

**Family policies and the departure from the male breadwinner family model –
different development paths in European welfare states**

Birgit Pfau-Effinger

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Chairs: Steven Saxonberg, Hana Haskova

Birgit Pfau-Effinger
Professor for Sociology
Institute for Sociology
University of Hamburg
Allende-Platz 1
20146 Hamburg, Germany
Phone +49-40-42838-3810
e-mail pfau-effinger@sozialwiss.uni-hamburg.de

Abstract

Main aim of the paper: In this paper I will analyse different development paths of family policies in West European countries since the early 1990s in a comparative cross-national perspective. The main question of the paper is: To which degree was the development characterized by path dependence and by path departure? Moreover, possible explanations for the specific features of the development of paths of family policies will be discussed.

Theoretical framework: The paper introduces a theoretical framework for comparative analyses of family policies. It is argued that the explanatory power of the popular concept of 'familisation/de-familisation' is limited, since it does not consider the different dimensions of family policies, and its use can lead to a misinterpretation of specific features of family policies. Instead, the paper introduces an approach for the classification of family policies which is based on three main dimensions of family policies for comparative analyses. The paper moreover discusses how useful the path dependence concept of historical institutionalism could be for comparative analyses of policy development. It argues that this concept has the problem that it neglects the role of cultural, social and economic factors for the explanation of development paths of specific institutions like family policies.

Methodological approach: The paper presents findings of a comparative analyses of the development of family policies in Finland, Germany, and Spain from an international comparative EU-Project 'Formal and Informal Work in Europe' (FIWE) which was coordinated by the author (see also Pfau-Effinger/Flaquer/Jensen 2009). Besides the development of welfare state policies, also data and empirical studies on the social, cultural and economic context and women's labour market behavior are included into analyses.

Results and discussion: According to the findings, the development paths of family policies differed considerably in all three welfare states in the early 1990s. At the start, all three welfare states were following a different path. Whereas the development of family policies in Finland has followed this path since then, the German welfare state has recently initiated a path departure in family policy development, and family policies have converged with the Finnish path. Also in Spain, path departure in that the welfare state after a period of inactivity in the early 1990s has introduced some measures to support women's employment. I discuss how cultural factors have contributed to path dependent development and path departure.

Introduction

In the early 1990s, family policies of European welfare states towards childcare and the employment of mothers differed considerably. According to Esping-Andersen (1990), there were three distinctly different types of family policy, depending on the main institution of society to which they allocated the care for young children: the state, the family and the market. Feminists have in part criticized that Esping-Andersen did not consider adequately the role of women as caregivers in his approach. Some authors have therefore introduced other typologies, which were related to gender policies of welfare states (Lewis and Ostner 1994), for example, have introduced the distinction between a strong, a moderate and a weak male breadwinner model of the welfare state.

About two decades later, it is an interesting question how family policies have developed since the early 1990s, using the popular concept of path dependence/path departure of historical institutionalism. The aim of this paper is to do such analyses for three welfare

states with distinctly different family policies in the early 1990s, with regard to two main questions. The first is about path dependence and path departure in the development of the family policies of these welfare states in a comparative perspective, and how it is possible to conceptualise this. The second question relates to the explanation why the development was characterised by path dependence or path departure in each case. I will discuss the role of cultural factors for path dependent development and path departure of family policies for the countries included in the study, and how they interact with political, social and economic factors.

The path-dependence, and correspondingly, path-departure of welfare-state policies have often been explained by endogenous factors of institutional change, mainly by the mechanism of 'increasing returns' (Pierson 2000). There have been relatively few attempts to include external factors of the society surrounding the welfare state into the explanatory approach. I argue that a broader approach is needed that includes besides social and economic factors also cultural factors outside the specific institutions of the welfare state. I will use the example of Finland, Germany and Spain which each represent a different type of family policies in the early 1990s.

1. The path-dependence concept and its limits – institutions without society

In how far does history shape human choice? Concepts of path-dependence stress the constraining role of the past for present development, in contrast to concepts in which change is mainly seen as the outcome of purposive action (Garud and Karnoe 2001). The concept of path-dependence was originally developed in the economic sciences where it was introduced by David (1985) in order to describe the fate of technological innovations. It contradicts the assumption, made by neo-classical economists, of optimal choice, according to which technological innovation is introduced if a new technology is more efficient than the old one. Instead, it is argued, a traditional technology can be preferred to a more efficient solution because a comparative advantage is caused by the fact that it has been established for a long time. A deviation from the traditional solution may also cause substantial transfer costs. From this perspective, it may be more 'rational' to keep the old version.

