

German Parental Leave Policy in the Context of Cultural and Institutional Change

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Research question and main aims

Research question

- How far and in which ways did cultural change contribute to change in the family policy of the German welfare state in the mid-2000s?

The “Nordic Turn” in Family Policy in Germany – mid-2000s

Table 1: The Nordic Turn in Family Policy in Germany since the mid-2000s

Dimension	Old family policy	New family policy
Family Policy towards public childcare	<p>Limited social rights to public childcare</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual right of all children 3-6 to affordable public daycare (part-time 50%) (since 1995) 	<p>Individual right of children under school age to affordable public fulltime daycare*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For all children age 1-6 • For children age 0-1 of employed parents
Parental leave	<p>Low paid parental leave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental leave possible for 3 years with job protection, of which 2 years paid • Pay: means-tested childcare benefit for less affluent families (300 € per month) 	<p>Generously paid parental leave for 1 year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parental leave possible for 3 years with job protection, of which only 12 months paid • Pay: 65% employment income substitute, 100% for low income earners, at minimum 300 Euro for non-employed people
Support of father’s care for their children	<p>Option for parents to share parental leave</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option for parents to share parental leave • 2 extra months of paid ‘Daddy leave’ with generously paid parental leave, if mother takes parts of the leave

*Duty for municipalities to extend public childcare according to the demand since 2005; legal right for children was enacted 8/2013

Change in cultural basis of policy

Old policy based on

- cultural family model of male breadwinner/female part-time carer, with women with children under three as fulltime maternal carers
- cultural idea of women's financial dependency in male breadwinner couple
- was not designed for participation of fathers in parental leave

Change in cultural basis of policy

New policy based on

- cultural family model of dual breadwinner/state carer
- cultural idea of women's financial independence within the couple, at least in middle class families
- cultural idea of the employed mother who returns after one year to her fulltime job
- cultural idea of the caring father

Theoretical approaches to the role of culture for institutional change

Theoretical approaches about the role of cultural change for welfare state change

- Cultural ideas among political actors can influence the political development that leads to change in welfare state institutions at different stages (Béland, 2009, 2015; Kaufmann, 2014; Schmidt, 2003)
- Cultural ideas of political actors can be communicated with the population on the basis of public discourses (Schmidt, 2003)

My theoretical approach

Broader approach to the relationship between culture and welfare state change (Pfau-Effinger, 2005, 2009), includes besides the political processes also

- theorising the „cultural process“, which is the chain of events by which cultural change in the population can enter the field of political actors, politics and policies
- Include the role of actors who are relevant in this process

Concept of culture

Concept of culture (Pfau-Effinger, 2005*)

- ‚Culture‘ as a system of collective ideas relating to the „good“ society and (morally) „good“ behavior
- ‚Cultural ideas‘ include cultural values, models/‘ideals‘, belief systems; potentially fragmented, contested, contradictory and changeable
- Cultural system offers action orientation to actors, but does not determine action
- Actors are relevant for cultural change, by introducing new cultural ideas, discourses, conflicts, negotiations

*Pfau-Effinger, Birgit (2005): Culture and Welfare State Policies: Reflections on a Complex Interrelation. *Journal of Social Policy* 34, 1, pp. 1-18.

Main assumptions about cultural process

Nr.	Events
1.	Start: Cultural change in population relatively independent from the institution that we study.
2.	Specific actors in the population claim that the welfare state should adapt these cultural ideas (like social movement, civil society organisations).
3.	The new cultural ideas enter the field of politics, taken up by actors representing the civil society, or by political actors at the edge or in the centre of power
4.	Parts of the relevant political actors may try to initiate institutional change on the basis of the new cultural ideas Marginal political actors might gain power, or more powerful actors adapt the new cultural ideas
5.	Potential result: Fundamental change in welfare state institution

How can we measure cultural change in relation to gender and family?

