The London School of Economics and Political Science

Shifting Ideas:

Work-family policy reform in Germany and England, 1997-2008

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Declaration

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Abstract

Since the late-1990s high income countries have taken an increasing interest in work-family policies, expanding provision of childcare and early education and reconfiguring maternity, paternity and parental leave policies to better facilitate reconciliation between employment and care responsibilities. These changes have occurred in contexts in which they represent a dramatic shift away from long-established 'paths' of policies towards families, underpinned by assumptions about the existence and desirability of male-breadwinner/female-caregiver family roles. This thesis investigates this expansion of work-family policies in two countries in which they represent such a shift: England and Germany. Unlike much of the comparative literature, which seeks to explain the cross-national trend of expansion, this thesis examines variation in reform and particularly why Germany underwent dramatic 'path switching' change compared to more moderate 'path departure' in England.

Arguing that to understand the content of change, it is necessary to examine the ideas underpinning reform, the thesis compares the processes of reform in the two countries and the role of ideas therein. Through documentary analysis and interviews with participants in the policymaking process, it investigates how new ideas about work-family policy came onto the political agenda and how they influenced policy development. Drawing on a novel framework of ideational change, it concludes that in Germany deep ideational change took place, in which 'background ideas' that underpinned work-family policymaking were altered, while in England change remained at the level of problems and solutions and background ideas served to constrain change. The thesis explains this through differences in the form in which new ideas arrived on the political agenda, the political context which helped shape their reception and the way in which key political actors framed the new ideas.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Work-family Policy Expansion Across the OECD

Since the 1990s, policies which relate to how families balance employment and the care of young children have become an area of dynamism in many high-income countries across the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). How welfare states grapple with the combination of demographic and socio-economic pressures that are collectively known as 'new social risks' (Bonoli, 2005) are central to claimed new approaches to social policy, such as the 'social investment perspective' (e.g. Esping-Andersen et al., 2002; Hemerijck, 2017; Morel et al., 2012). To address these challenges, many countries have undergone an unprecedented expansion of focus on policies related to the family and to the care of young children, which had previously often been viewed as a private matter beyond the reach of the state (Ostner and Lewis, 1995). Since the 1990s many OECD countries have invested heavily in what are often referred to as 'work-family policies' (e.g. Blome, 2016b; Boling, 2015; Lewis, 2009; Morgan, 2013): expanding early childhood education and care (ECEC) services and reforming policies, such as maternity, paternity and parental leave (henceforth leave policies), that facilitate parents' temporary withdrawal from the labour market after childbirth (Daly and Ferragina, 2018; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015). These countries are often referred to as 'latecomer' reformers, in that they are following the 'early bird' examples of Scandinavian countries, which undertook a similar work-family policy expansion from the 1970s (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006; Leira, 1992).

Table 1.1 demonstrates the scale of this expansion. It shows that average expenditure on ECEC services more than doubled as a proportion of GDP between the early 1990s and the mid-2010s. If Scandinavian countries are excluded, the rise in spending is even more dramatic. In terms of policy outcomes, the average rate of ECEC attendance among children under three has risen dramatically since the early 1990s, while both mothers and fathers now have, on average, considerably more paid leave after childbirth. Moreover, the replacement rate paid during parental leave has also become substantially more generous since the early 1990s.

Table 1.1: Indicators of work-family policy expansion, 1990-2015

	All OECD countries		Without Scandinavia	
	1990	***2015***	***1990***	***2015***
ECEC spending, % GDP	0.38	0.77	0.13	0.59
ECEC coverage, % children under three	15.7*	42.9*	9.4*	40.6*
Paid leave for women, weeks	28.2	43.4	19.1	33.9
Paid leave for men, weeks	0.2	9.4	0.1	9.5
Replacement rate for maternity leave	58	58.6**	61.5	66.6**
Replacement rate for parental leave	24.2	33.2**	10.6	25.3**

Sources: Gauthier (1999, 2013); OECD (2021a). *ECEC coverage refers to 1993 and 2017; **the later data points on replacement rates refer to 2010.

Besides their considerable impact on people's lives, these changes are remarkable from the perspective of comparative welfare state research for two main reasons. First, they represent a rare example of social policy expansion in an era otherwise characterised by 'permanent austerity', in which the response to fiscal pressures arising from globalisation, post-industrialisation and demographic change led to a general trend of constrained spending and of incremental retrenchment in welfare state programmes (Pierson, 2001). Indeed, the proportion of social expenditure devoted to ECEC among OECD countries more than doubled on average between 1995 and 2010, while average expenditure on leave policies also grew in this period (OECD, 2021b). Second, the changes represent a departure from previous approaches to family policies, which in many countries were based on supporting the male-breadwinner/female-caregiver model family (Lewis, 1992, 1997). Instead, ECEC and parental leave policies aim to 'defamilialise' some of the responsibilities for the care of young children (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Leitner, 2003) and are therefore underpinned by an 'adult-worker model', in which all adults are expected to be in the labour market (Lewis, 2001b; Lewis and Giullari, 2005). This change is particularly notable in countries which had previously been characterised as 'strong male-breadwinner model' countries such as Germany and the UK (Lewis, 1992; Lewis and Ostner, 1994). Work-family policy reforms therefore confound many of the assumptions in the comparative welfare state literature, which tends to assume path-dependent change or incremental 'liberalisation' of welfare states, that is, movement towards reducing expenditure and generosity of welfare state provisions (e.g. Esping-Andersen, 1990; Hall and Soskice, 2001; Pierson, 1996, 2000).