Douglas North (1990) has suggested using this concept for the analysis of social institutions. Because of high costs, it may be particularly difficult to implement a new institution in the same way as a new technology. This does not mean that the institutional structure is static. However, institutional change is not the sudden introduction of a new institution for an old one simply because it is more efficient (North 1990: 99-105). Paul Pierson (2000) has adopted the concept of North and introduced an elaborated version of it for the social sciences, including social-policy analysis. In his approach the mechanism of 'increasing returns' is the main cause of path-dependent development. This means that 'the costs of switching from one alternative to another will in certain social contexts increase markedly over time' (p. 251) which can cause a 'lock-in' situation of the institution. Accordingly Pierson defines path-dependence as 'a social process grounded in "increasing returns"' and argues that 'increasing returns are likely to be prevalent' (p. 251).

The concept of path-dependence deserves the merit to have brought history back into the analysis of welfare-state restructuring. The insight that the restructuring of welfare states

is substantially influenced by their past provides us with a view of political actors being temporally located and socially embedded. This is important in explaining the lasting differences between welfare states, even if they seem to be influenced by similar processes like globalisation and EU-integration. Path-dependence has been usefully employed in social-policy analysis, mainly in analyses of the restructuring of retirement pension systems (Pierson, 2001). Such studies are excellent accounts of the high relative stability of the institutional orders of welfare states.

However, there is a shortcoming in the conceptualisation of the interrelations between the path-dependent development of a specific institution, such as the welfare state, and the surrounding societal context. The societal context enters the narrow concept of path-dependence only when it comes to a 'critical juncture' (David, 1985; Pierson, 2000). In such a situation, a path-dependent process starts which is conceptualised mainly as an endogenous institutional process where rational decisions of the actors are based on the 'lock-in' situation, and costs are connected with increasing returns instead of actual efficiency costs. However, the institution is not insulated against society, but what takes place inside the welfare state, and through the agency of its actors, is always interrelated with the development in the broader societal context. Recently, some more comprehensive approaches have therefore been introduced that consider the influence of factors outside the institution (Ebbinghaus 2004, Mahooney 2005, Beyer 2005).

However, the concept 'external factors' is too unspecific. The societal context in which the welfare state is embedded, and the contribution of the different types of factors in the societal context that can have an impact on institutional development, should be more precisely conceptualized (Pfau-Effinger 2009). This includes the role of cultural values and notions which may also have an impact on institutional change, and on whether it is path-dependent or not.¹ I will discuss the role of cultural factors for path dependent development and path departure of family policies for the countries included in the study, and how they interact with political, social and economic factors.

If we aim to explain path dependence and path departure, the explanation may relate to two different question. A first question is related to the process itself: (1) Why is a development characterised by path dependence and path departure of an institution like family policies? (2) The other question is related to the timing of the process: why did a path dependent development or path departure take place at a certain point of time? In this article, I ask for an explanation of the first type.

2. Conceptualising and comparing family policies

How did family policies in Western Europe develop, and how is it possible to conceptualise and analyse the development paths? Jane Lewis (2004) has argued that

¹ I define culture as a 'system of collective constructions of meaning by which human beings define reality' (Neidhard *et al.*, 1986: 11). Such a system includes stocks of knowledge, values and ideals, in sum: ideas, and it can be relatively stable over longer periods of time. At the same time, it is realized that collective constructions of meaning are produced and reproduced by the social practices of social actors, and they can be the subject of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between social actors, with cultural change as a result (Pfau-Effinger 2005a).

