family members. In my archival research, I discovered that women regularly drew on their family demands to improve their work lives. Of those who cited their living conditions at work, 39 percent did so to secure more flexible work schedules, 31 percent to upgrade their working conditions, and 30 percent to increase their access to socialized goods and services. "I have a husband and two sons, and more mouths to feed and more dirt to clean," a female factory worker wrote to a union official in 1966 in order to obtain a new oven and vacuum cleaner from her workplace.³² Similarly, when appealing to the main welfare office of the period, the Gyámhatóság, female clients frequently drew on their positions as workers. They used their positions as workers to coax caseworkers to intervene in their family lives. "I am a diligent seamstress who suffers pain at the hands of my husband," one woman wrote to the Gyámhatóság in 1965. "I ask for nothing more than an end to this pain."³³ Thus, by maneuvering among their different social roles, clients manipulated the prevailing "needs talk" to stake claims to a multiplicity of state resources and supports.

Accompanying these discursive resources was a plethora of practical tools clients could utilize in their everyday lives. These institutional resources were not simply financial in nature. Although this past regime did accord female clients material support, it also gave them the tools to become socially integrated. On the one hand, clients regularly mobilized Gyámhatóság caseworkers to resolve work problems—approximately 58 percent of my sample of state socialist case files involved clients who sought assistance to enter the labor force. Many of them mobilized caseworkers to locate and gain employment. They also used caseworkers to improve their work relations with colleagues and supervisors. On the other hand, clients

appropriated caseworkers to help them integrate their nuclear and extended families—roughly 72 percent of my sample of case files involved such familial work. Clients who felt that their families were falling apart often turned to caseworkers. Women who had been abandoned by their spouses or lovers had caseworkers track down these men—convincing caseworkers to use their control over paternity investigations, child custody, and child support to undermine men's ability to shirk their domestic responsibilities. They also drew on welfare workers to help repair severed ties with extended kin—using caseworkers to help them make contact with larger kinship networks or to work out issues they had with adult siblings and parents. As one woman wrote in a thank-you note to a state counselor in 1977: "I know that my ambivalence toward my daughter comes from my mother's anger toward me. I thank you for your help uncovering this and resolving and improving this relation."³⁴

In addition to receiving this integrative assistance, female clients used state socialist welfare offices to help alter the nature of their familial relations. They mobilized caseworkers to help make men better spouses and parents. Gyámhatóság caseworkers were willing to scold unruly husbands or irresponsible fathers. "He calls me a whore in front of the little ones," a woman confided to her caseworker in 1975. "They have no respect for me as a result."³⁵ On subsequent visits, the caseworker reprimanded the man for his "inappropriate" language. In another 1978 case, a woman informed her caseworker that she had to apply for assistance because her husband "refused to work hard."³⁶ On later visits, the caseworker lectured him about his "laziness" and pressured him to work more. Caseworkers were also used as bargaining chips in clients' domestic battles. They often gave clients copies of their home visit reports to mobilize as weapons. "Look what the tanács said about us," one woman exclaimed to her husband in 1980 in order to convince him to stop drinking.³⁷ And caseworkers regularly threatened to withdraw clients' support or to institutionalize their children as a way of forcing men to improve their behavior. For example, in 1969 a female client made a deal with her caseworker—the caseworker temporarily institutionalized her son to prove to her husband that his abusive behavior had "consequences."³⁸ In a 1975 case, a woman had a state psychologist require that she tutor her sons daily in order to equalize the domestic division of labor. As the counselor recounted after a home visit: "I arrived at the home at 6:30. The mother was in the back working with the boys while the father was heating up the food. When I asked about it, she smiled and said he did this since our therapy started."³⁹

Thus, by recognizing women's social contributions and responding to a variety of needs claims, the socialist welfare regime gave female clients a considerable amount of room to maneuver; it allowed them to articulate and defend their different interests. It was precisely this practical and dis-

cursive space that narrowed with the entrance of a global discourse of poverty regulation. First, at the practical level, this discourse limited the number of institutional resources at clients' disposal. In contemporary Hungary, all clients' problems are interpreted as material issues. With the introduction of means tests in the 1980s, caseworkers began to see their clients strictly through the lens of the material. Caseworkers used these tests to identify their clientele; only those women who could demonstrate material need became clients. The reversal has been striking. In the two districts covered by my research, 92 percent of female clients in the state socialist period were thought to have problems related to their work and/or family lives. In contemporary Hungary, 78 percent of these offices' clients are defined as strictly "materially" needy.