Classification approach - cultural family models as part of the „Gender Culture“ (Pfau-Effinger, 1998; 2004)

Definition: “Cultural family model” = complex of cultural ideas related to the “ideal” family form regarding gender, care and the work-family relationship

- main elements of cultural family models include cultural ideas related to
 - division of labor in parents’ work-childcare relationship
 - behavior towards the best way to care for children

Empirical study

Analysis of cultural process and role of actors in the specific historical sequence within and outside political field until institutional change (1960-2007)

Methods

- Document analysis about change in family policy institutions
- National and international survey data and qualitative empirical studies for the time period from 1960 until mid 2000s

Cultural development in the population 1960er until 1980s

- Cultural change from 1960s until the end of the 1970s from „housewife model of male breadwinner family“ towards ‚male breadwinner/female part-time care model‘
- strong role of feminist movement for the change
- persistence of cultural idea of ‚private childhood‘ and fulltime maternal childcare for children under school age in population
- 1970s/1980s Feminist movement started discourse about need for change of family policies, on the basis of the dual breadwinner/state care model

Cultural development in the population after 1990s

- After Unification 1990, two different types of cultural family model relevant in Germany
 - dual breadwinner/state care model in East Germany, with a tradition of one year fully paid maternal leave and women's return to fulltime employment
 - Male breadwinner/female part-time carer model still dominant in population of West Germany, with cultural idea of fulltime maternal/parental care for children under 3

Cultural change entering the field of politics

- 1980s Cultural ideas about gender equality introduced by feminists in the margin of the big political parties (women's working groups)
- Mid-1980s introduction of old parental leave policy, without support by feminists, who saw it as detrimental for women's labor market integration
- Early 1990s Law for the promotion of gender equality and individual right for (part-time) public daycare for children 3-6 introduced by conservative East German family minister Angela Merkel
- Red-Green Government from 1998 until 2004 neglected the need for further change in family policy

Basis for success of policies based on new cultural ideas

- In the conservative Government from 2004, powerful female members of the Government of the conservative CDU acted as 'institutional entrepreneurs' (DiMaggio, 19988) and designed the new family policy (East German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and family minister Ursula von der Leyen)
- Main basis of success of the 'institutional entrepreneurs' to introduce new policy: legitimation of new policy within conservative party with popular aims of promoting birth rates and social investment (see also Seelaib-Kaiser/Toivinen, 2010; Fleckenstein, 2011).

Consequences for gender equality

Strong increase of share of fathers taking leave after introduction of new policy (Reimer, 2014)

Low employment rate and high part-time rate of women with children under 3 remained in the West, relatively high employment rate and fulltime employment of women with children under 3 in the East (2018, Statistisches Bundesamt)

Main reason: Persistence of difference in main cultural family models

Table 2: Women's employment rate, part-time rate and rate of children in public childcare, in %

	Germany total	West Germany	East Germany
Employment rate of women with children under 3	32	30	39
Part-time rate among employed women with children under 3		78	47
Share of children under 3 in public daycare	33	28	52

Conclusion

- Cultural change in the population can contribute to welfare state change
- The political actors that are involved can include a civil society movement outside politics and feminist institutional entrepreneurs in the field of politics
- The cultural ideas can be contradictory and contested, and the cultural ideas of the main actors do not necessarily fit with the main cultural ideas in the population
- As far as the new policies are not based on cultural ideas that are popular in the population, their effects on people's behavior may be limited.

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MANY THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION

Table 1: Typology of cultural family models (Pfau-Effinger 1998, 2004) – the ideal types

Type of cultural family model	Gender division of labour	Main type/s of care for children under school age	Country examples
Family economy model	Both partners work in family economy	Mainly working childhood	Finland until the 1960s, Mediterranean countries until end of 20th Century
Housewife model of the male breadwinner marriage	Man acts as full-time income earner, woman does unpaid care in family household	Maternal childcare	West Germany, The Netherlands in 1950s and 1960s
Male breadwinner/female part-time care model	Man acts as full-time income earner, woman combines childcare and paid employment in part-time	Maternal childcare/public childcare	West Germany, The Netherlands since the 1970s
Dual breadwinner/dual carer model	Both partners share employment and childcare on part-time basis	Parental childcare/public childcare	The Netherlands since the 1980s
Dual breadwinner/care by extended family model	Both partners as full-time breadwinners	Childcare by relatives	Mediterranean countries since end of 20th Century
Dual breadwinner/state care model	Both partners as full-time breadwinners	Public daycare for children in full-time	Nordic countries, to some degree

Selected publications

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- Pfau-Effinger, Birgit (2004): Historical paths of the male breadwinner family model – explanation for cross-national differences. *British Journal of Sociology*, 55, 3: 377-399.

