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Family as a resource of deinstitutionalisation social policy in modern Russia (1991 - 2018)

However family centered forms of state care start developing in the 1990s, institutionalisation rests a privileged form of orphan state care in post-soviet Russia up until 2010, when the social policy paradigm turns towards deinstitutionalisation by promoting fostering and adoption. This initiative has been reinforced in 2014 by the decree №481 aimed at transforming former soviet type orphanages into Child&Family Support Centres in order to work with families « in danger » and to create a « family like » environment by means of reorganising residential institutions into small-group homes with fixed educators.

Hence, family represents a transformation in governmentality practices linked to the passage from the liberal economy (1991-2004) to the mix-welfare state social policies (2004-2018). The given paper proposes to analyse this transformation focusing on the roles attributed by the state to the foster family, biological parents and the institution. I will demonstrate that professionalisation of the foster family by establishment of a principal-agent relationship with the state, makes it a normalising instance, whereas the biological family, ignored during the first period, becomes a major subject of governmentality policies. Finally, the former orphanages represent a family « surrogate » that provides a « family like » socialisation to the categories of children for which fostering or adoption are problematic.

This evolution has been explored through ethnographic interviews with foster families, institutional actors and a two months' observation in family support centres in Moscow and Irkutsk.