This dramatic shift in welfare workers' conception of need has shaped the kind of assistance provided to clients. Caseworkers now deal with clients in one of two ways. In most cases, they just distribute financial assistance. They allocate poor relief to clients and assume it will solve their problems. Since the mid-1980s, the overall number of Hungarians receiving occasional poor relief has increased by 2,000 percent; the number of recipients of ongoing poor relief has risen by 1,000 percent.⁴⁰ Similar increases occurred in the two Budapest districts of my research: the proportion of clients receiving childrearing assistance soared from 8 percent in 1985 to 77 percent in 1992. These increases are deceiving if interpreted without an appreciation for the broader changes in state redistribution. Poor-relief programs provided recipients minimal amounts of money: in 1995, they provided clients between 1,500 and 3,500 forints (\$20–40) from three to six times a year. Moreover, such boosts to clients' incomes paled in comparison to the material losses they suffered in the last decade—with the end of price subsidies for basic necessities and housing, state-financed childcare, employment guarantees, and work-based benefits, the socialist safety net has largely evaporated. Even those Hungarians who were able to pool all of the available state supports remained unable to bring their families above the subsistence level.⁴¹ This may explain why, in 1995, 30 to 35 percent of the population lived below the minimum subsistence level, and an additional 20 percent hovered around it.⁴² Hence, while caseworkers did distribute more poor relief, these funds were nowhere near sufficient to counter the financial losses confronting clients.

In addition to distributing poor relief, caseworkers placed large numbers of their clients' children in state care. Institutionalization was the primary way that caseworkers dealt with clients they believed to have severe material problems. Among the 517 cases I reviewed from the period, I found poverty to be the main justification used to remove children from their homes. In these cases, welfare workers offered elaborate accounts of these clients' material conditions and their inability to provide basic necessities for their

children. They used detailed data on the size and value of clients' flats to justify institutionalization—41 percent of the institutionalization cases in my sample cited "inappropriate housing" as the sole reason for removing children from their homes. "Did you see how they lived?" a caseworker once exclaimed to me after a home visit. "Six people in one room. Of course I will pull the kids. How could they imagine otherwise?" Caseworkers used income data in similar ways. Approximately 39 percent of the institutionalization cases I reviewed cited "low wages" as a justification for placing children in state care. As a caseworker put it in a 1990 case: "With their low wages, it is impossible to raise three children. They lie about their income or they live in extreme poverty. Either way, the children must go."⁴³ Data collected by welfare offices confirm these findings: in 1984, 29 percent of the children placed in state care were said to be materially (*anyagilag*) endangered; by 1992 the number had increased to 87 percent.

This focus on targeting and treating poverty meant that a whole range of issues fell outside the state's domain. Many kinds of state assistance ceased to be available to clients—they were no longer able to use caseworkers to foster their social integration or to reshape their domestic relations. Rather, caseworkers were skilled at reducing all of their clients' problems to material issues. For instance, they never addressed the domestic abuse that so many clients were subjected to.⁴⁴ In my archival and ethnographic research, I determined that roughly 32 percent of current welfare cases involved some sort of domestic violence—abuse that was consistently ignored by welfare workers. Instead, caseworkers turned this violence into a material problem. "Don't talk about the fights with your husband," a social worker once advised a public assistance applicant. "Just tell them that your husband lost his job and you have no heat. That's the real problem." A good example of this was the case of Mrs. Lakatos, a Romani woman who came to a Family Support Center in 1994 ostensibly for help paying an overdue utility bill. As her meeting with the social worker progressed, she began to remove her clothing to show us the scars and burns covering her body. By the end of the meeting, she had broken down in tears—admitting that her husband beat her and begging for help. What kind of help did she receive? A few hundred forints for medicine to treat her wounds and a referral to a local soup kitchen.

Caseworkers also collapsed their clients' childrearing problems into material issues. Whereas in the state socialist period "child protection" encompassed a wide range of domestic arrangements, by the late 1980s it had been defined in strictly material terms. A caseworker who began work in the early 1980s defined it in this way in an interview: "Child welfare is saving children from poverty and the dangers of it. What else could it mean? It is simple. Children are healthy and secure when they have food, a home, and clothing."⁴⁵ In practice, this meant that caseworkers simply refused to

deal with clients whose childrearing problems were not accompanied by poverty. "I am sorry, I cannot help you," a caseworker once told a woman seeking help on behalf of her delinquent son. "You have the resources to deal with the problem, but try a probation officer." Those clients with both childrearing concerns and material problems had the former reduced to the latter. Caseworkers attributed all sorts of childrearing difficulties to material deprivation, thus ignoring the other issues that impinged on mothers' lives. As a caseworker analyzed in 1986: "The mother is angry and abusive with her son because since his birth, the family slid into poverty."⁴⁶ Caseworkers frequently linked juvenile delinquency, rebellion, and poor school performance to low family income. In one 1991 case, a welfare worker even attributed a teenage girl's sexual promiscuity to her family's poor material circumstances. As she wrote in her case notes: "Five people live in one room. There is no bathroom in the flat so they use the collective one in the building. . . . The girl escapes this with her irresponsible and disorderly behavior with older boys."⁴⁷