contemporary welfare states are increasingly supporting an adult earner model instead of the housewife model of the male breadwinner marriage. As she and other authors have found, they differ considerably with regard to the degree to which they support this new model. The theoretical concept of familisation/de-familisation is currently particularly popular for classification of different types of family policies along the assumed development path from the support of the housewife model of the family towards the adult worker model. This concept was developed in feminist discussions of the welfare state, particularly in the work of Lister (1994) and McLaughlin/Glending (1994). It was then introduced into the approaches of general welfare state research, particularly through its use in the work of Esping-Andersen (1999: 45-46). It refers to the outsourcing of care work out of the family, which is a prerequisite for the integration of women into gainful employment unburdened by familial responsibilities (Esping-Andersen 1999: 51; Leitner 2003). The 'de-familisation' is seen as an important prerequisite for the capacity of women to integrate into the labour force and thus to 'commodify' themselves, and for gender equality. 'Hence, de-familisation would indicate the degree to which social policy (or perhaps markets) render women autonomous to become "commodified", or to set up independent households, in the first place' (Esping-Andersen 1999: 51) In the case of outsourcing, care work is transferred to organisations outside the private household. The term 'familisation' refers to the opposite: its retention in the family, or policies that support this.

The problem of this concept is that it classifies family policies on the basis of a single dimension, whether it supports women's informal care in the family or public care outside the family. In this regard, differentiations of the concept undertaken by Leitner et al. (2004) was helpful for distinguishing between policies which burdened families with responsibilities that should have been duties of the welfare state and policies that supported families in their duties. But even this elaborated approach does not adequately conceptualise the ways in which different developments interact and overlap, based on a general trend towards an extension of public childcare and the support of family leave schemes at the same time. Also, it neglects the role that generously paid family leave schemes can play for the promotion of gender equality.

Altogether, the degree to which family policies are shaped cannot be reduced to a one dimensional difference between welfare state support of family care and women's housewife role on one hand and public care and the employment of mothers of young children on the other. I therefore suggest to apply a more complex approach that combines three different dimensions. I suggest to use the following dimensions:

- The option to receive public or publicly financed childcare and connected social rights (see also Knijn und Kremer 1997);
- the option to temporarily provide care for one's own child on the basis of family leave-schemes (like maternity leave, parental leave, paternity leave, child allowance), as well as the option for parents to act as financially autonomous carers during periods of family leave;
- the degree of support for equal sharing of employment and family care between women and men.

The main features of the whole setting can be described on the basis of these dimensions. It is then possible to distinguish different types of family policies (see also table 1):

(1) Support of women’s employment in a male breadwinner context

This type is based on comprehensive public childcare for children of age 3-6, but relatively little public care for children below 3 years; a low generosity of family leave schemes, and does not support particular leave by the child’s father.

(2) Support of gender equality on the basis of comprehensive public childcare

This type is based on comprehensive public childcare for children of all age groups below school age, a low generosity of family leave schemes, and does not support particular leave by the child’s father.

(3) Support of a multi-option model

a) gender differentiated

This type is based on comprehensive public childcare for children of all age groups below school age, a high generosity of family leave schemes with the option to temporarily act as financially autonomous caregiver, but it does not support particular leave by the child’s father.

a) gender equalising

This type is based on comprehensive public childcare for children of all age groups below school age, a high generosity of family leave schemes with the option to temporarily act as financially autonomous caregiver, and it supports particular leave by the child’s father.

Table 1: The typology of family policies

	(1) Support of women’s employment in a male breadwinner context	(2)Support of gender equality on the basis of comprehensive public childcare	(3)Support of a multi-option model a) Gender differentiated b) Gender equalising
Public childcare provision and social rights to get care Children 3-6 Children below 3	High* Low	High High	High High
the option to act as financially autonomous family carer during parental leave	Low	Low	High
Particular promotion of generously paid parental leave for men	No	No	a) No b) Yes

In order to distinguish path dependence and path departure, I suggest using Peter Hall's distinctions for the classification of policy changes. Hall (1993) has introduced a model for the analysis of policy change that conceptualises its magnitude in the following way: (1) A

first-order change is change of level; (2) a second-order change is characterised as change of instrument; and (3) a third-order change is based on a shift of goals. I suggest using this concept to distinguish between path-dependent and path-breaking changes in welfare-state policies. As far as first- or second-order changes take place, this can be characterised as path-dependent development. As long as change is restricted to the change of levels and instruments, it can take place within the framework of the present type of welfare state and its developmental path. I argue that we can talk about path-departure mainly only in terms of the third-order change: when welfare states change the goals of their policies in general, or in a specific field. In the concrete case of family policies, I talk about path departure if welfare state policies change from one type to the other type of family policies among the three types mentioned in part 1 (see also table 1).