Work-family policy expansion has therefore been a subject of attention from researchers examining welfare state change. The main focus of this literature has been to explain the changes and in particular to ask why countries previously characterised as 'strong male breadwinner model' countries underwent such dramatic shifts in their approach to families. Comparative research in this vein has tended to focus either on explaining how similar

expansion has taken place across different welfare states (e.g. Fleckenstein, 2010; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2012, 2013), or on examining why some countries have undertaken these reforms while others have not (e.g. Blome, 2016a, 2016b; Estévez-Abe and Kim, 2014; Estévez-Abe and Naldini, 2016; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2017; León et al., 2021). While such a focus is valuable in illuminating how such dramatic change can come about in apparently unfavourable circumstances, it masks the considerable variation in the changes that are evident cross-nationally.

Variation is important because it raises the question of whether we are witnessing a single trend of expansion away from family policies designed around the male-breadwinner model family towards an 'adult-worker' or 'dual-earner' model, in which case variation might indicate different levels of progress towards this end goal, or whether we are in fact witnessing multiple paths of transformation. In the literature that evaluates and analyses the 'policy logics' of recent changes, there is broad consensus identifying a general shift away from 'male-breadwinner model' family policies, but considerably less agreement about the contours or even existence of any new model (Daly, 2011; Leitner, 2003; Lewis, 2001b; Orloff, 2006). It is notable that expanded government involvement has shifted family policy from being a *sui generis* policy area to it being 'functional' for a wide range of social policy objectives (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010a). Indeed, work-family policy reforms have been seen by governments, academics and international organisations as crucial in achieving numerous goals including increasing maternal employment rates, reducing gender pay and employment gaps, improving children's educational outcomes, reducing developmental inequalities between children, reducing child poverty and social exclusion, raising birth rates and developing competitive and flexible labour markets for the globalised, knowledge-based economy of the future (e.g. Esping-Andersen et al., 2002; Esping-Andersen, 2009; European Commission, 2013, 2017; OECD, 2001b, 2007, 2017b). This multiplicity of goals that policymakers expect work-family policies to achieve illustrates how the departure from male-breadwinner model family policies is more complex than the general trend indicates.

Given this, in order to understand the changes that are underway in latecomer reformers, it is important to move beyond explanations for the departure from the male-breadwinner model to examine what factors lie behind the variation in this departure. This thesis compares the processes of work-family reform in two countries in which the expansion of ECEC and leave policies between 1997/8 and 2008 represent an unprecedented increase in state attention on families and young children and which the literature has highlighted as key examples of

latecomer reformers: Germany and England[1] (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Lewis, 2009; Morgan, 2013; Ostner, 2010). Nevertheless, while both countries are representative of a similar shift away from a male-breadwinner model legacy, the changes undertaken in Germany were more extensive, involving a dramatic break with past approaches to families, while the changes in England were less decisive, with elements of previous approaches still evident in the reforms. By comparing these two cases of work-family policy expansion, this thesis contributes to the literature on welfare state change and work-family policy expansion by treating variation in change, rather than merely change itself, as the object of explanation.

Having introduced the thesis's theme of variation in work-family expansion, the remainder of this chapter provides a brief overview of work-family policy reforms in Germany and England (Section 1.2), demonstrates that the existing literature struggles to explain why Germany underwent the more extensive change (Section 1.3) and outlines the ideational approach and the research questions that this thesis will adopt (Section 1.4). Section 1.5 discusses the chosen methodological approach, case selection and research methods. The chapter ends with an outline of the overall thesis (Section 1.6).

1.2 Work-Family Policy Change in Germany and England

Both Germany and England were archetypal examples of 'strong male-breadwinner model' welfare states in which social policy explicitly or implicitly supported traditional male breadwinner/female-carer families (Lewis and Ostner, 1994). In both countries, this was underpinned by the principle that the care of young children was the responsibility of the family, which was a private realm free from state intervention. Yet these similar approaches were fostered by different principles. In West Germany[2] the focus of family policies was to support the institution of marriage and the role of the family as the primary site of welfare distribution

[1] Due to devolution in responsibility for ECEC policy in the UK, the empirical analysis of this thesis focuses on England. While the primary data collected will refer to England therefore, the thesis also draws on a range of secondary literature and cross-national statistics, which take Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) or the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) as its reference point. Due to this the terms Britain or the UK will be used where appropriate. While this creates some inconsistency in terminology, particularly in this chapter, Chapter 2 and Chapter 6, it can be assumed that insights drawn for the larger entities also hold for England, which is by far the largest of the four nations in terms of population. In 1997, England accounted for 83 percent of the total population of the UK (and 86 percent of Britain) and 84 percent of the population of children under five (87 percent of Britain) (ONS, 2020).

[2] Having been divided into West and East Germany after the Second World War, Germany was reunited in 1990. West Germany was much the larger of the two, containing approximately 80 percent of the population in 1990. Much of the discussion of the historical trajectory of German family policy (see Chapter 2) therefore focuses on West Germany, especially as upon reunification the five East German *Länder* were integrated into the West German state. However, the stark differences in the two 'halves' of Germany, in terms of work-family policy and behaviour are noted in Chapters 2 and 6.

(Moeller, 1993; Ostner, 1993). In England, the liberal principle of the limited state led to a lack of direct policies towards families as an institution, and a targeted approach focused on poverty alleviation (Ruggie, 1984). As such, while German family policy 'explicitly' promoted the male-breadwinner model family, in England similar outcomes were fostered 'implicitly' through a lack of intervention (Kaufmann, 2002). This meant that by the late 1990s, when centre-left parties took office for the first time for 16 years in Germany and 18 in England, both countries were characterised by minimal provision of ECEC. While the design of leave policy was very different – a long, low-paid entitlement for all parents in Germany and a very short, low-paid entitlement for mothers in England – both encouraged mothers to leave the labour market at childbirth and any subsequent return to employment was usually part-time (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004; Daly and Scheiwe, 2010).