Clients with severe alcohol problems received similar treatment. It was not uncommon for such clients to come staggering into these offices. Most of them were looking for someone to talk to. Yet they rarely found sympathetic listeners. As a caseworker told me when I asked her how she dealt with such clients: "Well, we never give them money. You know where it will go. We have special food packages for them, so they get the nutrients they need." Other clients received lectures on the connection between alcoholism and poverty. "How many forints do you spend on pálinka?" a social worker quizzed one such client.⁴⁸ "Imagine, if you had that money, you would not be here." Similar kinds of "assistance" awaited clients with psychological problems or emotional troubles. All of these clients were collapsed into one category, the materially needy. And all of them were thought to be in need of one kind of assistance, poor-relief.

As a result, in this welfare system it was almost impossible for clients to acquire state resources to resolve nonmaterial issues. I observed numerous clients become dismayed as they told stories of domestic turmoil to the blank, uninterested faces of caseworkers. All caseworkers had a few clients whom they called "chronically long-winded" due to their continual attempts to draw caseworkers into their domestic lives. They avoided these clients like the plague. In one office, two caseworkers developed a "rescue system" to avoid dealing with such clients. Whenever one of them got stuck with a long-winder, she would kick the adjacent wall—prompting the other caseworker to come over with an "emergency" to end the meeting. As one of them remarked after a successful rescue mission, "You'd think she [the client] would learn. I don't want to hear about every fight with her husband. What does she think I can do?" Other caseworkers were less subtle in their refusal to engage in clients' domestic lives. One home visit comes to mind. When

we arrived at Mrs. Janos's flat, she was cleaning and her husband was sleeping. As the caseworker made her usual calculations, the client whispered stories of the man's heavy drinking and violence. When the caseworker interrupted her to ask if she had a car, the woman began yelling about how no one cared and the Gyámhatóság was no good. The caseworker responded that she was assessing her eligibility for childrearing support, not the "quality" of her marriage. As we left, the woman returned to her sweeping with a defeated look on her face. For Hungarian women like these, the materialization of need was a constraint that limited their room to maneuver.

In addition to reducing clients' practical maneuverability, the materialization of need has also narrowed the discursive space within which clients can advance their own definitions of need. By collapsing clients' identities into one identity, all "needs talk" has been confined to the material. Acceptable modes of argumentation have been limited to poverty claims. This welfare regime hears only the appeals of certain classes of women. And it responds only to appeals couched in terms of poverty. Appeals not framed in material terms fall on deaf ears. "Did you hear me," one Romani woman exclaimed as her caseworker measured the size of her flat. "I said that he goes to those prostitutes on Rákóczi square. This is dangerous for the little one, with all the diseases. Are you writing this down?"⁴⁹ The caseworker rolled her eyes and pretended to write something down. Other caseworkers were even less polite. For instance, many clients brought their children to welfare offices and staked claims to state assistance on their behalf. Caseworkers regularly mocked these clients. One woman who had her son sing and dance for caseworkers to bolster her request to exchange her flat was accused of using her child as a "circus animal." Her request was rejected and she became known as the "circus woman."

As I have noted, the new discursive terrain also became less malleable. Just as clients found it impossible to squeeze practical resources out of these agencies, they were unable to expand the discursive space to speak of a wider range of needs. Female clients who couched appeals in maternal terms were silenced. Caseworkers simply did not hear their confessions of maternal isolation or exhaustion. Domestic violence loomed large in these offices, but was never addressed. Clients' complaints about unruly husbands resounded throughout this welfare apparatus, but were never discussed. And clients who voiced needs they had as women were treated as if they spoke a foreign language. A 1995 home visit to a woman referred to the Gyámhatóság by her son's teacher is illustrative of this silencing. When we reached her flat, located in an elite area of Budapest, the client had us sit down for coffee. She then recounted story after story: how her husband left her for a secretary; how she lost her job at the Ministry of Culture due to her communist background; and how her family banished her because they could not deal with her "nervousness." Her words literally floated by

the caseworker, who sat drinking her coffee and calculating the value of the client's expensive furnishings. After discovering how large her disability pension was, the caseworker abruptly got up, walked out of the flat, and dropped the case. On the way back to the office, she turned to me and asked, "What was that woman about? Please, I have clients who can't even feed their kids. What did she want from me?"