3. Development paths of family policies in Finland, Germany and Spain

Change in the welfare states of Western Europe since the 1990s has in general been characterised by extended spending, the establishment of new social rights and the extension of existing social rights in the field of family policies, while the development of other parts of the welfare state has instead been more characterised by retrenchment policies (Pfau-Effinger 2005a; Szeleva/Sirovatka 2008). This applies to the welfare states of Finland, Germany and Spain as well. In the following section I analyse the development of family policies in these three welfare states since the early 1990s in relation to the main criteria introduced above.

3.1. Development of family policies in Finland

Path dependence of family policies in the Finnish welfare state

Welfare state policies in Finland have strongly supported formal employment of mothers and collectivised childcare since the 1960s. The social care services have been greatly expanded at the local government level – mainly also kindergartens. Also, a social right for children from 3 to 6 to public childcare existed. Since the 1970s also paid parental leave schemes had been established, as well as leave rights for fathers (Jolkkonen et al. 2009). Therefore, it would be misleading to classify family policies in Finland in the early 1990s as a one-sidedly ‘de-familising’ policies. Instead, they have established different options to decide in favour of a very short or somewhat longer period of family leave for women and men. The option in favour of a time period which parents spend with their small children at home was connected with the possibility to act as financially autonomous caregiver. I therefore classify the family policy at that time as a gender equality policy on the basis of a multi-option model.

Since then, the Finnish welfare state has gradually strengthened both pillars. A law that guarantees all children under school age a place in municipal day care was implemented in 1996. Also, free childcare services were introduced for private households in times when the public childcare organisations are closed (Tommiska 2005). On the other hand, different schemes of paid parental leave were greatly extended during the 1990s. Today, these are among the most generous schemes in the West of Europe. Parents therefore, as also in other Nordic countries like Sweden and Denmark, have a real option to chose between public childcare and generously paid family care when their children are small

(Pfau-Effinger 2010). Also, particular elements of generously paid leave by the child's father were and during the past decade, father care has been in the focus of leave policy development.

Cultural, social and economic background

These policies of the Finnish welfare state interact with the dominant cultural orientation of the Finnish society towards a dual breadwinner/state care provider family (Pfau-Effinger 2004b). In Finland, the housewife model of the male breadwinner family was never dominant at the cultural level, and it was not introduced to any substantial degree into practice of the family. Instead, great parts of the population which was mostly based on the social class of free farmers with small farms, until the 1960s oriented towards a 'family economy' model, according to Pfau-Effinger's typology of cultural family models (Pfau-Effinger 1999; 2004b). This model, which formed the main cultural basis of the arrangement of work and family until about the 1960s, was based on the idea that all adults in a family contribute full-time to the agrarian production. Childhood is in most parts constructed as "working childhood", meaning that children contribute to the production on the farm as soon as they are physically able to do so. During the rapid transformation of the Finnish society from an agrarian society to a service society in the following decades, this model was substituted by a relatively egalitarian model of the "dual breadwinner/state carer" family on the basis of lifelong full-time participation of men and women in waged work. Accordingly, there is a long historical continuity of full-time employment of women, including mothers of young children, in Finland, as historical research has shown (Haavio-Mannila 1983; Kaarninen 1991; Pfau-Effinger 2004). Women are nearly their whole working life participating in the employment system on a full-time basis.

The introduction of generous parental leave was not directed to the introduction of women's housewife role, which never in the Finnish history had been relevant. Instead, it was mainly a reaction to the 'care crisis' at the end of the 1980s, which was caused by a lack of qualified personnel for a further expansion of the public childcare system, and by the fact that the state therefore could no longer guarantee the public supply of kindergarten places (Joronen 1994; Simonen/Kovalainen 1998; Kuhnle & Hort 2004). However, even if the division of childcare and housework in families is among the most equal in Europe, as women's position in the labour market, still mainly mothers of a new born child are taking up parental leave (Lammi-Taskula 2007; Haataja 2007; Salmi & Lammi-Taskula 2006; Ruuskanen 2006). However, mothers of young children are using the parental leave schemes that they can chose after the end of maternity leave only to a limited extent, and for a relatively limited period of time. According to the Family Leave Survey about half of all mothers stayed at home until the child was 18 months old and more then half until the child was two years old (Salmi & Lammi-Taskula 2006, 91-92.).

