Different paths of family policy modernization in continental welfare states

Changing dynamics of reform in German and Swiss family policies since the mid-70s

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Paper prepared for the annual conference of the Swiss Political Science Association, Balsthal, November 2-3, 2006

Abstract

Family policy in continental welfare states strongly reflected the male breadwinner model at the beginning of the 1970s. With the emergence of post-industrialism, however, this model has become increasingly ill-suited with regard to the new social structures and values. This paper studies the impact of the post-industrial social needs and demands on family and care policy and politics in Germany and Switzerland. The power resources approach falls short of explaining the recent continental care policy “modernization”, since the labor movement has no strong interest in care policy and the mobilization of women’s organizations has remained weak. Instead, the paper argues that the politics of reform must be analyzed with a coalitional approach in a multi-dimensional policy space. Indeed, the adaptation of the male breadwinner model to new needs and values can be achieved along different paths, namely via a) the recognition of care work (recognition model), b) increased female labor market participation (working mother model) or c) an overall rebalancing of work and care for both men and women (social transformation model). Each of these reform directions gives rise to different conflict lines that foster specific actor alliances.

Based on an empirical analysis of actor positions in all family policy reform processes since the mid-1970s, the results show that in both countries, social-liberal value alliances and cross-class alliances between employers and the left have become important drivers of work-centered modernization, whereas social-conservative alliances advocate the public recognition of female care work. Due to the different institutional frameworks of decision-making, this multi-dimensionality of care policy modernization has led to sequential waves of care policy reforms in Germany and to reform stalemate in Switzerland until the end of the 1990s. In more recent years, however, social-liberal and cross-class alliances have become successful drivers of family policy in the direction of a working mother model.
**Introduction**

Traditional family policies in continental welfare states privilege the male breadwinner model, i.e. the support of family households mainly by means of financial transfers. These benefits are often tied to the labor market participation and the income of the male earner. Care work within the family is mainly provided by dependent women and is not in itself a source of eligibility for public financial support. Consequently, universal family benefits – unrelated to labor market income -, external care infrastructure, parental leave schemes or maternity insurance are traditionally less developed in these regimes, compared to social-democratic or liberal welfare states (Lewis 1992). The family and care policy institutions in a particular country have crucial implications for the respective life chances of men and women. The literature on welfare regimes initially failed to acknowledge for these gendered dimensions of the welfare states (Esping-Andersen 1990, Korpi 1983). The feminist critique of the welfare regime literature (Orloff 1993, Sainsbury 1994, Daly 1994) provoked a fruitful rethinking of regime characteristics and the inclusion of family and care policy as key components in comparative welfare state research (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1999, 2002, Huber and Stephens 2001, Iversen and Rosenbluth 2005). The male breadwinner orientation of family policy in the continental welfare states is mainly being explained with regard to the strong role of Christian Democratic conservatism in these countries (van Kersbergen 1995). In alliance or competing with the labor movement, these conservative actors built a highly developed system of financial transfers, helping the male breadwinner in keeping his family by compensating to some extent the costs of child-raising.

In addition to the feminist critique of the welfare regime literature, the emergence of post-industrial social structures and values since the late 1970s has provoked a renewed interest in family and care policies, because the male breadwinner model is particularly ill-suited in coping with the social needs and demands of a post-industrial society. Indeed, post-industrialization creates a wide range of new social needs (see, for instance, Armingeon and Bonoli 2006, Bonoli 2005b, Esping-Andersen 1999, Huber and Stephens 2006, Taylor-Gooby 2005), particularly in the field of gender relations and family policy. Rising female education levels and labor market participation rates foster claims for work-care reconciliation policies, such as care infrastructure or maternity insurance; growing family instability and divorce rates raise poverty levels in single-parent households; lone mothers are often unable to fully

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1 My contribution for this panel is part of an ongoing Ph.D.-project under the direction of Professor Hanspeter Kriesi at the University of Zurich. I would like to thank Hanspeter Kriesi and Olivier Giraud for helpful comments.
participate in the labor market and risk not to qualify for child support; finally, the industrial household organization – i.e. an unpaid “de-commodified” female caregiver and a “commodified” male full-time earner – most fundamentally clashes with post-industrial values and the libertarian emphasis on gender equality, individualism and equal opportunities for men and women. All these structural and ideological developments challenge the continental welfare regime.

In other social policy fields, such as pensions or activation and labor market policies, post-industrialism has led to a thorough restructuring of the content and politics of these policies (Häusermann 2006, Armingeon and Bonoli 2006). What impact of post-industrial social structures and value changes can we expect with regard to family and care policy? Is the male breadwinner model doomed to disappear, and if yes, by what model is it going to be replaced? Following the power resources approach, we should expect only marginal changes, since the victims of post-industrial risks and needs are dispersed and weakly organized. Nevertheless, we observe in most continental regimes (including Switzerland and Germany) a series of “modernizing” reforms, tending to detach family benefits from labor market participation and to improve policies such as external child care infrastructure, parental leave schemes or lone parent allowances (Jenson and Sineau 2001, OECD 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, Leitner et al. 2004). Hence, one puzzle and one question are at the center of this study. The puzzle is the following: Why do these - highly unlikely - modernizing reforms take place? And the question asks where “modernization” is leading the continental welfare states to.

My point is that both questions can be answered only if we focus on the politics of reforms, i.e. the political actors, their preferences and interactions. Such a coalitional approach is necessary, because the modernization of continental family policy is taking place along a plurality of conflict lines, which oppose the political actors in highly different ways. Thereby, new alliance potentials emerge for actors, who may support particular reforms for entirely different reasons. Hence, if one wants to understand family policy development in post-industrial continental welfare states, one needs to identify the salient conflict dimensions and how the relevant actors position themselves with regard to these dimensions.

In the first part of this paper, I will develop the analytical framework of a multidimensional reform space with the hypothetical ideal-positions of particular actors. This allows me to derive hypotheses regarding the conflict lines and alliances that are likely to structure post-industrial continental family politics. Coalition-building is enabled and constrained by an
institutional framework of decision-making that varies between countries. Hence, an institutionalist argument is developed to explain cross-country differences. After presenting the research design and the empirical and methodological strategy in more detail, the empirical chapter of the contribution will first analyze the evolution of actor configurations and reform-coalitions for Switzerland and Germany separately, before comparing the countries with regard to the substantial policy development.

1. **Theoretical framework and hypotheses**

How are institutional changes of the continental male breadwinner family policy brought about? And who are the drivers of modernization? The existing literature comes to diverging expectations and answers with regard to these questions. In a power-resource perspective, authors remain highly skeptical as to the chances for substantial change, since the victims of post-industrial social needs and demands – such as lone mothers, young families, highly educated women, divorced parents – are a very heterogeneous and dispersed group that is not only weakly represented in parliaments, parties and trade unions (Ebbinghaus 2006), but also unlikely to mobilize massively, because they lack the conscience of a “common cause”, i.e. their specific needs diverge too much (Kischelt and Rehm 2006), and there is no single actor likely to bundle these interests. This literature, however, fails to account for the many reforms of the recent years. Hence, a different strand of literature points to the mobilizing capacity of women’s movements in the struggle against the male breadwinner model (Naumann 2005, Orloff 2006, Bonoli 2005b). Furthermore, Bleses and Seelaib-Kaiser (2004) attribute Germany’s changes in family policy to a “modernized” Christian Democracy. Finally, authors with a more coalition-focused approach stress the importance of a new coalition of left-wing and liberal actors, changing selectively (Ballestri and Bonoli 2003) or profoundly the direction of family policy (Daguerre 2003, Binder et al. 2004). I would argue that the reason why these studies come to different conclusions with regard to the driving forces of family policy reform, lies in the fact that they conceive of “family policy modernization” in a misleading, uni-dimensional way. In this conceptualization of the reforms, the male breadwinner model forms one extreme of the reform axis, while the “post-industrial” family policy forms the other extreme. This perspective, however, obstructs a view on the underlying multidimensional reform dynamics. All the various actors may be dissatisfied with the male breadwinner model and support it’s reform. However, all of them may want to “modernize” it in a different way, giving more or less weight to female labor market participation, the upvaluation of care work or a more in-depth transformation of the social structures and norms
of family and work organization. This is why no single actor can become the sole new driver of post-industrial policy reform.