As this incident reveals, an impenetrable discursive barrier was erected between clients and caseworkers. On one side of this barrier were female clients, socialized in the state socialist welfare regime, who expected caseworkers to assist them both materially and socially. As their appeals for broad social protection remained unrecognized, their room to maneuver contracted; as their nonmaterial pleas went unacknowledged, they became disgruntled. On the other side were caseworkers, trained in new schools of social work and armed with means tests and surveillance techniques. As their material handouts were met with requests for further aid, they became frustrated; as their poor-relief and soup-kitchen referrals led to demands for additional social intervention, they became annoyed. In effect, the materialization of need enlarged the social distance separating caseworkers and clients. Out of this yawning chasm emerged mythologies about the stigmas and pathologies of the "new" Hungarian welfare client.

MATERIALIZED NEEDS, STIGMATIZED WELFARE CLIENTS

This pattern of interaction between caseworkers and female clients repeated itself over and over again, surfacing in all of the welfare offices I studied. The situation was frustrating for everyone—clients left the office unsatisfied with their forint handouts, while caseworkers remained on to face the next predictably ungrateful client. These interactions took on an assembly-line quality and left caseworkers feeling like alienated, piece-rate workers. As caseworkers sat in their collective offices, processing case after case, they expressed an extreme dislike for their work. They had good reasons to be disgruntled: Their working conditions had changed in ways that transformed them into eligibility workers; the new office division of labor undermined their control over cases and clients; and the limited resources at their disposal made them feel powerless, given the enormity of the problems they confronted.⁵⁰ Caseworkers' struggles to make sense of their lot were made more difficult by their newness to the job. The overall censoring of the past left them without a comparative perspective on their welfare practices and working conditions.

For many welfare workers, these feelings of frustration were exacerbated by the fact that the welfare reforms being enacted around them had negative effects on their lives outside of work. Most welfare workers were lower-middle-class women who lived just above the subsistence level. Thus, while

they experienced a decline in their standard of living, they remained ineligible for the new poverty programs they oversaw. In effect, the poverty tests they administered disadvantaged women just like themselves. Welfare workers frequently referred to this. As they distributed childrearing assistance and household maintenance funds, caseworkers often noted that they could use some extra money to raise their kids or to renovate their flats. Such comparisons became even more prevalent in the mid-1990s after the "Bokros reforms" income-tested the family-allowance and maternity-leave programs—thus cutting many welfare workers from these benefits and heightening their sense of economic insecurity. Once implicitly connected through universal provisions, there were no longer any policies joining caseworkers and clients; there were no programs that both groups of women shared. One caseworker put this best when she explained the Bokros reforms to me in an interview: "I don't know what the clients complain about; with their income they will get support. Mothers like me will be harmed. If I do not have my baby in the next year, I will be without support, not *them*."⁵¹

In response, most caseworkers displaced their sense of powerlessness onto their clientele. Their frustration evolved into full-scale hostility and anger toward clients. This surfaced in numerous ways. Most common were caseworkers who read new meanings into their clients' appeals for assistance. They began to interpret such appeals for evidence of individual pathology and defect. These interpretations soon gave rise to the icon of the "welfare cheat" and a new language to describe her: she is a lazy, uncultured, simple, and disorderly woman. She is a woman who cannot be trusted. She is a woman capable of forging income documents or hiding electronics in closets. All of these welfare agencies had institutional archives of stories to support this image: home visitors who found costly household goods hidden under beds or in neighboring flats; caseworkers who discovered fake work records or unreported income; and clients who came to the office covered with expensive jewelry. Caseworkers then used these stories to explain client poverty. "Clients are different today," one older caseworker revealed in an interview. "They lie, cheat, and steal. Even the Hungarians do this now. Terrible."⁵² Once reserved for Romani clients, the myth of the "welfare cheat" now applied to all clients. Whatever their ethnicity, all clients were thought to be potentially pathological and capable of extreme acts of deception.