It seems that in some parts, and mainly also in the deep labour market crisis of the 1990s, family leave schemes in Finland have also been used as an alternative to unemployment. This argument is supported by the fact that mothers who had been employed before the leave returned to employment faster than those who had no job to return to (Salmi & Lammi-Taskula 2006, 91- 92.). However, this did not change the general orientation of the Finnish population towards gender equality and life-long full-time employment of women

and men. According to a representative attitude survey by the Statistical Office of Finland in 1998, for example, it is a self-evident fact from the perspective of most Finns that 'married women have the full right to work whatever their family situation'. 91 per cent of Finnish women and 88 per cent of men agreed with this statement. The male breadwinner role of men, in contrast, is not popular: The great majority of women (74 per cent) do not agree with the role of men as breadwinners, whereas the proportion of men who object to this role model is not nearly as high (60 per cent) (Melkas 2002, p. 11).

3.2. Development of family policies in Germany

Path departure of family policies of the German welfare state

In contrast to the classification of the German welfare state as a conservative welfare regime which is one-sidedly promoting childcare by women in the family, this welfare state had already in the early 1990s introduced an individual right for each child from 3-6 years to participate in public childcare. Though, in West Germany public childcare to a substantial degree was organised as only part-time care, while many parents would have preferred care provision from two third of a working day (Esch/Stöber-Blossey 2006). During the first three years after the birth of a child, public childcare was only to a relatively low degree available

For parents of children below three years, a right to parental leave existed until the child was three years old, after a period of 14 weeks of full paid maternity leave. Parental leave was paid for two years with 300 German Mark (150 Euro) per month that was means-tested on the basis of the family income. This amount was extended to 300 Euro until the end of the 1990s, which still was far below the subsistence level, or alternately 450 Euros for one year. This means that the amounts of childcare allowance actually paid in the parental leave-schemes in Germany were and below poverty-line levels and covered only some parts of the period in which women usually interrupted their employment in order to take over care responsibility in the family household. Accordingly, women were dependent on the income of a male breadwinner if they stayed at home up to three years in order to care their own children. Specific policy efforts to include the child's father into family childcare were absent so far. In general, family policies more or less supported a male breadwinner/female part-time care provider model of the family, with three years parental leave by the child's mother. This situation was established until 2006.

Since 2007 family policies have changed. The Government started to extend public childcare for children below three with the aim to provide childcare provision for one third of the children of this age group until 2014, and full-time provision of childcare was substantially extended. Also in the field of social rights to give care, in Germany substantial change took place since 2007. A more generous pay for parental leave was introduced, with pay of two third of the previous income during 12 months. Low income earners in part receive pay of 100 per cent of their previous income.

This was a departure from the male-breadwinner principle in parental leave-schemes, and as such was an important step towards state support of gender equality on the basis of a multi-option model of family policies. In the previous concept, the caring parent, usually the child's mother, was constructed as member of a male breadwinner marriage, and the idea was that she was financed through the income of the male breadwinner. The new

paradigm is based on an individualised concept, on the assumption that a parent during the leave period should be autonomous and able to live on her/his own during this time.

The German welfare state has also started to promote the participation of fathers in family care, in that the Government has introduced a special period for fathers in the parental leave schemes (Bundesministerium für Familien 2006). This is an active measure to support a more equal sharing of family responsibility and employment. The experiences of the Nordic welfare states show that the introduction of 'Daddy months' into the parental leave scheme can be a successful instrument for increasing considerably the rate of parental leave taken by fathers (Eydal 2005).

Altogether, the new concept that family policies of the German welfare state started to support is based on the idea that the child's mother is taking maternity leave and parental leave until the child is 14 months, and the father is participating in parental leave at least for two months. Moreover, it gives women the option to full-time employment after women return from two months of maternity leave, or after parental leave, if they wish.

