

Plessz, Marie. 2009. "Life Stages and Transformations of the Labor Market. The case of Central Europe (Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary)." *European Societies* 11(1):103-36.

Abstract:

Various mechanisms, including lower productivity, discrimination and composition effects, have been cited to explain the disadvantaged position on the labor market of young people, women, and persons nearing the end of their working life. This article relies on two hypotheses. First we adopt the perspective of life cycle theory, therefore this phenomenon is also understood as a consequence of giving priority on the job market to fathers between 35 and 40 years old. Second we consider that having a job and the level of earnings are two different dimensions of the labor market and of the way people can be advantaged or disadvantaged. In the case of the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary in the period running from the 1980s to the early 2000s, the arrangements made vary in time and by country, as is shown by employment chances and earnings for a variety of groups, corresponding here to the life stages of youth, motherhood or fatherhood, and old age. This information brings to light which groups are disadvantaged and in what way. The configurations observed change with the countries' economic and socio-political transformations, becoming more diverse by country at the end of the period. Older workers appear excluded from the labor market in Hungary; young people in Poland are integrated but paid relatively low wages; in the Czech Republic, where employment rates are relatively high, mothers are less likely to work.