The election of centre-left governments in 1997 and 1998 in the UK and Germany respectively marked the beginning of a decade long process of reform which would leave work-family policy transformed in the two countries. In the UK, by the time Labour left office in 2010, all three- and four-year-old children were guaranteed a free early education place for 15 hours per week, while government interventions to subsidise childcare costs for low- and middle-income families in employment and to fund increasing provision in areas not served by the market had dramatically expanded the proportion of children accessing childcare places. A network of Children's Centres, 3,500 across the UK, were opened by 2010. Maternity leave and pay were also transformed: leave was extended to 12 months for all employed women, while pay was raised substantially and extended to 9 months. Fathers qualified for two weeks paid paternity leave as well as 13 weeks of unpaid parental leave (as did mothers), while legislation to enable mothers to transfer unused leave and pay to fathers was in place from 2006, although not put into practice until 2011 (Daly, 2010; Lewis, 2009).

In Germany, reform started more slowly with the first Social Democrat (SPD)-Green coalition government modifying the existing long, low-paid parental leave by enabling more flexibility in how it could be combined with employment. However, in 2004 the SPD-Green federal government funded a large increase in childcare provision for under-threes, an unprecedented step in German family policy. With the replacement of that government by a Grand Coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU) and SPD in 2005, the momentum of reform accelerated under the CDU-led family ministry between 2005 and 2008. From 2007 the existing parental leave system was overhauled with a shorter (12 month) period of payment and a replacement of the low flat-rate benefit with a

Scandinavian-style earnings-related payment. Further, two months of leave were provided to partners on a use-it-or-lose-it basis in a clear move to incentivise more sharing of care responsibilities between parents. The following year, an even larger investment into childcare expansion was announced with the aim of providing sufficient places for 35 percent of children by 2013, at which time a legal entitlement to a childcare place for all children would come into effect. As part of a compromise within the CDU/CSU 2008 also saw legislation for a care allowance to be paid to families who did not use public childcare which would come into effect in 2013, although as a federal level policy this was struck down by the Constitutional Court in 2015 (Blum, 2012; Fleckenstein, 2011; Ostner, 2010).

This brief overview indicates the scale of change in the two countries, with unprecedented expansion of state involvement in how young children are cared for and in promoting maternal employment. Nevertheless, the comparison also demonstrates that these changes were more extensive in Germany, constituting what a number of observers have characterised as a 'paradigm shift' or 'Nordic turn', with a complete overhaul of the government's approach towards families, maternal employment and a total restructuring of ECEC and leave policies (Blum, 2012; Erler, 2009; Ostner, 2010). Work-family policy in England was also characterised by a much-expanded role for the state in the care of young children, which had previously been seen as a private matter and a substantial increase in access to ECEC services and in maternity leave rights (Lewis, 2009; Lewis and Campbell, 2007). However, while these policies were expanded dramatically, elements of the pre-existing policy design remain evident in English reforms: ECEC was expanded through government investment and intervention in the existing market for provision, while a continued 'maternalism' prioritised the extension of leave for mothers rather than the sharing of care responsibilities (Daly and Scheiwe, 2010; Moss, 2014). The focus of this thesis is on these different trajectories of change. Chapter 2 sets out the changes in more detail and substantiates the notion that Germany's changes were more extensive than those in England. In the terms used there, the key question that this thesis asks is: why did Germany undertake 'path-switching' change, while England underwent a less dramatic 'path departure'?

1.3 Explanations for Work-Family Policy Change

Broadly, there are three strands of research in the literature seeking to explain work-family policy expansion. First there are quantitative analyses, which seek to identify the independent variables associated with the recent changes across a large number of cases (e.g. Bonoli and Reber, 2010; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015; Lambert, 2008). Second, there are

comparative case studies, which either seek to identify common explanatory factors in a similar expansion across different national contexts (e.g. Fleckenstein, 2010; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Fleckenstein and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2011; Leitner, 2010; Morgan, 2013; Seeleib-Kaiser and Toivonen, 2011), or to explain the presence or absence of change in cases drawn from similar national contexts (e.g. Blome, 2016a, 2016b; Estévez-Abe and Kim, 2014; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2017; León et al., 2021; Oliver and Mätzke, 2014). Third, single country case studies identify key factors through in-depth analysis of national processes of work-family policy reform (e.g. Boling, 2015; Daly, 2010; Fleckenstein, 2011; Lewis and Campbell, 2007; Ostner, 2010; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2010). While there is some overlap between findings, these different approaches have produced a remarkable range of possible explanations.

These can be grouped into three types of explanation: functional accounts that focus on socio-economic or demographic variables; political accounts that highlight the role of key political actors, such as political parties or feminist agency; and institutional approaches that focus on the distribution of power within political systems, the 'rules of the game' within which politics takes place and the impact of policy legacies. This section discusses each of these in turn, and argues that none of them can satisfactorily account for why Germany's reforms were more extensive than those in England.

The first type of account highlights the expansion of work-family policies as a functional response to the challenges posed by social, economic and demographic changes. Table 1.2 highlights that the socio-economic and demographic context of England and Germany on the eve of the reforms displayed a number of similarities, especially in employment data, and differences, most notably in demographic indicators which highlight Germany's low fertility rates.