The possibility to realise the new paradigm is however still limited in that women who were not employed before they gave birth to a child, like students and unemployed women, only receive a flat-rate of 300 Euros which is clearly below the poverty line, so that they still have to rely on a male breadwinner. The male breadwinner principle was even strengthened for these groups as a consequence of the Hartz IV activation programme. These women usually do not even have a right to unemployment benefit II. Instead, any male partner with whom they live together is expected to act for them as male breadwinner (see also Scheiwe 2009).

To conclude, the development of family policies was path dependent from the early 1990s until 2006 when family policies supported women's employment in a male breadwinner context. The German Government initiated path departure in the year 2007, and since then, family policies are supporting a gender equality model on the basis of a multi-option approach to family policies.

Cultural, social and economic background

In this section I ask in how far change in family values has contributed to path-departure in the family policies in Germany. The time sequence is important in this respect. An impact can be assumed if change in the dominant model of the family in the population has taken place before policy change, and discourses have developed that mediate between the new family values in the population and policy elites. In Germany the housewife marriage was the main cultural basis of the family in the 1950s and 1960s. This model is based on the premise of a fundamental separation of the 'public' and 'private' spheres, and a corollary location for both genders: the husband's proper work is in the 'public' sphere, while the housewife is responsible for the private household and childcare; her financial security exists on the basis of his income. This model is linked with the cultural construction of 'childhood', according to which children need special care and comprehensive individual tutelage of the mother in the private household.

Since then, a fundamental cultural transformation has taken place which exhibits a relatively high dynamic. A process occurring from the end of the 1960s to the end of the

1990s considerably weakened the central cultural position of the traditional family model in West Germany. The old housewife model of the male breadwinner family was increasingly replaced by the 'male-breadwinner/female part-time carer model'. This type rests essentially on the vision of full integration of women and men into paid economic activity. At the same time however, it presupposes that women as mothers may interrupt their economic activity for a few years, after which they combine employment and responsibility for childcare through part-time work, until their children are no longer considered requiring particular care. The new cultural model for family and gender relations that is dominant in West Germany is characterized by the idea that the mother should be employed, but also that 'private' childhood should still play an important role in family life (Pfau-Effinger 2005a). The majority of the population in West Germany still think that it is detrimental if the mother of a pre-school child is working (Eurobarometer 2010).

Cultural development in West Germany alone therefore cannot explain why the German government has initiated a path departure of family policies towards a gender equality model based on a multi-option approach. It seems more that the cultural development in East Germany as well as the family policy development in East Germany has contributed to this development.

Besides a short period of interruption after unification, welfare state policies at the Federal and the local level have continuously promoted a dual breadwinner/public childcare model of the family. Public childcare provision had been comprehensive for children of all age groups in the former GDR. It was substantially cut down in the first period of the unification. Already during the middle of the 1990s, however, it was extended again by the Federal Republics in East Germany and the municipalities, and soon was comprehensive and full-time again. This difference is due to the specific policies of the *Neue Länder* and municipalities in East Germany which date back to the specific traditions that developed in the former GDR (Pfau-Effinger and Geissler, 2002). Since 2005 some Federal Republics in East Germany have also introduced an individual right for children from two years of age to publicly-funded childcare,

It is possible that the fact that the *Neue Länder* had already acted as forerunner with regard to a new type of family policy, and the dominant cultural orientation of the people in East Germany towards a dual breadwinner/public care model have inspired policymakers in the Government to introduce these new policies. Also, it can be assumed that the fact that the German Kanzler was a woman from East Germany at this point of time, and the family minister was female as well, is playing more than just a marginal role for the explanation of this policy shift. As far as the development has been convergent, it can be assumed that the diffusion of policy concepts and ideas from other European countries, mainly also the Nordic countries, has also played a role, as well as EU policies towards family and employment and the cultural values that they have transported.

3.3. Development of family policies in Spain

Path departure of family policies of the Spanish welfare state

Family policies was nearly absent in the Spanish welfare state in the early 1990s. The welfare state was strongly relying on the family as main provider of childcare. Until

recently, Spain was still one of the European countries with the lowest levels of social expenditure on the family and children in Europe (0.7 per cent of GDP in 2004).¹.