1.1. Different dimensions of modernization in contemporary family and care policy

The continental welfare state as it has grown in the industrial age is characterized as a male breadwinner model, because women’s and children’s material well-being and citizenship rights depend on the male breadwinner. Derived pension rights for spouses or family allowances tied to income illustrate the male breadwinner type of social policy, since neither women nor children are directly, as individuals, eligible for social benefits. Family allowances, e.g. are seen as a part of the income of the male breadwinner. Hence, part-time workers or unemployed have no or only limited rights to such benefits. Family benefits are not means-tested, since their goal is to enable the male breadwinner’s household to afford a standard of living, which corresponds to his status on the labor market. In the 1950s and 1960s, this model was indeed “modern”. The right of mothers not to work was a symbol of social and economic progress and wealth. Indeed, the success of the industrial welfare state was to allow even middle class households to “afford” a housewife and to live on one income only\(^2\). The male breadwinner model is highly “bismarckian”, insofar as it relies heavily on labor market income as a criterion for the eligibility to public benefits. The division of work within the family and the organization and provision of care work belong to the private realm, in which the state is not supposed to intervene. Furthermore, gender roles differ starkly: while most men are in full-time, paid employment, care work remains unpaid and is provided almost exclusively by women.

Since the 1970s, family and labor market instabilities have rendered the male breadwinner model rather obsolete as a social reality and a normative goal. Unemployment, divorce and precarious work-conditions have increased the number of individuals – men and women, but mostly women - with discontinuous employment biographies, who are unable to rely on a male breadwinner and who are, at the same time, badly covered by the conservative welfare state. The bismarckian reliance on paid employment as the only source for eligibility to public benefits has become more and more dysfunctional. Moreover, the values of individualism and

\(^2\) What today is often – and, from a contemporary perspective, rightfully - depicted as a patriarchal and inegalitarian system oppressing women’s independence was then claimed by large parts of the women’s movement itself, as Naumann (2005) shows for the German case.
gender equality have gained prominence from the 1970s onwards, when more and more men and women refused to or failed to live up to the traditional gender roles. From the late 1970s onwards, some need for adaptation of family policy to the new needs and demands was widely perceived across the partisan spectrum in most countries (Pfenning and Bahle 2000, Bleses and Rose 1998). However, “modernization” of the male breadwinner model can be achieved along different paths. Nancy Fraser (2001) distinguishes between the universal breadwinner, the caregiver parity and the universal caregiver models as three alternative visions of post-industrial welfare states. This distinction is most helpful. However, since Fraser discusses her visions in a more normative way with regard to gender equality only, I will instead use the labels of working mother model, recognition model and societal transformation model to the three dimensions of family policy modernization.

The recognition model (inspired by Fraser’s caregiver parity model) is based on the idea of detaching family policy benefits and services from labor market participation. Indeed, it recognizes care work, i.e. the birth and upbringing of children, as a basis for the eligibility to social rights. Examples of such a reform strategy include universal and equal allowances for all families, independent from income, or birth benefits for non working mothers. This model indeed adapts to post-industrialism because it does rely on continuous, standard employment relations. Parental, “uncommodified” care work becomes a source of social rights in itself. Insofar, the realm of legitimate state intervention is extended to the previously private realm of the family. However, the recognition model does not aim at gender equality in the sense of more equal roles for men and women in the society. To the contrary, by rewarding care work, the recognition model creates negative incentives for women’s labor market participation.

In contrast to the recognition model, the working mother model (inspired by Fraser’s universal breadwinner model) aims at more equal gender roles by creating positive incentives for female “commodification”. Male and female gender roles become more alike since the typical female employment biography becomes more similar to the traditionally male pattern. The policy reforms belonging to this dimension of modernization provide benefits or services that help to reconcile work and care (day care centers, nannies, etc.) and to replace temporary income-loss in case of birth. Hence, benefits are often income-related and insurance-based. Contrary to the recognition model, the working mother model is a) gender egalitarian and b) perpetuates commodified paid work on the labor market as the single source for individual social rights. The state does not intervene in the division of gender roles within the household
and does not recognize parental care work. Care work is only considered as “work” in it’s commodified form, i.e. by professional care workers.

Finally, the societal transformation model (inspired by Fraser’s universal caregiver model) aims at the most profound change of social norms, labor market organization and gender roles. It aims at enabling both parents to participate equally in the labor market and in care work. Policies supporting flexible work-care organization, such as part-time rights, job sharing or parental leave schemes belong to this category of instruments. In addition, the societal transformation model recognizes new family forms, such as single parent families and relies on parenthood, rather than employment, as the basis for social rights. It requires societal transformation because it aims at a new distribution of work and care and an overall reorganization of the processes of production and reproduction. Similarly to the working mother model, it is gender egalitarian, because it aims at equalizing the male and female work-care balance. And similarly to the recognition model, it upvalues care work as equally important to commodified work.

Hence, the four models of family policy can be understood as the quadrants of a two-dimensional policy space. A first dimension relates to the status of commodified work in the distribution of social rights and – more generally - to the legitimacy of public intervention in the private realm of the household. Shifts on this axis reflect changes in the importance of labor market participation as a criterion for the distribution of life chances. The second dimension relates to the level of aspired gender egalitarianism. Both the societal transformation model and the working mother model aim at more similar gender roles for both men and women, which means that the importance of gender in pre-structuring highly differential life courses should be considerably weakened. This model corresponds to individualist and libertarian values and opposes a more traditionalist and differentialist conception of male and female roles in the society. According to the male breadwinner model and the recognition model, by contrast, care remains mainly female and commodified work mainly male.

Figure 1 locates the four models in the two-dimensional policy space. It also provides an ideal-typical location of political forces and ideologies in this space.
The ellipses in figures 1 represent the hypothesized preferences of the main political forces\textsuperscript{3}. Hence, for each model of family policy, we can derive hypotheses on the political alliance that are likely to support it.

The “old left”, i.e. the traditional Social Democracy and the trade unions are mainly motivated by their positions on the state-market divide. They struggle for de-commodification and advocate ample state intervention in the redistribution of life chances. However, part of the European left has largely reoriented its ideological stance since the 1970s, under the influence of libertarian values (Kitschelt 1994, Kriesi 1999). The “new left”, mainly green parties, social movements and – to differing extents – social democratic parties, strongly favor libertarian values, while the distributional class conflict has lost some of its salience to them. In Germany and Switzerland, the Social Democratic parties have lost large parts of their constituencies in the working class. Today, they mobilize most of their support among rather highly skilled socio-cultural specialists (Kitschelt and Rehm 2005). The Social Democratic

\textsuperscript{3} The borders of the ellipses may be read as indifference curves, which means that e.g. conservatives advocate traditional values, but are supposed to have a considerable leeway with regard to the state-market-axis. They give clear priorities to values and slight concessions in the libertarian direction “cost” must be compensated by strong concessions on the second axis (I owe this idea to Torben Iversen).
parties in these countries can therefore be expected to privilege libertarian values over the state-market divide. Hence, there is an alliance potential between the old and the new left (A0) with regard to the societal transformation model, combining gender equality and decommodification.

In addition, the old left – mainly trade unions – may also find a common ground with conservative forces in supporting policies that recognize parental care work by means of public subsidies. Trade unions organize mainly male workers. Hence, gender egalitarian policies have always had a precarious place on their agendas. Hence, they may advocate the decommodifying character of recognition policies, even though the latter are not gender egalitarian. Conservative actors, however, are expected to advocate recognition policies precisely for their traditionalist aspects. Indeed, recognition policies preserve the family and the household as the unit of the society. Hence, I expect an alliance potential between the old left, Christian Democracy and right-wing conservative parties (A1) with regard to the recognition model.

The male breadwinner model combines minimalist state intervention with a differentialist conception of gender roles. In the industrial age, this model could emerge from a compromise between labor and capital, because family policy was all about the decommodification of the household, rather than the individual family members. In the post-industrial context, however, I merely expect an alliance potential between liberal and conservative actors (A2) with regard to the male breadwinner model, since it upvalues paid work and preserves traditional gender roles.

Economically liberal actors, in turn, have rather ample ideological leeway with regard to socially libertarian values. Hence, they might as well join in the support of a working mother model, particularly in post-industrial times, when most women cannot rely on a male breadwinner anymore. Therefore, there is a social-liberal alliance potential between liberal actors and the new left (A3) with regard to the working mother model.