Table 1.2: Socio-economic and demographic context in Germany and England

	Germany	**UK**	*Reference year*
Women's employment rate, 25-49 year olds	69.1	72.1	*1998*
Women's part-time employment, among 25-49 year olds	37.7	42.3	*1998*
Average weekly hours of part-time work, women	16.9	16.6	*1998*
Gender gap in employment, no children	3.8	1.5	*1998*
Gender gap in employment, child aged under three	32	34.6	*1998*
Gender gap in employment, child aged three to five	30.3	26.4	*1998*
Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, women	44.7	55.7	*1997*
Gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education, men	50.4	60.0	*1997*
Total fertility rates (births per woman)	1.37	1.72	*1997*
Marriage rates (per 1,000 people)	5.2	5.3	*1997*
Divorce rates (per 1,000 people)	2.3	2.8	*1997*
Share of births outside marriage (%)	18.0	36.8	*1997*
Old-age dependency ratio (no. people aged 65 or over per 100 people of working age [20-64])	26.5	25.5	*2000*

Sources: Eurostat (2018); OECD (2017a, 2021a); UNESCO (2020).

Functionalist accounts of welfare state change are most clearly associated with the 'industrialism thesis' which sought to explain the development of welfare states through the social needs created by the process of industrialisation, particularly the risks of illness, injury or old age (e.g. Wilensky, 1975). In the post-industrial era, changing patterns of family formation, low fertility, the rise of non-standard employment and increased international economic competition create 'new social risks', which welfare states need to cover (Bonoli, 2005; Häusermann, 2006). In particular, the long-term trend of increasing female labour market participation, coupled with an increase in the proportion of children growing up in single-parent households, has challenged the previous reliance on the traditional family to provide childcare and provoked significant work-family conflicts for parents (and mothers in particular) (Lewis, Campbell, et al., 2008). Moreover, governments not only need to react to growing female employment; increasing women's labour market participation has also become a key goal (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010a). This is for a number of reasons including the need for greater labour supply in the context of increasingly globalised economic competition, the need to improve the working-age population's output and revenue generation in ageing societies, and families' need for two incomes in post-industrial labour markets characterised by an increasing proportion of insecure, low paid jobs (Bonoli, 2007).

Because of this, it is not clear to what extent work-family policy expansion is a reaction to needs caused by rising female employment, or whether it removes barriers to enable female

employment. Consequently, it is unclear whether work-family policy reform is likely to precede or follow shifts in employment measures (Lewis, Knijn, et al., 2008). Indeed, empirical evidence on the impact of new social risks on work-family policy expansion is very limited. Bonoli and Reber (2010: 101), referring to childcare policy in particular, describe a field "ridden with reverse causality problems and chicken-and-egg dilemmas." While their cross-national analysis of determinants of childcare spending finds a small positive relationship with female employment rates from the previous year, they highlight that this must be treated with caution. Similarly inconclusive results have been found for the relationship between low fertility rates and work-family policies (Lambert, 2008).

Aside from difficulties in establishing causation, functional arguments are unsatisfactory from a theoretical perspective as policies are not automatic responses to social problems. Instead, as the extensive public policy literature has shown, the process of problem definition is an inherently political one (Kingdon, 2003; Rein and Schön, 1977; Rochefort and Cobb, 1994), which indicates that while new social risks might be important in attracting policymakers' attention, how they are addressed relates to political factors. For example, Seeleib-Kaiser and Toivonen (2011) have shown that despite fertility in Germany and Japan being low since the 1970s, it did not come onto the political agenda as an issue until the early 2000s, and policy expansion only happened after this had taken place. As Henninger et al (2008: 307) state: "fiscal and economic as well as demographic challenges are not challenges per se, but become so in a process of collective interpretation." More broadly, 'strong' versions of functional theories have been criticised for denying any role to politics in the development of welfare states and therefore to the particular issue of how and why different welfare states have developed along different paths (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Myles and Quadagno, 2002). In work-family policy research, qualitative comparative work has argued that while new social risks are 'functional underpinnings' of work-family policy expansion (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014), it is necessary to examine the politics of this expansion in order to explain it fully.

The second type of explanation of work-family policy reform in the literature focuses on politics. Power resources theory argues that welfare state expansion depends on the political mobilisation of workers, through left parties and trade unions (Huber and Stephens, 2001; Korpi, 1983). Bonoli and Reber (2010: 102) point out that translating a theory that "[t]he extent of welfare state development is a function of the political power held by those who are to benefit from it" to work-family policies could mean two different propositions. The first would be the 'parties matter' assumption that left parties would be associated with work-family policy

expansion because their members would be more likely to gain from gender equality and women's employment; the corollary of this would be that religious parties of the right would be expected to favour the traditional family and therefore to be associated with lower levels of work-family policies. The second would be to focus on the beneficiaries of such policies, who are most obviously women, and therefore to assume that the political representation of women would be associated with expanded work-family policies (Bonoli and Reber, 2010). Accounts of the earlier development of work-family policies in Scandinavia since the 1970s do indeed demonstrate that left parties and the mobilisation of feminist organisations were the key drivers of change (Ferrarini, 2006; Huber and Stephens, 2001; Leira, 1992).

However, cross-national research has failed to establish a conclusive link between left governments and work-family policies, and results from different studies are somewhat contradictory. Iversen and Stephens (2008) find that left parties are drivers of increasing childcare expenditure and Christian Democratic parties are linked to lower levels of spending, as do Bonoli and Reber (2010), although the size of the effects are small. On the other hand, examining changes over time, Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2015) find these party differences were important in the 1980s and 1990s but have since become insignificant. By contrast, Lambert (2008) finds that the link between left parties and work-family policy reform has grown over time. Moreover, Morgan (2006) has shown that any correlation between left parties and public childcare is largely due to Scandinavian countries and that elsewhere the correlation is much weaker. This is explained by the fact that left parties are traditionally representatives of male industrial workers, who may have little interest in gender equality and in promoting the labour market integration of women (Häusermann, 2012).

