“ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT” AND GENDER EQUALITY:
EXPLAINING VARIATIONS IN THE GENDER POVERTY GAP AFTER SOCIALISM

Using the 2008 cross-sectional wave of the survey Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) and multi-level modeling techniques, this paper explores the macro-level determinants of the gender poverty gap in the ten post-socialist European Union member states. In dialogue with the literature on the impact of economic development on gender inequality in Latin America, we find that fast-paced, foreign capital led economic growth is associated with a larger gender poverty gap, while generous welfare policies, specifically higher levels of spending on pensions and family policies are correlated with women’s lower relative vulnerability. These findings evaluate the impact of neo-liberal style "economic development" on gender inequality in a geo-politically specific context and suggest that structural adjustment and global market integration may exacerbate women's vulnerability even when they are well equipped with human capital and other resources to compete with men in the labor market.

Eva Fodor is associate professor of Gender Studies at the CEU and academic director of CEU IAS. Eva has a PhD in Sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles and her main research area is comparative gender inequalities. Her first book "Working Difference: Women’s Working Lives in Hungary and Austria, 1945-1995" was published by Duke University Press in 2003. Currently she studies the role of the welfare state and "economic development" on gender inequality in poverty.