Moreover, employers organizations are also expected to increasingly support the working mother model, not only because women absent from the labor market run poverty risks (that eventually must be covered by welfare benefits), but also because of a future shortage in skilled labor, which is already foreseeable for demographic reasons. This aim may also meet the aspirations of a qualified female workforce. Hence, I even expect the emergence of cross-class alliances between employers, the new left, and high skill unions in highly feminized sectors (A4) with regard to the working mother model.
1.2. Development of reform coalitions and policy outputs

The above hypotheses deal with the five alliance potentials (A0-4) that emerge from the expected positioning of the political actors. They should be distinguished from actual reform-coalitions, which are formed in the back and forth of political negotiation in decision-making processes. Indeed, for a potential alliance to materialize, it takes processes of political exchange and compromising and the formation of ambiguous agreements (Palier 2005). Hence, reform-coalitions determine the actual development of the content of family policy in a particular country. Indeed, I assume a similar development of actor configurations and alliance potentials over time in both Switzerland and Germany, because they emerge from the clash between existing institutions on the one hand, and post-industrial structures and values on the other hand, both being similar in the two countries. However, despite the resembling alliance potentials, the actual formation of reform-coalitions depends on country-specific institutions structuring (electoral) competition and decision-making in the policy space. These institutions differ considerably between both countries, Switzerland being the prototypical case of a consensual regime (Lijphart 1999), while Germany displays a more adversarial and majoritarian pattern of electoral competition between government and the opposition (Lehmbruch 2000, Lijphart 1999). Whether Social Democrats support or reject a reform together with Christian Democrats, with liberal parties or employers depends largely on this structure of political competition in a country. This has a direct relevance for the likelihood of the different dimensions of modernization to become salient in a particular country’s family policy.

I hypothesize that in a consensual institutional framework, coalitional dynamics are more flexible. New, diverse and varying alliance potentials between actors have better chances to develop into actual reform coalitions than in adversarial systems, where the major camps of government and opposition will eventually oppose each other anyway, mostly for electoral reasons, whether or not their ideal-positions are very distant or rather close. Hence, I expect politics in the German adversarial context to a certain extent to be locked into old structures of conflict, opposing the left to the right. By contrast, new coalitions crossing traditional party divisions (left-right / government-opposition) as well as cross-class coalitions are more likely to emerge in the Swiss consensual institutional context. Consequently, I suppose that family policy modernization develops in a more limited and sequential way in Germany compared to Switzerland, where I expect a continuous modernization along different dimensions.
2. Design, data and methods

2.1. Selection of reform processes and countries

In order to test the above hypotheses on alliance-building and policy development over time, I need to examine policy-making since the 1970s, when post-industrial needs and demands appeared on the policy agendas. For this reason, all successful and failed family policy reform processes at the national level since 1977 have been selected. Their content is presented in detail in appendix 1. 10 reform processes have taken place in Switzerland and 13 in Germany.

Germany and Switzerland fit in a “most similar system design” strategy of comparison. Indeed, both countries are continental, conservative welfare regimes, in post-industrial social needs and demands are particularly badly covered (Bonoli 2004).

The two countries differ, however, with respect to the institutional framework of decision-making. In Switzerland, all major parties are represented in the oversized coalition-government. While this - as well as the threat of an optional popular referendum at the end of the process - makes policy-making highly consensus-oriented, it also allows the parties to defend autonomous positions in parliament and to build alliances rather flexibly. Germany, by contrast, displays a more majoritarian logic of party competition in the parliamentary realm (both countries differ markedly on Lijpharts (1999) executives-parties dimension). Even though the government has to negotiate consensus with the opposition on particular policies and under certain circumstances (i.e. if the opposition holds the majority of seats in the Bundesrat, the federal chamber), the relation between the two main parties (CDU/CSU and SPD) is usually much more adversarial than in Switzerland (except for times of oversized coalition-governments). This bipolarism implies stronger party discipline in parliament and less variable and flexible alliance formation.

2.2. Data and methods

Each element of reform can be classified according to the direction of reform it aims at (male breadwinner, working mother, recognition or societal transformation models, see appendix 1).

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4 In both countries, however, family policy is made at sub-state levels, too. A study focusing on the development of policy outcomes would, of course, need to include the sub-state level reforms. For the tracing of coalitional dynamics, however, the 23 reforms provide a sufficient empirical basis. Moreover, the recent governmental Swiss family policy report (EDI 2004) shows that the issues on the political agenda are largely similar at the cantonal and the national level.

5 Even though it is true that Switzerland has a rather liberal labor market regime. Hence, the classification of Switzerland as a liberal or conservative regime is disputed. However, with regard to family policy, Switzerland should be classified as a conservative welfares state.
In order to analyse alliance-formation and coalition-building on these reforms, I have retraced the main issues and debates of the reforms by means of secondary literature, about 10 interviews for each country with representatives of the main political actors and primary sources such as governmental reports, parliamentary debates and reports on consultation procedures.

I have then coded the positions of the actors on four aspects of every single element of reform: 1) whether the actor was favorable to state intervention in this specific issue or not, 2) whether the social policy intervention should apply to all citizens (universal coverage) or only to parts of them, 3) whether benefits should be high or low and 4) whether the intervention should occur at the level of the federal state or at some sublevel. For each reform-issue and for all actors, these positions have been coded on a scale from 0 to 2. 1 means that the actor agrees to the position of the reform bill proposal, 2 means that an actor advocates a less generous policy (non-intervention, low benefits, low range of insured people, etc) and 0 that the actor favors a more generous solution (universal, tax-financed, high benefit levels).

For the identification of actors’ positions, I have relied on the responses to the official consultation procedures (Switzerland), the official statements in the public hearings before the parliamentary commission (Germany), press statements of the actors and parliamentary debates. For the few cases, for which such sources were unavailable, I used previous research (Ballestri and Bonoli 2003) and press articles.

I have then averaged the positions for each reform element over the four aspects and analysed this data by multidimensional scaling (MDS with PROXSCAL in SPSS 11.0). This scaling method displays actors and issues spatially. The graphs can be read as follows: the distance between an actor and an issue represents the “generosity” that the actor advocates with regard to this issue. An actor located closely to an issue, for example, claims extensive coverage, while more distant actors advocate restrictive positions. Hence, actors with a similar distance from the same issue (regardless of the distance between the actors themselves) advocate the same position. Therefore, they form an alliance potential. Thus, alliance potentials do not depend on the distances between the actors. I have highlighted the alliance potentials with ellipses in the graphs and labelled the ellipses with regard to the type of objective alliance it shows (A0-4).
4. Empirical analysis

The empirical country chapters are structured as follows. After a brief presentation of the country-specific policy legacies and institutional reform conditions, I discuss actor positions and their evolution in single reforms and over the whole sample of reform processes.6

4.1. Switzerland

Switzerland has clearly been a continental-conservative welfare regime with regard to family policy in the 1970s. Family allowance schemes as the main policy instruments have spread from the 1960s onwards (Dafflon 2003). The family allowances in Switzerland are mostly financed by employers and often tied to an income. Hence, self-employed, part-time workers or people absent from the labor market had very limited or no rights to child allowances. Hence, post-industrial developments in social and economic structure induced a strong need for adaptation (Fux et al. 1997). In addition, family allowances diverge strongly across the cantons (see Dafflon 2003, Binder al. 2004). Even though the federal state could harmonize the cantonal family allowance schemes, no such reform has succeeded so far. The fragmentation of the legislative authority in family and care policy is an obstacle to modernization, but also a consequence of the male breadwinner model. Nevertheless many family policy proposals are discussed at the national level and they allow to trace the alliances and attempts at modernization over time.

The analysis of all family policy reforms since the late 1970s shows that all four dimensions of modernization have been at stake at some point in time. An attempt to harmonize the level of family allowances among cantons in 1986 dealt with a typical male breadwinner policy. However, this reform strategy has lost its importance over the years. Indeed, more recent reforms dealing with child allowances proposed to grant them independently from labor market participation (at stake in 1986, 1991 and 2003). Such policy proposals aim at modernization in the direction of the recognition model, since they reward child rearing directly. Recognition policies have also repeatedly been on the agenda with proposals for birth benefits granted to women not active on the labor market (1984, 1987, 1994, 1999). The

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6 For reasons of space, not all 23 MDS can be presented in the paper. For illustrative purposes, I present the MDS of four reforms for each country. The eight reforms have been selected because they combine several strategies of reform (male breadwinner, working mother model, recognition model and societal transformation model) and because they illustrate well the different possible alliance potentials (A0-4, see above). For a complete account of reform contents and actor positions / alliances, see appendix 1.
working mother model has mostly been at stake in reform bills for maternity insurance in 1984, 1987, 1994, 1999 and 2004. In addition, both the 2002 proposal to reimburse external child care expenditures and to create work incentives for less privileged families, as well as the 2003 bill for publicly subsidized care infrastructure focused on the working mother model. Finally, the societal transformation model appeared on the agenda in the 1984 proposal for parental leave, in the 1991 proposal for means-tested supplementary benefits to lone parents, as well as in the 1999 project to grant maternity benefits in case of adoption.