Such a characterisation is true of both the Labour Party in the UK and the SPD in Germany, neither of which had historically demonstrated any interest in policies aimed at improving women's access to the labour market (Perrigo, 1996; von Wahl, 2006). Moreover, from a 'parties matter' perspective, the prospects for reform would seem to have been better in the UK than Germany: while the German SPD-Green coalition governed from 1998 to 2005, in the UK Labour was in power for almost double this amount of time (1997-2010) and held a strong parliamentary majority for these thirteen years. Further, the fact that the most extensive reforms in Germany were undertaken by the CDU-led coalition directly contradicts the 'parties matter' thesis, which clearly struggles to account for relative changes in Germany and England.

A second proposition of power resources theory links the expansion of work-family policies to women's political representation. The argument here is that the presence of women

in political institutions such as parliaments and governments are an important driver of change for policies that reflect women's interest, because such policies are usually not prioritised in these traditionally male dominated institutions. Because of the potential of work-family policies to reduce gender inequalities in employment and the household, the role of women's representation is thought to be particularly important (Annesley, 2007). One strand of this literature highlights the importance of the number of women in legislative bodies, theorising that it is only after representation reaching a 'critical mass' will women be able to influence policymaking (e.g. Dahlerup, 1988). Cross-national studies of work-family policy expansion do find that higher numbers of women in legislatures are positively associated with work-family policies (Bonoli and Reber, 2010; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015; Lambert, 2008).

However, there are theoretical reasons for questioning whether the theory is sufficient to explain policy expansion. First, it is not clear that women will automatically support policies that promote gender equality; indeed recent studies have argued that it is necessary to account for the presence of conservative women in theories of representation (Celis and Childs, 2018). Second, the mechanisms for how a 'critical mass' of women parliamentarians influence policymaking, which in many political systems tends to take place in the 'core executive', are not clear (Annesley and Gains, 2010). An alternative conception argues that the numbers of women in a legislature are less important than who they are, what positions they hold and what they do; this strand of the literature focuses on 'critical actors' (Childs and Krook, 2009). This notion is closely related to that of a 'policy entrepreneur' (see Section 3.4.6) and requires a focus on the opportunities that particular institutional contexts provide for critical actors to influence policy as well as the actions that the particular actors undertake. As such, the presence or not of critical actors is partly related to institutional opportunities, such as the extent to which women hold ministerial positions (Annesley, 2007). Nevertheless, because the notion of a 'critical actor' involves an examination of how they act, it cannot be assumed that the mere presence of women in either legislatures or core executives will inevitably lead to change.

At first glance, comparing Germany and England on the level of women's representation does seem to indicate that conditions in Germany were more promising for women to influence policymaking than in England. Not only did the three parliaments from 1998 until 2009 contain a higher proportion of women members than the UK parliaments from 1997 until 2010, but during this period women made up a higher proportion of cabinet positions in each of the three German cabinets than they did in the UK (see Table 1.3).

However, despite this, it should be noted that in both countries women were extremely under-represented in the most prestigious cabinet positions. Indeed, across the three cabinets in each country, only one of what Annesley et al (2019: 283) call 'high status' cabinet posts was occupied by a woman in each country.[3] Moreover, the ministers responsible for work-family policies in both countries were not in such prestigious positions, meaning that the key to reform, as highlighted in Chapters 4 and 5, was their ability to persuade senior colleagues of their benefit. Perhaps the most obvious difference in terms of women's representation is that in the period in which Germany underwent the most extensive reforms (2005-2009) the country was led by Angela Merkel, whereas Britain's prime ministers during the period in question were men. Nevertheless, the presence of a woman leader does not guarantee policies that favour women's interests in general, as Margaret Thatcher's 11 year stint as British prime minister demonstrated (Bashevkin, 1996). As such, the presence or absence of women's representation cannot explain the differences in the two trajectories of reform.

Table 1.3: Women in politics in Germany and the UK, 1997-2010

Parliamentary session	Number of ministers who are women	% of ministers who are women	% of members of parliament who are women
Germany			
1998-2002	5	35.7	30.9
2002-2005	6	46.2	32.2
2005-2009	5*	33.3*	31.8
UK			
1997-2001	5	23.8	18.2
2001-2005	7	31.8	17.9
2005-2010	6**	27.2**	19.8

[3] In Germany, Herta Däubler-Gmelin was minister of justice during the first SPD-Green government in 1998-2002. Brigitte Zypries held the same position in the second SPD-Green government (2002-2005) and the Grand Coalition (2005-2009). In the UK, Margaret Beckett was foreign secretary between 2006 and 2007, while Jacqui Smith was home secretary between 2007 and 2010.

Sources: Butler and Butler (2011); Deutscher Bundestag (2021); Inter-Parliamentary Union (2021). Note: Cabinet figures exclude the Chancellor in Germany and the Prime Minister in the UK. All figures are a snapshot shortly after the election that began the parliamentary session. Due to cabinet reshuffles, which are more common in the UK than in Germany, figures can change over a parliamentary session. *in 2005-2009 the Chancellor was a woman, Angela Merkel. **the 2005-2010 parliamentary session involved a significant number of reshuffles (including a change of prime minister in 2007) and the proportion of women in cabinet rose to 36 percent between 2006 and 2007.