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What is culture?- Concepts of culture in Social Sciences

Main focus at micro level

- individual patterns of interpretation of the world
- individual values or attitudes about the ,good‘ and the ,ideal‘ to which individuals orient in their behavior
- toolkit that actors apply in order to realize their aims (Lamont, 2008)

Main focus at macro level

- System of ideas including dominant and marginalised ideas about the morally ,good‘, to which social actors relate and which they can change (Archer, 1996; Max Weber, 1964)

Main assumptions about cultural process

Nr.	Events
1.	Start: Change in relevant cultural ideas in population relatively independent from the institution that we study.
2.	Specific actors in the population establish new discourses in which they claim that the welfare state should adapt these cultural ideas (like social movement, civil society organisations).
3.	The new cultural ideas enter the field of politics, either by the participation of actors from the civil society in politics (Vaisdivosky), or because political at the edge or in the centre of power adopt them.
4.	Parts of the relevant political actors may try to initiate institutional change on the basis of the new cultural ideas The power of these actors is a main factor for their success. Marginal political actors might gain power, or they convince more powerful actors about the new cultural ideas
5.	Potential result: Fundamental change in welfare state institution

Concepts of culture and institutions

Concept of culture (Pfau-Effinger, 2005*)

- ‚Culture‘ as a system of collective ideas relating to the „good“ society and (morally) „good“ behavior
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- Cultural system offers action orientation to actors, but does not determine action
- Actors are relevant for cultural change, by introducing new cultural ideas, discourses, conflicts, negotiations

Concept of ‚Institutions‘

- Definition: Set of rules which are framing the action of social actors on the basis of expectations (norms), incentives and restrictions on the basis of sanctions (Lepsius, 1990; Hall, 1993)

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Relationship between culture and institutional change

- Cultural ideas influence the basic norms of an institution when the institution is established or fundamentally changes
- Cultural change outside the institution (in population, among political actors) can proceed relatively independent from development of institution (Pfau-Effinger, 2005).
- Fundamental role of actors and power relations for cultural change and its role for institutional change.

Findings of the analysis of the cultural process (1)

Nr.	Theoretical assumptions about chain of events	1960-2007 Actual events
1.	Start: Cultural change in population relatively independent from the institution that we study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural change from 1960s until the end of the 1970s from „Housewife model of male breadwinner family“ towards ‚male breadwinner/female part-time care model‘
2.	Specific actors in the population claim that the welfare state should adapt these cultural ideas (like social movement, civil society organisations).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1970s/1980s Feminist movement started discourse about need for change of family policies, but it was split in political aims• Mid-1980s introduction of old parental leave policy, without support by feminists by conservative family minister Heiner Geissler, main reason was EU directive• New Element in Gender Culture after Unification 1990: dual bread-winner/state care model in East Germany

Findings of the analysis of the cultural process (2)

Nr.	Theoretical assumptions about chain of events	1960-2007 Actual events
3.	<p>The new cultural ideas enter the field of politics, taken up by actors representing the civil society (Vaisdivosky), or by political actors at the edge or in the centre of power</p>	<p>Early 1990s: new cultural family model male ,breadwinner/female part-time carer‘ introduced at political level with considerable delay,</p>
4.	<p>Parts of the relevant political actors may try to initiate institutional change on the basis of the new cultural ideas</p> <p>Marginal political actors might gain power, or they convince more powerful actors about the new cultural ideas</p>	<p>New ideas first introduced by feminists in the margin of the big political parties</p> <p>Powerful female members of the Government of the conservative CDU acted as ‘institutional entrepreneurs’ (DiMaggio, 19988) and designed the new family policy (East German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and family minister Ursula von der Leyen)</p>

Findings of the analysis of the cultural process (3)

Nr.	Theoretical assumptions about chain of events	1960-2007 Actual events
4.	Continued	<p>However, cultural ideas on which new policy was based were in part not very popular in mainstream of political parties and main parts of the (West German) population:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's fulltime employment one year after childbirth • Father's parental leave, independent from mother's leave <p>Main basis of success of the 'institutional entrepreneurs': legitimation of new policy within conservative party with popular aims: demographic argument and social investment argument (see also Seelaib-Kaiser/Toivinen, 2010; Fleckenstein, 2011).</p>
5.	Potential result: Fundamental change in welfare state institution	New family policy was introduced by CDU-led Government in mid-2000s