Hence, family policy has indeed become multidimensional in Switzerland. Now do the actor alliances that formed on these reforms correspond to the expected patterns? Maternity insurance for working mothers has always been supported by the Social Democrats, trade unions, the Green Party and women’s organizations. Over time, however, the liberal party FDP, high skill unions and even the Christian Democratic party also started to support maternity insurance and – with regard to the working mother model – took much more “new leftist” positions on this matter. It was merely the right-wing conservative parties, such as the Swiss People’s Party or the Protestant People’s Party and the employers who remained opposed to the working mother model. Nevertheless, the Christian Democrats – together with the other conservative actors – did not lend an unconditional support to maternity insurance. Indeed, they always stressed the importance of additional benefits to non working mothers, as well (recognition model). The left-wing parties, in turn, supported the Christian Democrats in this claim. Hence, a large Social Democratic – Christian Democratic alliance supported the recognition policies, against a cross-class coalition of employers, liberals and high skill unions.

Figure 1 and 2 illustrate these findings for the proposals on maternity insurance and birth benefits in 1987 and 1999. In 1987, a social-liberal alliance of the left, liberal parties (FDP, LdU), women’s organizations and trade unions (A3) supported maternity insurance, against conservative parties (CVP, SVP) and employers. Benefits to non working mothers (recognition) gathered the support of the left and part of the conservatives (CVP, peasants) (A1). The peasants, e.g. supported only birth benefits, notably because their wives normally were working on the home farm without formally being employed. On the other extreme, high skill unions, the liberal parties and employers (SAV) (A4) are located very far from birth benefits and closer to maternity insurance, which means that they only supported the working mother model, but not the recognition model.
Figures 2-5: Multidimensional scaling of four Swiss family policy reforms (abbreviations see FN 7, guidelines for interpretation, see p. 12)
Until 1999, it was mostly the location of the Christian Democrats (CVP) that had changed. They advocated all elements of reform, even the benefits in case of adoption (societal transformation model). The CVP really shifted to a more leftist stance in family policy. The other conservative parties (SVP, EVP), however, remained open only with regard to birth benefits (recognition model), and the liberal party (LPS) and employers (SAV) advocated maternity insurance for working mothers only. Finally, the liberal party FDP was internally split on the reform, because they favored maternity insurance, but were more critical towards birth benefits.

With regard to reforms dealing with financial transfers and family allowances, a similar development of alliance potentials can be identified between 1986 and 2003. In 1986 and in the debate on the parliamentary initiative of 1991, a Social Democratic - Christian Democratic alliance (A1) supported the generalization of family allowances and their detachment from labor market participation and status (recognition model). Again, a cross-class coalition of employers, liberal parties and high skill unions (A4) opposed the recognition model and pleaded for income-related or means-tested benefits. As illustrated in figure 3, the 1991 proposal included also means-tested benefits for lone mothers, a policy supporting new risk groups (societal transformation model). The new and old left (A0) – Social Democrats, trade unions, women’s organizations etc. – remained, however, rather isolated in the support of this measure. By contrast, the Christian Democrats as well as the catholic and protestant unions and churches opposed the means-testing of family allowances for reasons of principle. Since they consider child allowances a reward of care as such, and not a social policy, they insisted on the universality of family benefits for all parents. The 2000 reform (figure 4) again shows some changes in the position of the CVP. Indeed, the Christian Democrats started to support means-tested child allowances for poor families (societal transformation model) together with the left (A1). With regard to the reimbursement of external child care expenses (working mother model), the socialist and green parties, unions, feminists and even the high skill unions formed a potential alliance, and the issue gathered even partial support of the liberal FDP and the employers (A3, A4). A similar pattern of alliances (A3 and A4) has adopted the law on federal subsidies for external care infrastructure in 2003 (Ballestri and Bonoli 2003, MDS not shown).

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7 Abbreviations: CVP Christian Democrats, Employers is the average of SAV (Swiss employers) and SGV (small business employers), FDP Free Radical Party (liberal), High skill CDU/CSU is VSA/SKF, Peak unions is the average of the Christian and the Socialist Peak CDU/CSU (SGB and CNG/Travail.Suisse), SPS Social Democrats, SVP Swiss Peoples Party (conservatives); for guidelines for interpretation, see p. 13;
In sum, the Swiss case confirms that different strategies of reform are on the political agenda and that alliances of actors vary considerably, depending on the issue at stake. There is not one dominant conflict line. Furthermore, the alliance potential patterns that emerge confirm the analytical framework to a large extent. All three dimensions of modernization (recognition, societal transformation, working mother model) become salient in family policy reform debates. The Christian Democrats and conservative parties stress the importance of the recognition model, while the liberal parties and employers (partly) advocate the working mother model only. The positions of the left, however, are more difficult to differentiate and disentangle. Social Democrats, Greens, and trade unions alike support all directions of modernization. However, some difference between the new and the old left appear in the positions of women’s organizations and high skill unions, favoring the gender egalitarian models only, but not the recognition model.

In order to present the development of actor positions over time, I have categorized the elements of each reform with regard to the four dimensions of reform and averaged the actors’ positions for each decade. The overall MDS then allows to trace their positions over time.

Confirming the results from the individual reform studies, figure 5 shows a relatively stable group of Social Democrats, peak unions and greens located at all time points very closely to
all four strategies of reform (A0). This means that these actors have claimed very generous policies with regard to all reform strategies. Since the late 1970s, these actors are consistent supporters of any type of family policy expansion.

There is more variety on the political right. While the Social Democratic – Christian Democratic alliance (A1) has always existed with regard to the recognition model, Christian Democrats opposed parental leave (societal transformation model) in the 1980s, because – as their argument was in Parliament - a child needs direct care from his/her mother not only during 9 month but during a much longer time. They argued that the whole idea of parental leave (and maternity insurance, i.e. the working mother model) was “too unilaterally oriented towards working mothers”\(^8\). Hence, in the 1980s, they are located much more closely to the recognition model than the working mother or the societal transformation model. The Christian Democrats, however, have evolved considerably in the 1990s and the 2000s towards more “new leftist” positions. This development is on the one hand due to value shifts within the party, but also to their electoral fate. Indeed, the crisis of the party in electoral terms (its share on the national level fell from almost one third in the 1980s to less than 15% during the 1990s) might explain large parts of their shift towards a more “progressive” family policy.

Another interesting development concerns the high skill unions. While they have always formed a cross-class coalition with the employers against the recognition and male breadwinner models, they have evolved considerably closer to the working mother model in the 2000s. Their development is similar – though much stronger – to the movement of the liberal party FDP and the employers SAV towards the working mother model. These shifts lead to cross-class-coalitions and – as a novelty - some social-liberal coalitions involving the left and (parts of) the FDP with regard to the working mother model. Why have employers (and skilled labor) and the FDP changed their position only in the late 1990s, while new value structures have evolved from the 1970s onwards? On the one hand, perceptions of a recent lack of skilled female workforce should be taken into account, since both employers and the unions stress this point. Nevertheless, as Kübler points out rightfully (Kübler 2005), this problem has not amplified massively and care infrastructure has not an enormous impact on this development, since skilled women in Switzerland largely chose to work and not to have children. However, the employers’ stance for a better combination of work and external care could be intensified by these demographic concerns and by the fact

\(^8\) Debates in parliament, NR 6.3.1983: 447.
that left and feminist actors have only in the late 1990s started to push the issue of external child care infrastructure. Even as late as in 1996, external child care was a claim of only “low priority” for women (Fux et al. 1997). In addition, the libertarian wing in the FDP has become stronger in the 1990s. These developments increasingly allowed for the formation of cross-class and social-liberal value alliances. These coalitions are indeed a novelty in Swiss family policy of the 1990s.