Reacting against the limitations of power resources theory in explaining work-family policy expansion in a variety of strong-male breadwinner model countries, a number of other studies have highlighted the role of electoral competition in persuading parties previously showing little interest in work-family policies to undertake path-departing change (Blome, 2016a; Fleckenstein, 2010, 2011; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014, 2017; León et al., 2021; Morgan, 2012, 2013; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2010). This theory, often highlighting the role of women within parties in drawing leaders' attention to the potential electoral benefits of work-family policies, can account for why parties of both the left and right have turned to work-family policies in recent decades and also provide the link between women's agency and policy outcomes (Morgan, 2013). Drawing on the notion that political parties are not simply driven by 'policy-seeking' motives but are also 'office- and vote-seeking' (Strom, 1990), this approach highlights how the decline of traditional class-based voting cleavages in the post-industrial era has led political parties of left and right to seek new constituencies to add to their electoral coalitions (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013). Part of this changing electoral picture has been a shift in women's voting patterns, which in the post-war years tended to be more conservative than men's, but in the context of rising female employment, the declining influence of religion and stronger feminist attitudes, have shifted in a progressive direction (Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Iversen, 2010). Thus the votes of women have become particularly sought after and this explains why work-family policies have been on the political agenda in many contexts where it would previously have seemed unlikely.

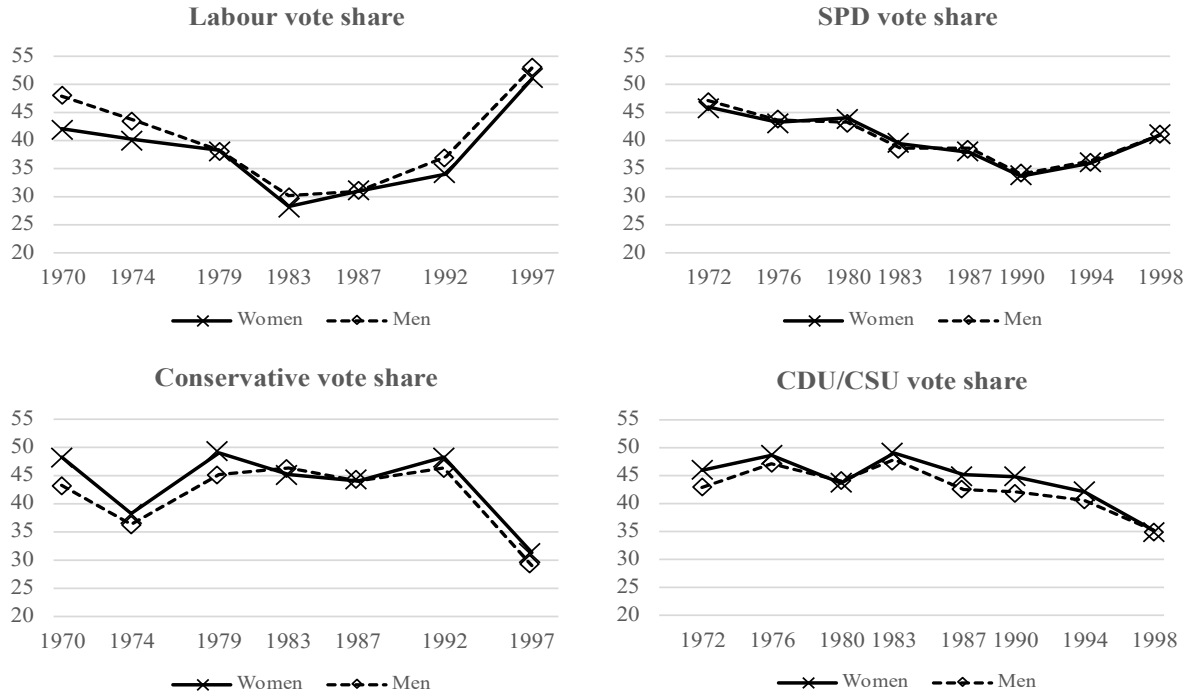
Both single country case studies and comparative research have highlighted the key role that electoral competition played in the cases of German and English work-family policy reform (Blome, 2016b; Fleckenstein, 2010, 2011; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Häusermann, 2018; Morgan, 2013; Naumann, 2012; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2010). These accounts highlight that in both Labour in England, and the SPD and CDU in Germany, attempts to appeal to women voters prompted party leaders to promote work-family policies.

However, while electoral competition provides a convincing explanation for why these parties decided to expand work-family policies, it cannot explain why Germany went further than England. In order to so, one would have to demonstrate that electoral competition was

more intense in Germany than England. One way to do this would be to establish that women's votes were more 'up for grabs' in Germany than in the UK, although as Figure 1.1 shows, the voting patterns of women and men for both major parties are remarkably similar in the two countries from the early 1970s until the late 1990s.

The electoral competition argument highlights the role of social attitudes towards women's employment as being a key factor in explaining why some countries have seen significant work-family policy reform, while others have not (Blome, 2016b; León et al., 2021). One might expect therefore that electoral competition would be stronger where social attitudes are more progressive, especially among women. However, Table 1.4 shows that social attitudes were in practice considerably more progressive in Britain than in Germany in the late 1990s. This demonstrates that while electoral competition may be a convincing argument for why path-departing change came about in both countries, it cannot illuminate the different trajectories with which this thesis is concerned.

Figure 1.1: Voting patterns in Germany and the UK, 1970-1998



Sources: Norris (1999); Statistisches Bundesamt (2018).