However, as Flaquer and Escobedo (2009) point out, there was recently also some change in family policies which is not reflected in such data, since Spanish family subsidies are not categorised as social expenditure. Change mainly relates to social rights to receive care. Public childcare in the form of 'pre-primary school' which is financed by the educational authorities has substantially been extended. Since 2004, the welfare state has supported early education (age 3-6) through public funding, on the basis of 25 hours per week, but in fact, most organizations provide care and meals from 9 to 17h. In a comparative perspective the coverage of children 3 and older is nearly complete. With a new education law in 2006, the government also committed itself to extending public funding to 20 per cent of under-3-year-olds. However, coverage for this age group is still far from full, and the quality of care is low (Flaquer/Escobedo 2009)..

A first and very minor element of father's leave was introduced in that fathers can take two weeks of paid leave after a child was born. However, until today, paid family leave does not exist. Women/parents can therefore only choose between two relatively precarious options: they either are obliged to continue full-time employment after only about two months, while a family member takes over the childcare, or the household pays for a hired childminder. Otherwise, women stay for a longer while at home without any financial support. Insofar, the new family policy only supports women's employment in a male breadwinner context.

Altogether, it is possible to say that a paradigm change has taken place in the Spanish welfare state in the last years: Family policy was nearly absent for a long time until the middle of the 2000s. The Government then has initiated a path departure towards a family policy that supports women's employment in a male breadwinner context.

Cultural, social and economic background

Why did the Spanish welfare state not support the family in the early 1990s? According to Flaquer and Escobedo (2009), this was a result of a strong mistrust of the state, which was a legacy of Franco's authoritarian regime. They argue that up to the death of Franco in 1975, a pro-natalist family policy, mainly consisting of cash benefits for large families, had been one of most prominent features of the authoritarian regime. After the transformation to a democratic regime, all relevant political and social actors wanted to distance themselves from Franco's pro-natalist and anti-feminist family policies and therefore avoided policy-making in the field (see also Valiente 1997).

Even if family policies practically did not exist in the early 1990s, this did not mean that childcare was clearly allocated to the child's mother and the male breadwinner couple, like in Germany. Even if the task of childcare was left over to the family, there was not such clear concept so far about the concrete person of the care provider. Since the family in Spain, like in other Mediterranean countries, in part has a different form compared with Germany and other North European countries. Different to the 'core' family form in those countries, the family form of the Mediterranean countries is strongly based on 'complex' households which include as co-residents adult people other than nuclear family members

like adult siblings still living in the household or grandparents (Flaquer 2000, Naldini 2003). Still in 2002, the percentage of Spanish households made up of three or more adults with or without dependent children amounted to 41 per cent, while in the EU-15 this figure was 23 per cent on average (Eurostat 2004). Also, extended families are strongly connected even if the members are living in different households, which allows an intergenerational exchange in both directions of family services and accounts for the importance of mutual help among close female kin (Flaquer/Escobedo 2009). This is also a reason why Naldini (2003) has proposed the notion of 'family/kinship solidarity' in order to characterise the Southern welfare regime. The main unit which is seen as responsible for childcare therefore includes the extended family, besides the child's mother also its relatives. This model resembles more the 'family economy' model which was based on cooperation of all adults in farm work and was common in many rural areas in Europe until the 20th Century (Pfau-Effinger 2004a)², and less the traditional male breadwinner/female housewife model.

With the long-term increase of women's labor force participation, the extended family does no longer work so well as unit in which childcare is provided. A main reason is that non-employed elderly women who might act as child minders within the extended family are less and less available. A substantial part of families tried to solve this problem with an informal solution: mainly also in middle class families, they are particularly substituted by female migrant child minders, who are often employed on the basis of undeclared work (Flaquer/Escobedo 2009).

It seems that two main developments have contributed to this path departure. On one hand, the traditional 'family economic' family model which was based on mutual support in the extended family has eroded. This was mainly also a result of the increase in women's labour force participation. Moreover, it seems that the interpretation of active policies of the welfare state towards the family and childcare in the context of Franco's era has faded away and therefore new space for an active family policy has emerged.

3.4. Path dependence, path departure and convergence in a comparative perspective

In many West European societies, change in family policies has contributed to the departure of the male breadwinner model of the family. However, there were in part substantial differences with regard to the type of family policies. In this paper I have analysed different development paths of family policies in West European countries since the early 1990s in a comparative cross-national perspective. The main question was: To which degree was the development characterized by path dependence and persistence, to which degree by path departure and convergence? Another question was directed towards the explanation of path dependent development and path departure.