Quite often, this image of the "welfare cheat" was coupled with mythologies about clients' aggressive and "out of control" behavior. Most caseworkers believed their clients were capable of outrageous acts of violence and thus needed to be contained physically. All of the welfare institutions I studied employed "security guards." In some agencies these guards were male social workers trained to "keep order"; in other offices they were actual

policemen who wielded weapons. When I asked about the need for these guards, welfare workers half-jokingly told me that these men "herded" and "tamed" their clientele. Actually, this was exactly what these men did. They stood outside the agency doors, blocking the entrance and deciding whom to let in. They escorted clients into the office and routinely watched over their meetings with welfare workers. To intimidate potentially aggressive clients, these men walked through the office and asked, "Is everyone okay here?" or "Does everyone feel safe?" When clients got visibly angry, these men forcibly removed them from the office. In general, clients were perceived to have become "out of control," to be in need of continual surveillance. As a female client once screamed as she was physically removed from the Gyámhatóság: "She has taken my children away, why do I need to be taken away too? You would also be upset, am I not allowed to be angry?"

Caseworkers' defensive attacks on their clients frequently descended beyond their presumed personality traits to their physical characteristics. The sight, the smell, and the feel of clients' bodies were common topics of conversation among caseworkers. Many caseworkers used animal metaphors to describe their clients, referring to them as cattle and pigs. Caseworkers called those days when assistance applications were due "slaughterhouse days" because of the large number of clients who gathered outside Gyámhatóság offices to submit applications. Even more demeaning were the jokes that caseworkers told about their clients' appearances. They regularly made fun of deformities in their clients' bodies. "Was that person human? Man, woman, or beast?" a caseworker once joked about a client. They came up with degrading names for clients. There was the "toothless one," a woman whose front teeth had been knocked out by her husband and who could not afford replacements.⁵³ There was the "legless one," a woman who had lost part of her left leg in a "domestic accident" and who could not pay the medical costs to repair it.⁵⁴ There was even the "voiceless one," an elderly man who had throat cancer and spoke through a device attached to his mouth.⁵⁵ In a 1989 case, a particularly poetic caseworker used the metaphor of a "battlefield" to describe a client's body: "She works on Rákóczi Square. [This is] appropriate. Bruises all over, like a war. . . . Tattoos on the skin, like mines . . . and the mouth of a soldier."⁵⁶

Moreover, caseworkers spoke incessantly about the "smell" of their clients. They often berated clients for not washing regularly. "I used to wash before work," a caseworker once remarked to me. "Then I realized that there is no use, so now I clean myself as soon as I return from work." Another caseworker told the office a "funny" story about how her two sons once remarked that she "smelt like a zoo" when she arrived home from work. While her story provoked hysterical laughter among her colleagues, it prompted the clients in the room to drop their heads in embarrassment. Then there was the caseworker with whom I rode the metro to work each

day. Whenever we exited the metro station, located over three blocks from the office, she began talking about how she could already smell her workplace. To deal with this, she brought air freshener to the office. She kept it by the door and continually sprayed it around to rid the office of the "sickening smell" of poverty.

Given their disgust with the sight and smell of their clients, welfare workers avoided all contact with clients' bodies. In effect, clients had become "untouchables"—contaminated bodies not to be felt. This may have been another reason for the security guards: These men handled the contaminated. When situations arose that necessitated physical contact with clients, caseworkers called in the guards to do the dirty work. On one occasion an elderly client lost her balance and fell to the floor of one Gyámhatóság office. Unable to get up, she was forced to lie on the floor until a caseworker called a guard to help her up. While the caseworker never discussed the incident, it was clear that she feared physical contact with the client. Another caseworker articulated this fear explicitly when she once saw me touch a client. The client's son had been institutionalized, and she came to beg for his return. After a caseworker rejected her appeal, the woman wandered the office, eventually ending up at my desk. As she sat crying, I touched her hand in an attempt to comfort her. The caseworker looked on, mortified. I was immediately reprimanded: "Never touch a client. Wash your hands immediately because you never know what you can get from them."

As horrific as these mythologies about clients' deficiencies and pathologies sound, it is important to recognize the source of caseworkers' defensive attacks. Caseworkers were themselves cogs in the system. To a large extent, their attitudes reflected changes in their working conditions—changes that, in effect, sliced clients into small pieces and turned caseworkers into piece-rate, eligibility workers. Caseworkers played no role in the importation process through which this larger poverty discourse seeped into Hungary. Others spearheaded this process: global policemen and local social scientists who appropriated and co-opted each other to serve their own interests. Thus, caseworkers were simply the messengers of a reductionist welfare model; they were the bearers of a stigmatizing message they had little input in formulating.