The conservative Swiss People’s Party SVP has shifted considerably between the 1980s and the 2000s away from all types of family policy. While this party did lend some support to most directions of reform in the 80s, it changed positions in the 1990s towards the recognition and male breadwinner model and has become the main defender of complete austerity in the field of social policy in the 2000s.

Finally, the general hypothesis of a diversification of alliances is confirmed. Contrary to Ballestri and Bonoli (2003), I show that the new potential of social-liberal convergence is not purely coincidental, but partly the result of socio-structural change and value changes, which can also be observed in other fields of social policy, notably pensions (Häusermann 2005). But I have also shown that over time, the conflict lines on family and care policy have become more diverse. With the employers, skilled labor, the FDP and feminists as rather “new” players in the field, family policy becomes even more heterogeneous. This configuration of positions creates opportunities, but also dangers for reforms: on the one hand, a combination of different modernizing paths can unite diverse actors and coalitions in ambiguous agreements (Palier 2005). But at the same time, these packages can also gather “ambiguous support” against them. These dynamics of coalition-formation depend heavily on institutional conditions, which will be discussed in the comparative paragraph below.

4.2. Germany

Germany is considered a proto-typical case of a continental Welfare regime (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999, van Kersbergen 1995). German family policy-making has always been heavily influenced by historical legacies. After the third Reich, state intrusion in the family and

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9 In that sense, I would contradict Binder et al (2004) and Kübler (2005) who see behind the employers’ shift a change in their values on gender equality. Instead, I argue that this belief-change might hold true for the FDP, but not so much for employers, which lend a very selective support to family policy (see also Ballestri and Bonoli 2003). The FDP, however, supports gender equality concerns also in other policy domains (splitting and caring benefits in the pension scheme etc., see also Martin 2002).
natalist policies were a taboo in the political discourse (Gerlach 2004, Naumann 2005, Bleses and Seelaib-Kaiser 2004). This did not prevent the Christian Democrats from developing a generous system of financial transfers and child allowances, differentiated according to the number of children (it was only under the social-liberal coalition in 1974 that child allowances for the first child were introduced). Until the 1960s, such child allowances remained mainly financed by employers for the working population. From the 1960s onwards, however, these private financing schemes were replaced by general tax revenues, and allowances granted independently from the labor market status of parents (Gerlach 2004). Thereby, Germany has moved from a male breadwinner model to a family policy with a strong recognition component. Indeed, German family allowances compensate parents for the costs they incur, compared to people without children (“horizontal equality”). Other directions of family policy, e.g. external care infrastructure, parental leave schemes etc. have not gained strong relevance until the 1970s. German family policy is also organized in a federalist manner, even though competences at the national level are stronger than in Switzerland.

In Germany as in Switzerland, all directions of policy development (male breadwinner, societal transformation, working mother, recognition) have been repeatedly on the political agenda since the mid-1970s (see appendix 1). However, according to the color of the government, some orientations have prevailed in the reform proposals. Hence, the working mother model has been prominently discussed under the social-liberal coalition in the 1970s until 1982, and much less so during the time of the CDU/CSU/FDP government (1983-1998). Towards the end of the 1990s, the working mother model has reappeared on the agenda under the SPD/Green-government (increased tax deductions for external child care expenditures in 2001, incentives to shorten educational leaves in 2000, support of external child care infrastructure in 2004). During the CDU/CSU/FDP-coalition years, however, the left stressed the need for societal modernization, claiming benefits to lone parents and for the individualization of children’s rights. The societal transformation model also remained on the agenda in the recent years, with increased child allowances for lone parents in 1999 or the introduction of a right to part-time employment for parents in 2000.

The recognition model was always important until the end of the 1990s (increases in child allowances in 1981, 1996, 1999 and 2001; expansion of educational benefits for all mothers in

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10 This was also due to the fact that the feminist movement was split, one part claiming measures to free women from labor market constraints and the other – socialist - part opposing public care infrastructure, which might “indoctrinate” children with state ideology (Naumann 2005).

11 Except for 1992 reform which – as a consequence of the reunification process (Gerlach 2004) – favored Kindergarten places
1985 and 2000), not least because of the strong role of the constitutional court in German family policy since the 1980s (Bleses and Seelaib-Kaiser 2004). Nevertheless, the recognition model has recently lost some of its force, because of fiscal austerity. Accordingly, a law to restrict the circle of beneficiaries of educational benefits has been adopted in 2004 (male breadwinner model).

The evolution of actor positions and alliance potentials is shown in detail in appendix 1. I will again discuss general trends and four telling examples of reforms.

The distinction between benefits granted to working mothers (working mother model) only or to all mothers (recognition model) has largely shaped German alliance patterns since the 1970s. When the social-liberal coalition proposed the introduction of maternity leave in 1979, educational benefits were granted exclusively to working mothers (see figure 6 below) \(^{12}\). The CDU/CSU rejected this bill, claiming equal benefits for non working mothers. Even though the SPD as well as the FDP sympathized with the idea of benefits for all mothers, they gave a clear priority to the working mother model. This income-related scheme had also the support of the high skill trade union DAG. Hence, a cross-class alliance formed against the recognition model (A4). Simultaneously, a social-liberal value alliance (A3) advocated the working mother orientation of the reform, including the obligation for women to announce their return to the labor market early, a measure designed to keep women in paid labor. Hence, the CDU/CSU failed in their opposition against female labor market participation. Only in 1985 could the new right-wing government implement educational benefits independent from labor market status. This 1985 reform (figure 7) was a turning point in Christian Democratic family policy. From then on, they promoted the “free choice” of parents to participate or not in the labor market (Bleses and Seelaib-Kaiser 2004), i.e. they did not explicitly oppose female labor market participation, but claimed that any benefit granted to working mothers must also be granted to non working mothers. The SPD and – maybe more surprisingly – the FDP did not oppose this strategy of “free choice”. Hence, a large Christian Democratic – left alliance (A1) supported “free choice” (which in fact is the recognition model).

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\(^{12}\) Abbreviations to figures 7-10: BDA Peak union of German employers, CGD Christian peak trade union, DAG high skill union, DGB German peak trade union, FDP Free Democrats (liberals), PDS Party of Democratic Socialism (extreme left), Service sector employers HDE, Small business employers ZDH, SPD Social Democratic Party, CDU/CSU Christian Democrats, ZDH peak union of small business employers; Family org. and Women’s org. are the averages of the positions of all family and women’s organizations that have intervened in the process.
Figures 7-10: Multidimensional Scaling of four German family policy reforms (abbreviations, see FN12, guidelines for interpretation, see p. 12)
By contrast, the left (parties and unions, A0) claimed - in addition - particular incentives for parents to share the maternity leave between mothers and fathers and special benefits for lone parents (societal transformation model). Employers opposed any increase in expenditures in family policy, notably for non working mothers.

Given their preference for the recognition model, the CDU/CSU/FDP quite surprisingly proposed to increase places in external child care for children between 3 and 6 in 1992 (MDS not shown). However, what seemed to be a large social-conservative (A1) alliance turned soon out to be mere lip-service, when the CDU/CSU – as opposed to FDP and SPD (A3) – refused to allow any federal founding to the program.

It was only in 2000 that the SPD/Green government reformed parental leave and educational benefits (figure 8). The new government bundled diverse modernization strategies by increasing the flat-rate educational benefit (recognition model) with the support of the CDU/CSU (A1), creating incentives to shorten parental leave (working mother model) with the support of FDP and the employers (A3/A4), and introducing the right of parents to work part-time and arrange parental leave more flexibly (societal transformation model, A0). More recently, however, the red-green family policy more clearly privileged the working mother model when introducing special tax deductions for external care expenditures in 1999 and 2001 and extending care infrastructure in 2004 (MDS not shown). Both reforms were advocated by a social-liberal value coalition (A3) and also by the employers (A4), while large parts of the CDU/CSU and family organizations rejected them.

Policy reforms dealing with financial transfers, i.e. family allowances and tax deductions, can be divided in expansive and retrenching reforms. All increases of universal child allowances in 1981, 1996, 1998, 1999 and in 2001 have been supported by the Social Democrats, the trade unions and the Christian Democrats (A1). The FDP, however, shifted from the loyal support of these measures until the 1998 to the very clear-cut priority given to a less costly working mother model. Hence, from 1999 onwards, the old left – conservative alliance (A1) faced a strong liberal opposition.