I have introduced a theoretical framework for comparative analyses of family policies. My argument was that the explanatory power of the concept of 'familisation/de-familisation' is limited, since it does not consider the different dimensions of family policies, and its use

² However, as I have shown, in some countries like the Netherlands, the housewife model of the male breadwinner marriage was also common in rural areas (Pfau-Effinger 2004b).

can lead to a misinterpretation of specific features of family policies. Instead, I have suggested an approach which distinguishes three different types of family policies on the basis of four different dimensions for comparative analyses.

It turned out that we can distinguish three different paths of family policy that had developed until the early 1990s as starting point (see also table 3). They have converged to two development paths.

Family policies in *Finland* in the early 1990s have supported a dual breadwinner/public care model of the family. In order to do so, they had established two pillars: comprehensive public childcare and different family leave schemes. Since then, family policies have changed along this path. On one hand, individual rights of children to public childcare provision have been extended to all children under 6 years. Moreover, pay for family leave schemes was increased and paid paternity leave was established. These policies leave options for individual parents to combine employment and parental leave according to their own choice on the basis of financial autonomy.

In *Germany*, Family policies were based on a 'dual approach'. On one hand, universal public childcare for children of 3-6 years was offered, mainly in part-time. Another pillar was a right to paid parental leave of three years. It was based on low, means-tested benefits for two years or higher benefits of one year at the poverty line. Altogether, these family policies supported a male breadwinner/female part-time care model of the family.

In the second half of the 2000s, a path departure has taken place. Both pillars of family policies were extended: The welfare state has started to substantially increase the provision of public care for children below 3 years of age and connected social rights. Moreover, it has introduced generous pay for about one year of parental leave, and therefore the option to act as 'autonomous caregiver' for those who temporarily are providing family care, as long as they have been employed before. It has also established two months of paternity leave. This means that the welfare state is increasingly supporting a gender equalising form of a multi-option model, even if this is not yet realised. In this regard, it has converged towards the development path of the Finnish family policies.

There was also a paradigm change in the *Spanish* welfare state towards family policies in the last years: The development path of family policies was characterized by very little efforts in the field of family policy for a long time until the middle of the 2000s. The responsibility for childcare had nearly completely left over to the extended family. However, since then, the welfare state has defined childcare for children below 6 years a public task. Policies have established comprehensive, publicly funded care for children from 3-6 and started to extend public or publicly financed childcare for children below 3 years. This is also an active measure to support the employment of mothers of young children and a dual breadwinner/public childcare model of the family. This development path is therefore characterized by path departure. Paid maternity leave, on the other hand, is still limited to 18 weeks and paid parental leave still does not exist, which also is true for the option to act as financially autonomous family caregiver.

I have discussed how far the path dependence concept of historical institutionalism offers the possibility to explain path dependence or path departure of family policies in a comparative perspective. I have argued that this concept has the problem that it neglects the role of the social, cultural and economic context for the explanation of development

paths of specific institutions like family policies. As it was shown, cultural change, together in part with social change, is an important factor to explain why the development was path dependent or characterized by path departure. As far as the development has been convergent, it can be assumed that the diffusion of policy concepts and ideas from other European countries, mainly also the Nordic countries, has played a role, as well as EU policies towards family and employment and the cultural values that they have transported.

Table 2: Main features of family policies 1992 and 2010

	Finland		Germany		Spain	
	1992	2010	1992	2010	1992	2010
Public childcare provision and social rights to get care						
Children 3-6	High*	High*	High	High	Low	Medium
Children below 3	High*	High*	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Generosity of family leave	High	High	Low	High	Low	Low
Number of months with pay of at least 2/3 of former income	10 months	10 months	3,5 months	12 months	0 months	0 months
High: more than 7 months Low: 7 months or less						
Possibility to act as financially autonomous family carer	High	High	Low	High (in part)	Low	Low
Particular promotion of parental leave by men	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No
Type of family policy	Support of a multi-option model (gender equalising)	Support of a multi-option model (gender equalising)	Support of women's employment in a male breadwinner context	Support of a multi-option model (gender equalising)	Nearly absence of family policies	support of women's employment in a male breadwinner context

*individual social right of each child to public care

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ⁱ Eurostat data.