While caseworkers may have been merely the conduits of a prepared message, clients viewed them as the source of the new mythologies looming over them. They perceived caseworkers as heightening their sense of stigmatization; they saw caseworkers' new welfare practices as threatening and pathologizing. Thus, they reacted to the message through the messenger. In doing so, clients sent their own powerful messages about the discursive and practical losses they are currently suffering. Their reactions took a variety of forms. Most often they exhibited embarrassment when interacting with caseworkers. Clients frequently came into welfare offices with their heads

down, whispering as they listed the different kinds of poor relief they received. Many clients told me that they dreaded coming to these offices and felt "ashamed" when they begged for state assistance. They complained about the degradation associated with caseworkers' investigations into their material lives, frequently calling caseworkers uncaring, brutal, and cold. As a female client once said to a friend as they left the Gyámhatóság, "I always feel dirty here. They are so despising."

For others, this embarrassment evolved into anger and rage. These clients engaged in shouting matches with their caseworkers, refusing to accept their new rules. "Why do you need evidence of my mother's pension?" one young woman snapped at a caseworker. "Isn't it enough that I am a single mother with two kids?" These clients challenged the narrow focus on the material and forced caseworkers to explain why their other needs no longer mattered. In these angry exchanges, clients asked penetrating questions. Why was it important if they had televisions or VCRs? And why was it not important if they felt disconnected and isolated? Why was it relevant if they knew how to economize or budget? And why was it not relevant if their husbands beat them or abandoned them for their secretaries? Few clients ever got answers to such questions. The materially "needy" ones got a little money and were shuffled out of the office, while the others were just shuffled out.

Finally, for some clients this degradation was too much to handle. As a result, they broke off contact with these agencies, despite serious personal and material problems. Vilma was one such client. I met Vilma in 1993 when she came to her local Family Support Center because her husband had lost his job. Initially, Vilma made no mention of the bruises and scars that covered her face. She simply came in every Friday to pick up food coupons and packages. With time, Vilma became more talkative, describing the beatings inflicted on her by her husband. Just as she began to open up, the Center ran out of welfare benefits. Her social worker referred Vilma to the Gyámhatóság and instructed her to apply for poor relief. While on a home visit to assess her eligibility for such funds, the caseworker discovered a problem: Vilma's husband owned some expensive musical instruments that put their disposable income over the assistance cut-off level. If she did not sell the instruments, her family would be denied aid. This prompted a series of fights between Vilma and her husband—fights that he apparently won, since she was given only temporary aid for which she had to reapply every two months.

On subsequent visits, Vilma's bruises became more visible, as did the signs of severe alcohol abuse. No one ever mentioned these symptoms. When Vilma lost her job in 1994, rumors began to circulate that she had turned to prostitution. Her caseworker then confronted her, threatening to withdraw her assistance if she did not stop her "illegal activities." Bombarded by accusations, Vilma sat with her head down and adamantly denied

the charges. Clearly deflated, she was being "hit" from all sides. I saw Vilma last in early 1995. Her body was emaciated, bruised, and battered. She had come to the office to place her kids in an institution for neglected children. As she filled out the necessary paperwork, she turned to me and nervously remarked, "I had no choice. At least I won't have to come here and see them [the caseworkers] anymore."

GLOBAL WELFARE SHIFTS AND THE MATERIALIZATION OF NEED

The IMF and the World Bank promised Hungarians "welfare with a human face." Hungarian sociologists promised them a welfare system that was more sensitive to the needs of the vulnerable and deprived. Democratization scholars promised them new possibilities for "identity formation" and "interest articulation." What clients like Vilma got instead was a poverty discourse that narrowed their room to maneuver. They faced a discourse of welfare that constituted them solely as needy, materially deprived individuals. They confronted a newly reformed welfare apparatus that accorded them few practical or discursive resources. And they felt stigmatized and pathologized in new ways. Rather than having more opportunities to secure their own well-being, these Hungarian clients experienced a contraction in the space they had to protect themselves in their everyday lives.

The poverty discourse underlying these welfare shifts is not unique to Hungary. This same discourse has been at work across the globe, restructuring welfare systems in contexts as diverse as North America, Western Europe, and the South Pacific. With these shifts, the diversity in welfare models characteristic of the postwar era has given way to a convergence. Once organized to meet the collective needs of workers, mothers, and/or families, these welfare states have become more class-based. Gone are the days when many welfare states operated with expansive conceptions of need that guaranteed their citizens everything from employment to universal childrearing supports to comprehensive family benefits. As entitlement systems are scaled back and means-tested, definitions of need have been narrowed and individualized. And as need-definitions have been individualized, welfare states have become focused on the bureaucratic regulation of poverty and the "needy." Moreover, the vehicles for these structural and discursive shifts were often international agencies. The IMF and World Bank did not restrict their policing activity to the Second and Third Worlds. They were also active participants in negotiations over European integration, especially in the debates over social expenditures. And they always brought their welfare blueprints home with them as they restructured debts and transformed welfare systems throughout the West.