Table 1.4: Social attitudes in Germany and Great Britain, 1999

A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works							
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Net: Agree	weighted n=
Total Population	Germany	23	43.3	26.8	6.9	66	1,930.40
	Great Britain	9.5	36.7	44.1	9.6	46	901.4
Women	Germany	21.7	39.3	31.6	7.4	61	1,106.90
	Great Britain	7.8	31.2	50.6	10.4	39	461.3

Source: EVS (2011).

A third set of explanations focuses on the role of institutional factors which help to structure the shape of reforms by shaping the possibilities for change. Welfare state institutions are the focus of a rich vein of literature on the long-standing impact of welfare regimes and gender regimes on policies related to families and women's employment, which highlights substantial differences between regimes and the longstanding influence of certain principles in particular regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Hantrais and Letablier, 1996; Lewis, 1992; O'Connor et al., 1999; Orloff, 1993). As highlighted above, these include the liberal principle of non-intervention of the state in the private realm of the family, which characterised British family policy over the 20th century (Lewis, 2013a; Randall, 2000), while the central importance of the family to German society and its role as a site of welfare provision have been a key feature in (West) German family policy (Hagemann, 2006; Moeller, 1993; Ostner, 1993). More specifically, the literature on path dependence draws attention to feedback effects: the ways in which past policy developments constrain the possibilities for and types of change available to policymakers (Pierson, 2000) and therefore to the importance of timing (Pierson, 2004). For example, Bonoli (2007) argues that Scandinavian welfare states were able to reorient themselves towards new social risks because they did so in the 1970s, before their postwar social policies, particularly pensions, had reached maturation. By contrast, welfare states that attempted to deal with new social risks in the 1990s and 2000s faced significant difficulties committing spending to 'new' social policies, such as work-family policies, due to the cost of providing mature 'old' social policies, such as pensions. Some support for this 'crowding out thesis' has been found in terms of a strong negative relationship between spending on old age benefits and on childcare across 23 OECD countries (Bonoli and Reber, 2010).

However, in both Germany and England work-family policy reform represented a significant departure from the existing path of policies towards families, rendering a focus on path dependency, such as in the crowding-out thesis, inadequate to illuminate the differences in the paths taken by Germany and England. If anything, the crowding out thesis makes the

comparison of Germany and England more of a puzzle: in 1998 Germany spent 10.8 percent of GDP on pensions and old age benefits, the fourth most in the OECD and more than double the 4.6 percent spent in the UK (OECD, 2021b). From the perspective of the crowding out thesis therefore, Germany's more extensive expansion of work-family policy is unexpected.

Accounts that focus on political institutions argue that the "rules of the game" (North, 1990: 3) which structure politics shape the potential outcomes that are possible in a particular political system. In particular, the notion of 'veto points' (Immergut, 1992) or the related concept of 'veto players' (Tsebelis, 2002) refers to the ways in which formal political institutions determine the potential for reforms to be blocked. It can be assumed that countries with political systems with more veto points or players would find substantial reform difficult to achieve, whereas countries in which power is more concentrated would be more able to undertake reforms. Factors that are considered to diffuse power among veto players include federal political systems, systems of local self-government, non-majoritarian voting systems, strong bicameralism and institutions such as an influential constitutional court which can veto government legislation (Schmidt, 1996). It is notable that the German political system includes all of these features while the British is characterised by much more concentrated power in the executive. Schmidt's (1995) index of barriers to central state authority scores Germany as among the most constrained in the OECD with a score of five out of six, while Britain is one of the least with a score of one. A focus on political institutions would point to the English case being the one in which more extensive reform was more likely, adding to the puzzle at the heart of this thesis rather than explaining the different trajectories of German and English work-family policy reform.

The structure of economic institutions such as the labour market and systems of skill formation are also understood to influence policy change by shaping the interests of key actors, most notably employers. As work-family policies integrate women into the labour market, they are thought to be favoured by employers, who are concerned about labour market shortages (Bonoli, 2005; Estévez-Abe, 2005). However, these preferences are shaped by the structure of labour markets in different countries and in particular by the shifts in skill requirements associated with post-industrialisation. In coordinated market economies (CMEs), such as Germany, post-industrialisation has led to a growth in the proportion of jobs requiring high general skills, while in liberal market economies (LMEs), such as the UK, there has been a shift towards low skilled employment (Fleckenstein et al., 2011). Fleckenstein and Seeleib-Kaiser (2011) argue that these shifts in skill demands imply that employers in CMEs would be more

likely to advocate for work-family policies than their counterparts in LMEs, where employers' interests would be focused on encouraging low-skilled women into the labour market. The cases of Germany and England do provide some evidence for these assumptions, in that employers in Germany did act as promoters of work-family policy reform whereas employers in England were more ambivalent, particularly over leave policy (see Chapters 4 and 5). However, in both countries' employers were supporters of childcare reform, while in Germany, employers initially opposed reforms to parental leave in 2000 that supported work-family reconciliation, before becoming supporters of more substantial reforms six years later, indicating that employers' preferences were not as clearly determined as the theory suggests. Further, it does not seem to apply to other CME cases (Blome, 2016b). As Fleckenstein and Seeleib-Kaiser (2011) note, this theory lacks empirical evidence and is largely based on untested assumptions. Moreover, cross national studies have not found significant relationships between countries' skills profile and work-family policies (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015; Lambert, 2008). It is therefore questionable the extent to which a focus on employers' preferences can fully explain the different policy trajectories in Germany and England.