In 1999 and 2001, the red-green government wanted to limit tax deductions for external child care expenditures to working parents only (working mother model), and they were followed by the FDP and the unions (A3, see figure 9). The CDU/CSU, by contrast, claimed the same deductions also for non working parents (recognition). The new left (SPD and Greens), however, took increasingly large distances from the recognition model. Finally, the positions split even more when the SPD included means-tested allowances for lone and poor families in
the 2001 reform (societal transformation model). As expected, they were supported by the left only (A0).\footnote{In several reforms, there was also a heavy debate on tax deductions. Indeed, the tax deduction system defended by the FDP and the CDU/CSU allowed equal deductions to all families. Because of the progressive tax system, high-income earners saved more money than low income earners. The SPD, unions and the Greens always opposed this system (A0), but they were opposed by a large front of conservatives, liberals and employers.}

The configuration of actor positions, however, was different in reforms aimed at retrenchment. Until the 1980s, cuts proposed by the government were reliably rejected by the opposition: While in 1981, a social-liberal alliance advocated cuts against the CDU/CSU, the same SPD opposed the cuts made by FDP and CDU/CSU in 1983. However, after the 1990s, all major parties and the employers started advocating certain cuts in educational and child allowances, opposed only by minor parts of the CDU/CSU, family associations and most trade unions. This pattern of positions – all major parties vs. constituencies of beneficiaries - resembles mostly to what Pierson (2001) called the “new politics”-alliances for retrenchment. They might become a relevant configuration of actor positions in the future if retrenchment becomes an important reform trend even in family policy.

In sum, as in Switzerland, a variety of conflict lines remained important in Germany and there is no single conflict line that accounts for modernization. The alliance potentials increasingly take the shape suggested in the analytical framework. Indeed, during the era of family policy expansion, the major parties SPD, CDU/CSU and FDP could rather easily agree on both recognition and working mother policies. However, the conservative stance of the CDU/CSU, as opposed to the liberal and libertarian orientation of the FDP have appeared more clearly in the recent years, where – as theoretically expected – they took more clear-cut positions for the working mother respectively the recognition model. Again, the positions of the left are less differentiated. Both old (trade unions) and new (SPD, Green Party) left advocated recognition as well as working mother models. However, similarly to the FDP, the SPD and Greens redefined their stance more clearly towards a working mother model (e.g. their acceptance of the allowance retrenchment), whereas the trade unions still insist heavily on a high level of financial transfers (recognition model) and reject any cuts in them. Similarly, cross-class coalitions between the new left and employers appear more frequently in the 2000s in support of the working mother model. Employers – as the FDP - have renewed their interest in family policy. Not only do they support the working mother model, but they also advocate cuts in formerly universal family allowances.
Again, these shifts can be traced in an overall MDS, which is based on the averaged positions of actors with regard to the four paths of reform and modernization in family policy. In Germany, as opposed to Switzerland, not only the right-wing actors have redefined their preferences over time, but also the left.

Indeed, between the 1970s and the 1980s, the SPD has moved ever closer to the working mother orientation of family policy, reflecting the new left’s increasing reluctance against the recognition model\textsuperscript{14}. During the 1980s and 1990s, the SPD had defended any expansion of family policy, also in directions of the recognition and male breadwinner model. In the 2000s, however, the Social Democrats, as the Green Party, have again taken a more moderate stance and defend the working mother model more clearly.

What is particularly interesting is that this movement of the SPD is clearly opposite to the movement of the trade unions, i.e. the old left. The unions were only weakly interested in family policy in the 1970s and 1980s, but became advocates of all types of family policy expansion in the 1990s and 2000s. Today, they defend much more generous claims than the

\textsuperscript{14} Abbreviations: Employers is the average position of BDA and ZDH, FDP Free Democrats (liberals), Green is the German Green Party, peak unions is the average position of DGB and CGD, SPD Social Democratic Party, CDU/CSU Christian Democrats CDU/CSU
new left. Hence, like in other policy fields, such as pensions (Häusermann 2005), trade unions become more and more isolated from the new left.

A similar polarization can be observed on the right. When the CDU/CSU was in opposition in the 1970s, it claimed rather generous benefits on all dimensions of family policy. Later on, while in government, the CDU/CSU adopted, of course, more moderate positions than the SPD. What is striking, however, is the clear-cut reorientation of family policy positions in the 1990s and 2000 against the working mother and the societal transformation models. Instead, the CDU/CSU advocated the “free choice” of parents to work or not, i.e. the recognition model. However, this model has lost support in the recent years, since it is a very cost-intensive strategy, which becomes increasingly difficult in times of austerity. Moreover, the other right-wing actors have clearly shifted to the working mother model. Indeed, the FDP has evolved to a much more clear-cut preference for the working mother model in the 1990s and 2000s. The FDP and the CDU/CSU have very clearly parted company on family policy issues in the 1990s. From 1998 onwards, the FDP has not supported any more child allowance increase. It is hard to tell whether – as in the Swiss case – this shift results from a libertarian value shift or whether the FDP’s policy position follows pure economic interests and loyalty to employers. Up to now, their support of work-care policies seems quite selective. Similarly, the employers have – after some abstention from family policy in the 1990s – gained a renewed interest in the working mother model in the 2000s.

Hence the structure of political alliance-development in family policy looks somehow rather similar to the Swiss case. The potential for selective social-liberal alliances has certainly increased and the CDU/CSU and the unions seem to be the most likely opponents in this conflict.

Overall, the German actors shift more widely in the policy space than the Swiss actors. This is most probably a result of the institutional framework of decision-making, which differs between Switzerland and Germany. In the more adversarial context, as in Germany, actors are inclined to take more extreme positions in the opposition and more moderate positions in government. And since they have to demarcate themselves from each other more clearly, they also take clearer ideological positions in favor of specific paths of modernization. The institutional framework is also highly relevant for the formation of reform coalitions and the actual policy development. This is the subject of the following comparative paragraph.

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15 The FDP has, e.g., turned down the Social Democratic project for a gender equality law for the private sector in 2000
4.3. **Comparative discussion: ambiguous agreements vs. electoral polarization**

My last hypothesis stated that in a consensual institutional framework, coalitional dynamics for reforms are more flexible, i.e. varying alliance potentials have better chances to result into actual reform coalitions. In adversarial systems, by contrast, government and opposition will eventually oppose each other mostly for electoral reasons, regardless of the proximity or distance of their preferences.

This hypothesis is indeed largely confirmed. In Switzerland, a variety of conflict lines and alliances can be observed not only at the level of policy preferences, but also in the final votes of the parties on the single reforms. The Social Democratic – Christian Democratic alliances for generalized child allowances in 1986, for maternity leave and benefits in 1987 and 1999 or for higher family allowances in 2004 did not break apart, even though these parties usually oppose each other with regard to welfare issues. However, even stronger evidence for the institutionalist hypothesis is provided by the social-liberal and cross-class reform coalitions for maternity insurance in 1999 and in 2004, and for care infrastructure in 2003, since Social Democrats, the FDP and employers are very unusual partners in welfare state policy making. These coalitions can be explained by their common interest in the working mother model and libertarian values. They are the most striking change in the Swiss dynamics of social policy-making. Ballestri and Bonoli (2003) argue that the social-liberal convergence of interest in the 2003 reform of care infrastructure was highly coincidental. Hence they do not consider this coalition to be a new driver of family policy development. I tend to argue against them, because the social-liberal coalitions have been observed on various family policy reforms and in several policy fields. Moreover, they can be meaningfully explained by structural developments of labor markets and value cleavages. Nevertheless, I tend to contradict Binder et al (2004.) and Kübler (2005), who argue that the social-liberal-employers-coalition is the new dominant “advocacy coalition” in Swiss family policy. Such an interpretation overlooks the diversity of reform dimensions and coalitions. Indeed, there are at least three driving coalitions in Swiss family policy. Aside the social-liberal support for the working mother model, the Social Democratic – Christian Democratic coalition for the recognition model remains intact. In addition, a “new and old”-left coalition – selectively supported by parts of the liberal parties and women’s organizations –still pushes for societal transformation policies.
In Germany, by contrast, the new alliance potentials cross-cutting the government-opposition and class-cleavages mostly did not materialize into reform-coalitions. Instead, the voting behavior of the main political parties was eventually structured by the government-opposition conflict. To provide a few illustrating examples, one can mention the 1981 increase in child allowances by the SPD/FDP government. Even though this reform was perfectly in line with the preferences of the Christian Democrats, the latter voted against the reform in parliament, arguing that the increase could not be financed. The same held true for the 1999 increase of child allowances by the new SPD / Green government. Conversely, the SPD abstained from voting the 1985 introduction of educational benefits, even though it had previously claimed precisely this kind of benefit. Finally, with regard to the new social-liberal alliances that emerged from 1998 onwards, a very striking example is the red-green reform in 2004, supporting external child care infrastructure: The FDP had been claiming such a reorientation of family and care policies away from financial transfers and towards the working mother model from the early 1990s onwards. In every previous family policy reform by the former conservative government, the FDP had put forward its own bill proposal, stressing the importance of external child care infrastructure for working parents. In spite of all that, the FDP – when in opposition - rejected the 2004 reform for formal and organizational reasons. Hence, the German institutional and electoral context clearly hampers the chances of new coalitions to emerge. In Germany, the new alliance potentials can thus be observed when looking at actor positions, but they hardly materialize, since politics are predominantly structured by the government-opposition divide.