While this poverty discourse has become globally hegemonic, it must still be indigenized in specific locales. In this regard, Hungary and other post-communist societies were in a somewhat unique position. With the ascen-

dancy of the new poverty discourse, countries like Hungary were characterized by special historical conditions that made their soil particularly ripe for planting. Unprotected by the historic shield of the party/state, they were wide open for this discourse of need to flood in through the newly-opened sphere of civil society. Itself in transition, the Hungarian state was unable to serve as a filter or a buffer for these global forces. These conditions also made local experts particularly "needy" and more inclined to participate in this discursive indigenization. With resources drying up in the local state and academy, Hungarian sociologists were readily co-opted by these global forces. They were lured into an ideological flirtation, unable to resist the political and material resources offered by the international policemen. Before long, they had embraced this discourse and translated it into Hungarian. Instead of freeing Hungarians to articulate new identities and interests, rapid democratization allowed global forces and local actors to institute new surveillance techniques and disciplinary welfare practices.

In this way, the welfare shifts experienced in postcommunist Hungary may be a sign of what is to come on a more global scale. Hungary's vulnerability to global inundation, combined with its censoring of the past and rejection of universalism as a standard for welfare, simply hastened processes underway elsewhere. As a potential vanguard of the new liberal welfare regime, Hungary may provide an example of what this global discourse of need breeds as it runs its course. In addition to pointing to the economic losses that accompany neoliberal welfare restructuring, the Hungarian case warns of the political repercussions of such reform: It reveals the practical and discursive limitations of this liberal welfare model and the pathologization and stigmatization unleashed by overly materialized conceptions of need.

NOTES

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1. Christopher Bryant and Edmund Mokrzycki, "Introduction: Theorizing the Changes in East-Central Europe."

2. See Zygmunt Bauman, "After the Patronage State: A Model in Search of Class-Interests"; and Gail Kligman, "Reclaiming the Public: Reflections on Creating Civil Society in Romania."

3. See Andrew Arato, "Revolution and Restoration: On the Origins of Right-Wing Radical Ideology in Hungary"; and Arista Maria Cirtautas, "In Pursuit of the

Democratic Interest: The Institutionalization of Parties and Interests in Eastern Europe."

4. Robert Deacon, "Social Policy, Social Justice and Citizenship in Eastern Europe," p. 7; János Kornai, "Paying the Bill for Goulash Communism: Hungarian Development and Macro Stabilization in a Political-Economy Perspective."

5. Zsuzsa Ferge, "Recent Trends in Social Policy in Hungary"; Jan Adam, "Social Contract"; Claus Offe, "The Politics of Social Policy in East European Transitions: Antecedents, Agents, and Agenda of Reform."

6. Deacon, "Social Policy, Social Justice and Citizenship in Eastern Europe"; Péter Gedeon, "Hungary: Social Policy in Transition."

7. See Iván Szelényi and Robert Manchin, "Social Policy under State Socialism: Market Redistribution and Social Inequalities in East European Socialist Societies"; Deacon, "Social Policy, Social Justice and Citizenship in Eastern Europe"; and Gábor Hegyesi, "A Szociális Munka."

8. Júlia Szalai, "Social Participation in Hungary in the Context of Restructuring and Liberalization."

9. Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices*.

10. The label "transitologists" is frequently used by scholars of Eastern Europe to denote their expertise in the study of political, economic, and social transition in the region.

11. Zsuzsa Ferge, *A Society in the Making: Hungarian Social and Societal Policy, 1945-1975*.

12. See Központi Statisztikai Hivatal (KSH), *A Gyermekegondozási Segély Igénybevétele és Hatásai*; *A Gyermekegondozási Díj Igénybevétele és Hatásai*.

13. See Júlia Szalai, "Some Aspects of the Changing Situation of Women in Hungary."

14. See István Kollar, *The Development of Social Insurance in Hungary over Three Decades*.

15. See Ágota Horváth, "Egy Segély Anatómiája"; and Lynne Haney, "But We Are Still Mothers: Gender and the Construction of Need in Postsocialist Hungary."

16. Until the mid-1980s, they were not even tied to the mother's income—all mothers received the same flat-rate grant. And all households received the same amount in family allowances.

17. Szelényi and Manchin, "Social Policy under State Socialism."

18. See Zsuzsa Ferge, *Szociálpolitika Ma és Holnap*; and Szalai, "Some Aspects of the Changing Situation of Women in Hungary."

19. SZETA was a nongovernmental charity organization established and run by oppositional social scientists and activists in the 1980s. In addition to distributing poor-relief to the impoverished, SZETA exerted political pressure on local-level government officials and offered legal aid to the poor.

20. See Zsuzsa Ferge, *Javaslat a Szociálpolitikai Rendszer Módosítására*; and Géza Gosztonyi, "Hatóság + Szolgálat."

21. Zsuzsa Ferge, *Szociálpolitika Ma és Holnap*.

22. Zsuzsa Ferge and Júlia Szalai, *Fordulat és Reform*.

23. See World Bank, *Hungarian Health Services: Issues and Options for Reform; Housing Policy Reform in Hungary*.

24. See World Bank, *Hungary: The Transition to a Market Economy: Critical Human Resources Issues*; and IMF, *Social Security in Hungary*.

25. See World Bank, *Hungary: The Transition to a Market Economy; Hungary: Reform of Social Policy and Expenditures*.

26. See Júlia Szalai, "Poverty in Hungary During the Period of Economic Crisis"; "Urban Poverty and Social Policy in the Context of Adjustment: The Case of Hungary"; and Júlia Szalai and Mária Neményi, *Hungary in the 1980s: A Historic Review of Social Policy and Urban Level Interventions*.

27. See István Tóth, "A Jóléti Rendszer az Átmeneti Időszakban"; Rudolf Andorka and István Tóth, "A Jóléti Rendszer Jellemzői és Reformjának Lehetőségei."

28. Tóth, "A Jóléti Rendszer az Átmeneti Időszakban."

29. János Kornai, "Lasting Growth as the Top Priority," p. 20.

30. Tóth, "A Jóléti Rendszer az Átmeneti Időszakban"; Gedeon, "Hungary: Social Policy in Transition."

31. The name of this journal, "Chance" or "Prospect," is itself quite indicative.

32. Enterprise archive, Csepel Vás és Fémművek 21-3310: 21. All translations of records and case files are the author's.

33. Gyámhatóság case file #01311-102-2.

34. Nevelési Tanácsado case file #0137788908-189: 125.

35. Gyámhatóság case file #081129: 120.

36. Gyámhatóság case file #013221: 152.

37. The "tanács" was the Hungarian local-level state apparatus, which included welfare agencies as well as district government offices and the police. Gyámhatóság case file #013002: 183.

38. Gyámhatóság case file #087750: 139.

39. Nevelési Tanácsado case file #082211212-123/89.

40. Zsuzsa Ferge, "A Magyar Segélyezési Rendszer Reformja II."

41. Zsuzsa Ferge, "A Célzott Szociálpolitika Lehetőségei"; and Rudolf Andorka and Zolt Speder, "A Szegénység Magyarországon 1992-1995."

42. Ferge, "A Magyar Segélyezési Rendszer Reformja II," p. 29.

43. Gyámhatóság case file #08009: 1002.

44. See Krisztina Morvai, *Terror a Családban*.

45. Author's interview #013112: 24.

46. This case is indicative of the interpretive shift. The woman had been abused as a child, had mental-health problems, and had an abusive husband. In the previous system, all of this information would have been used to analyze her anger toward her son. Gyámhatóság case file #0137794: 712.

47. Gyámhatóság case file #0811776: 909.

48. Pálinka is a Hungarian brandy known for its strong, inebriating effect.

49. Rákóczi square is a notorious Budapest gathering place for prostitutes.

50. See Alice Burton, "Dividing Up the Struggle: The Consequences of 'Split' Welfare Work for Union Activism," for a similar connection between the organization of welfare work and caseworkers' attitudes toward clients in the United States. Her analysis reveals how the shift to eligibility work bred hostility between welfare workers and recipients in another, very different context.

51. In fact, after the Bokros plan, there was a rush among caseworkers to have children before the reforms went into effect. When I returned to the field after a year, 70 percent of the caseworkers I knew were on maternity leave.

52. Author's interview #013112: 31.

53. Gyámhatóság case file #0811776: 1102.

54. Gyámhatóság case file #013221: 1034.

55. Gyámhatóság case file #086689: 1198.

56. Gyámhatóság case file #081998: 992. Her account made a metaphorical connection between Rákóczi square, the gathering place for prostitutes, and the Rákóczi war of independence which occurred in the eighteenth century.