5. Conclusions
In this article, I have argued that with the emergence of post-industrial social and value structures, actor alliances and coalitions in family policy change. The results show that cross-class alliances and social-liberal value alliances have become increasingly frequent in German and Swiss family policy-making. Moreover, the analyses of the individual reforms demonstrate that the multidimensionality of family politics is not such a new phenomenon: cross-class alliances between employers and high skill unions in Switzerland (against the recognition model) and social-liberal value alliances for the support of working mothers (as a part of the SPD-FDP “Gesellschaftspolitik” in Germany, Dienel 2002) had already appeared at the end of the 1970s. However, alliances between liberal actors, employers and the new left (Social Democrats and Greens) become ever more frequent. This is the major change and novelty in the post-industrial politics of family policy: in both Germany and Switzerland new
structural cleavages opposing social-liberal alliances to conservative actors become salient as a consequence of post-industrial labor market structures and value changes. Nevertheless, institutions produce cross-country differences: while new alliance potentials appear in both countries, it depends on the institutional context whether they develop into actual policy-making coalitions. Since party competition is low in Switzerland, parties can indeed form varying coalitions throughout the reform process and over time. In Germany, by contrast, the more polarized logic of party competition structures actual policy-making very much along the government-opposition divide and prevents the formation of new reform-coalitions crossing this divide.

These differences in the formation of reform coalitions have important implications for the modernization of family policy, i.e. the policy output. I expected that modernization would progress more quickly and encompassingly in Switzerland, because new coalitions for varying directions of family policy modernization form more easily. Quite contrarily, however, the multitude of simultaneously pursued reform dimensions was more of an obstacle to reform than a catalyst. Indeed, the proponents of reforms tied reform packages directed at several modernizing strategies at the same time (recognition, working mother and societal transformation, see appendix 1). Instead of producing ambiguous agreements for these reforms by gathering the support of various actors, these packages have often produced ambiguous agreements against the reforms, when several actors rejected the package for a single element they did not agree to. Only rather limited reforms, directed at a single dimension of modernization (notably towards the working mother model) have been accepted in the recent years. Hence, Swiss family policy at the moment seems to tend towards the development of the working mother model and to some financial transfers to special risk groups (societal transformation model).

In the German case, by contrast, more reforms have actually succeeded. The reforms were usually clearly directed towards a particular direction of family policy modernization, mainly the recognition model during the CDU/CSU/FDP-government and the working mother model from 1998 onwards. Hence, both paths to modernization of family policy have been followed at some point in Germany, but in sequences and not simultaneously. A specific “institutional” threat to reforms, however, results when majorities in the Bundestag and the Bundesrat diverge. For electoral reasons, the opposition may block family policy reforms in the second chamber. In the 1990s, this constellation of power has indeed led to a slowing down of German family policy modernization.
A final remark deals with the recent focus of welfare state research on retrenchment (e.g. Pierson 2001, Bonoli et al. 2000, Huber and Stephens 2001, Korpi and Palme 2003). Family policy as integral part of the welfare state (i.e. a policy shaping life chances and the material well-being of individuals) defies the retrenchment-thesis. In no other social policy field is so much expansion taking place at the moment. On the one hand, this can be – functionally - explained by the structural inadequacies of the conservative welfare states to post-industrial social needs and demands. On the other hand, however, family policy also becomes a field for political credit-claiming for actors, who otherwise have to implement highly unpopular policies of retrenchment in the fields of pension, health, unemployment etc. The German reform for external care infrastructure in 2004 illustrates this mechanism most clearly. Indeed, this bill stated that the savings resulting from the Hartz IV cuts in long-term unemployment benefits are to be reallocated imperatively to the expansion of external child care infrastructure at the local level. Hence, family policy modernization became a counterpart to the very unpopular retrenchment of existing benefits in unemployment policy. This mechanism of tying “modernizing packages” (Bonoli 2005) has become a pattern of post-industrial welfare reform politics.
References


## Appendix 1: Tables of analyzed reforms

### Content, actor positions and coalitions in Swiss family policy reforms (federal level) 1978 – 2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Reform</th>
<th>Directions of policy reform</th>
<th>Observed alliance potentials</th>
<th>Observed reform coalitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1  | Popular initiative on maternity insurance and parental leave 1984 (rejected) | • Parental leave scheme: societal transformation model  
• Income replacement and maternity leave of 16 weeks: working mother model  
• Motherhood benefits for mothers not active on the labor market: recognition model | • Left/ women’s organizations / unions for parental leave vs. liberals / conservatives and employers (A0)  
• Left / conservatives / feminists and partially unions for benefits to non working mothers vs. liberals and employers (A1)  
• Relative unanimity on some kind of maternity insurance, even though liberal reluctance (~A3) | Left / women’s organizations / union vs. liberals / Christian democrats / conservatives and employers |
| 2  | Cantonal initiative for the creation of harmonized national family allowances 1986 (rejected) | • Harmonization and extension of family allowances at the national level on an egalitarian basis: male breadwinner model  
• Extension of family allowances to non working people (decommodification): recognition model | • Cross-class coalition of employers and high-skill unions against the inclusion non employed and against harmonization (A4)  
• Left / Christian-democratic / part of unions for harmonization of benefits vs. liberals / employers / conservatives / feminists. (A1) | Left / family organizations / feminists / most Christian democrats vs. liberals / employers / conservatives |
| 3  | Reform of the federal law on health insurance (including maternity insurance) 1987 (rejected) | • Income replacement and maternity leave of 16 weeks: working mother model  
• Basic benefits to non working and non insured mothers: recognition model | • Left / peak unions / feminists / Christian-Democrats for benefits to both working and non working mothers vs. liberals / parts of feminists / high skill unions / employers (A1)  
• Cross-class alliance of liberals / high skill unions / employers and part of feminists against benefits to non working mothers (A4) | Left / peak unions / Christian democrats / feminists / part of liberals vs. liberals / part of unions / conservatives and employers |
| 4  | Parliamentary Intervention for increased family allowances 1991 (ongoing) | • Means-tested supplementary benefits to lone mothers and poor families : societal transformation model / poverty reduction  
• Child benefits independent from labor market status: recognition model | • Left / peak unions / feminists / single parents for means-tested benefits to new risk groups vs. conservatives / employers / churches / Christian democrats (A0)  
• Left / peak unions / family organizations / Christian democrats / churches for child allowances independent from labor market status (A1) vs. cross-class alliance of liberals, employers and high skill unions (A4) | Decision-making process still ongoing |
| 5  | Reform of the federal law on health insurance (including) | • Voluntary maternity insurance for working mothers: working mother model  
• Voluntary maternity insurance for non working mothers: recognition model | • Left / Christian democrats / feminists / family organizations for maternity insurance in general vs. liberals / conservatives and employers (A1)  
• Liberals / employers / high skill unions and some socialists | Ambiguous agreement on the rejection of these elements in the health reform 1994. → drop out of the bill proposal |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Voluntary maternity insurance (maternity insurance rejected)</td>
<td>1994 (maternity insurance rejected)</td>
<td>claim a more clear separation of insurance for working mothers and social policy for non working mothers vs. conservatives / Christian democrats (A4)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrats for tax-financed maternity insurance vs. liberals / conservatives / employers (split) / employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of the federal law on mandatory maternity insurance</td>
<td>1999 (rejected)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrat / women’s organizations / greens / unions for partially tax-financed maternity insurance vs. liberals / conservatives / employers (A1)</td>
<td>Left / unions / women’s organizations / part of conservative / Christian democrats for tax-financed maternity insurance vs. liberals (split) / employers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parliamentary intervention for supplementary means-tested benefits</td>
<td>to poor families 2000 (ongoing)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrats / family organizations women’s organizations greens / unions for means-tested benefits and care expenditure reimbursement vs. vs. liberals / employers and conservatives (A1)</td>
<td>Decision-making process still ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction of the federal law on financial allowances for care</td>
<td>infrastructure 2002 (accepted)</td>
<td>Socialists / liberals / partially conservatives / partially employers vs. partially conservatives and employers on support of external child care infrastructure (A3, A4)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrats / employers (large business) / unions / greens / family organizations / liberals (split) vs. conservatives / partially liberals / partially employers (small business)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Popular Initiative for harmonization and increase in family</td>
<td>allowances 2003 (ongoing)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrats (split) / greens / unions vs. employers / liberals / conservatives (split) (A1)</td>
<td>Decision-making process is still ongoing</td>
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<td>Reform of the national law on income replacement</td>
<td>2004 (accepted)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrats / employers (large business) / unions / greens / family organizations / liberals (split) for external child care infrastructure vs. conservatives / partially liberals / small business employers (A3, A4)</td>
<td>Left / Christian democrats / employers (large business and women’s sectors) / unions / greens / family organizations /</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Reform</td>
<td>Directions of policy reform</td>
<td>Observed alliance potentials</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 1  | Federal law on maternal leave 1979 | • Introduction of maternal leave for working mothers: working mother model  
• “Family benefit” for non working mothers (demanded by opposition, goal of parental leave of 3 years): recognition model  
• announcement of return to work: working mother model | • SPD – FDP-coalition / unions / employers against family benefit independent from labor market participation vs. CDU/CSU (FDP and SPD are split) (A4)  
• SPD / FDP / SPD-FDP-coalition / employers for rapid labor market return of mothers vs. conservatives and unions (A3) | SPD / FDP / partially CDU/CSU / unions vs. large part of CDU/CSU and employers |
| 2  | Federal law on tax relief 1981 | • Increase in child allowances, tax deductions for child raising: recognition model  
• Increase of educational benefits after birth: recognition model  
• Special tax deductions for lone parents: societal transformation model | • SPD / FDP / unions / CDU/CSU for higher child allowances vs. weak opposition of employers (A1) | SPD / FDP / unions / part of family associations vs. CDU/CSU / employers / part of family associations |
| 3  | Reform of the federal law on child allowances 1981 | • Reduction of child allowances and lowering of age limit to benefit from child allowances: male breadwinner model (retrenchment) | • SPD / FDP / employers for the lowering of benefits vs. CDU/CSU / partially unions / partially SPD (A3, A4) | SPD / FDP / employers vs. CDU/CSU (unions and few SPD-MPs remain silent in opposition) |
| 4  | Federal budgetary law 1983 | • Reduction and means-testing of child allowances and re-introduction of degressive tax deductions: male breadwinner model  
• Abolishment of tax deductions for child care: male breadwinner model | • FDP / CDU/CSU / employers for lowering of child benefits and degressive deductions vs. SPD / unions (A0)  
• CDU/CSU / employers / part of FDP for abolishment of tax deductions for external child care vs. SPD / unions / part of FDP (A3) | FDP / CDU/CSU / employers vs. SPD / unions |
| 5 | Federal law on educational leave and educational benefit | • Long parental leave, flat-rate education benefits for working parents, family benefits for non working mothers: recognition model  
• Incentives for sharing parental leave for mothers and fathers and higher benefits for lone parents (not in the governmental bill, claimed by the SPD): societal transformation model | • SPD / CDU/CSU / FDP / unions vs. BDA for parental leave, education benefits for working parents and non working parents vs. employers / part of CDU/CSU (A1)  
• SPD / Greens / womens organizations / unions for incentives for societal transformation model vs. CDU/CSU / FDP / employers (A0) | FDP / CDU/CSU vs. Greens; SPD abstained |
| 6 | Reform of the federal law on child and youth assistance 1992 | • Legal support for external child care infrastructure: working mother model  
• Increase of support for children and youth: recognition model  
• Attribution of rights to children instead of parents (claim by the left): societal transformation model | • SPD / Greens / women’s associations / part of CDU/CSU and FDP for the right of the children to a place in Kindergarten vs. part of CDU/CSU / part of FDP / conservative family organizations (A3)  
• Unanimity on extension of support mechanisms for youth and children  
• SPD / Greens / unions for the attribution of rights to children instead of parents (A0) | CDU/CSU / FDP / part of SPD vs. part of SPD / Greens |
| 7 | Annual federal fiscal law 1996 | • Increase in child allowances for third child and more and increase of family tax deduction, maintenance of degressive tax deduction system: recognition model | • Relative unanimity on higher benefits to families  
• CDU/CSU / FDP for degressive tax deductions and lower basic deduction for poor families vs. SPD / Greens (A0) | FDP / CDU/CSU vs. SPD / Greens / PDS |
| 8 | Federal law on tax relief 1999 | • Increase of child allowances for first and second children and increase of basic tax deductions for families: recognition model | • CDU/CSU / SPD / Greens / PDS for higher family allowances vs. FDP (A1)  
• PDS / Greens for more generous basic tax deductions vs. part of SPD / CDU/CSU / FDP (A0) | SPD / Greens vs. CDU/CSU / FDP, however a fourth of CDU/CSU MPs abstain from voting |
| 9 | First federal law on family support 1999 | • Increase of child allowances: recognition model  
• Increase of child allowances for lone parent families : societal transformation model  
• Increase of tax deductions for external child care costs: working mother model  
• Increase of tax deductions for external and within-family care : recognition model | • SPD / FDP / Greens / unions for deductions of care costs for working parents vs. CDU/CSU and PDS (A3)  
• SPD / CDU/CSU / Greens / unions for deduction of care costs independently of external or within the family and on child allowances vs. FDP. (A1)  
• SPD / PDS / Greens / unions for special allowances for poor families vs. CDU/CSU and FDP (A0) | Unanimity for the law (Implementation of a judgment of the constitutional court and higher child allowances) |
| 10 | Second federal law on family support 2001 | • Increase of child allowances and supplementary allowances for poor families: Societal transformation model  
• Increase of tax deductions for child education : recognition model  
• Increase of tax deductions for working parents and action program for more external child care infrastructure: | • SPD / Greens / FDP / PDS vs. CDU/CSU for favoring of tax deductions for care only for working parents (A3)  
• Left / CDU/CSU / unions /family organizations for higher child allowances, general educational tax deductions and care infrastructure for working and non working parents vs. marginal resistance (A3)  
• PDS / unions / women’s organizations for special allowances for | Almost unanimous vote for the bill (mostly an implementation of a constitutional court judgment, with some modifications). |
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<tr>
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<th>Reform of the federal law on educational benefits 2000</th>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td><strong>working mother model</strong></td>
<td>poor families vs. CDU/CSU / FDP / parts of SPD and family organizations (A0)</td>
<td>PDS abstains from the vote.</td>
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<td>• Increase of the flat-rate educational benefit: recognition model</td>
<td>• left / Greens / FDP / unions / employers for labor market participation incentives vs. CDU/CSU (A3, A4)</td>
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<td>• Increase of allowed working time during educational leave and incentives to shorten educational leave: working mother model</td>
<td>• SPD / Greens / CDU/CSU / family organizations / unions for increase of flat-rate benefits to non working mothers vs. FDP and employers (A1)</td>
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<td>• Right to part-time employment and flexibilization of parental leave scheme: societal transformation model</td>
<td>• SPD / unions / Greens for right to part-time employment and flexibilization of parental leave vs CDU/CSU / FDP / employers Small vs. large business on the right to part-time (A0)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Federal budgetary law 2004</td>
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<td>• Increase of the income threshold for the right to educational benefit (about a third of families loses entitlement to educational benefit): male breadwinner model</td>
<td>• SPD / Greens / FDP / partially CDU/CSU / employers for retrenchment vs. partially CDU/CSU / unions</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Federal law on the support of extra-family child care 2004</td>
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<td>• Extension of external care infrastructure, tax deductions for child care for working parents: working mother model</td>
<td>• SPD / Greens / PDS / FDP / unions / employers vs. part of the CDU/CSU / parts of family associations on the increase in support for external child care infrastructure (A3, A4)</td>
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