Another argument along similar lines is the hypothesis of Esping-Andersen (1999) and Morgan (2005) that there are two routes to raising childcare coverage: LMEs are able to develop childcare systems through market-provided childcare while CMEs require government intervention. The argument here is that in LMEs, which are characterised by high income inequality, market-based childcare can be made available to high income groups through provision by a low-skilled, low-waged childcare workforce. By contrast, in CMEs, where childcare workers are required to have an apprenticeship or degree-level qualification and therefore have higher wages, market-based childcare would be too expensive for the vast majority of parents. The implication of this is that in CME countries there is more pressure on governments to increase expenditure on childcare, while LMEs can rely on the market. As a description of different strategies to increase childcare participation, the logic behind the hypothesis is plausible but there is only limited empirical support (Bonoli and Reber, 2010). Morgan's (2005) argument, based on the case of the USA, is that the existence of a childcare market in LMEs allows policymakers to ignore the potentially controversial issues of childcare and mothers' employment, whereas in CMEs governments do not have the same option. The case of English ECEC expansion (see Chapter 5) would seem to run counter to this, in that government intervention was specifically because the market in existence in the 1990s was not providing sufficiently available or affordable places; indeed Esping-Andersen (1999: 67) points

out that the British childcare market does not seem to have these features and in fact is rather similar to that expected in CME countries. Further, CME diversity undermines the explanatory capacity of the hypothesis more broadly; for example, the Netherlands has a highly marketized system of childcare (Knijn and Lewis, 2017).

To summarise this section, none of the major theories that have been used to explain work-family policy expansion can fully account for why Germany undertook the greater change than England. Indeed, a number of insights from the literature make this outcome more puzzling, as conditions in England appear to have been more favourable for the greater reform. Not only did a centre-left party hold power for a considerably longer period of time in England than in Germany, but the institutional structure of the UK political system provides governments with considerably fewer constraints on their power. Further, if we accept that electoral competition motivated previously disinterested parties to promote reform, England being characterised by more progressive social attitudes would seem to offer governments a good reason to push for more extensive reform. While some of the institutional arguments indicate greater path dependency in England, it is notable that these rely on assumptions and lack specific evidence. Moreover, given that the period of focus is one of significant change in both countries, institutional accounts which stress constraints on change are likely to have only limited explanatory potential. In a comparison of English and German family policy from the 1970s to the early 2000s, Clasen (2005: 182) argues that family policy is less constrained by institutions, especially by policy legacies, than other fields of social policy, "which left governments more of an 'open field' and thus choice for designing new types of public intervention and deciding on their scope." In this context therefore, any investigation of the different trajectories of reform needs to pay close attention to how governments made these decisions. This requires a focus on the ideas involved in work-family policy reform.

1.4 An Ideational Approach: Contribution and Research Questions

Most of the literature surveyed above, which aims to explain work-family policy expansion, makes some reference to changing ideas, even if that is not the primary focus (Blome, 2016a, 2016b; Blum, 2010, 2012; Daly, 2010; Fleckenstein, 2011; Lewis, 2009; Lewis and Campbell, 2007; Mätzke and Ostner, 2010b; Orloff, 2006; Ostner, 2010). Indeed the overall notion of change is characterised as one of shifting assumptions away from the male-breadwinner model and towards the promotion of maternal employment, which is often associated with changing social attitudes towards a number of issues relating to families, children and gender roles (Kremer, 2007; Morgan, 2006). Such accounts build on the notion

that social policymaking is made within the context of broadly held and deeply embedded shared cultural values (Pfau-Effinger, 2004, 2005b; van Oorschot et al., 2008). It is however unclear how such broad societal ideas enter the political agenda and how they are translated into policies. Blome (2016b) argues that electoral competition provides such a mechanism, but while electoral competition can explain why political parties might be open to new ideas, it does not account for what those ideas might be or how they are transformed into policymaking.

Indeed, while structural and institutional factors such as those discussed above may well illuminate the conditions under which change comes about, they are indeterminate of the content of change (Béland and Hacker, 2004; Béland and Waddan, 2012). This is because policymaking is fundamentally a political process in which actors debate, contest and promote different courses of action (Boling, 2015; Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006; Morgan, 2006); in order to fully account for the *content* of change it is therefore necessary to examine the ideas are involved in these political processes. This is particularly true for policies relating to families, which as Clasen (2005: 140) notes are "rarely based on a clear diagnosis of existing problems, needs, demands, interests, and attitudes of families or children." Investigating change in policies related to families is therefore particularly suited to an ideational approach as such policies relate to deeply-held beliefs, infused with normative notions relating to gender roles, child-rearing and the relationship between individuals and the state (Strohmeier, 2002). Indeed, Lewis (2008: 499) has argued that "[t]he whole issue of how to balance paid work and the unpaid work of care carried out by men and women in families is to some extent a euphemism for competing ideas about childrearing and thus the role of parents, especially the mothers of young children - held by politicians, professionals and parents themselves".

The ideational literature has shown that ideas 'matter' in politics and policymaking, yet the ways in which they matter are numerous and diverse (Béland and Cox, 2011a). For example, one strand of comparative research has demonstrated the enduring impact of nationally-specific ideas in shaping divergent outcomes in a number of policy areas (e.g. Cox, 2004; VA Schmidt, 2002). Others have shown that ideas can provide explanations for situations in which key policy actors change their position to one that is seemingly against their own interests (e.g. Culpepper, 2008; Parsons, 2002), or why similar actors behave differently in different contexts (e.g. Berman, 1998). Ideas have been central to the analysis of 'paradigm shifts', moments of crisis when the fundamental assumptions that underpin economic policymaking shift (e.g. Blyth, 2002; Hall, 1993). Others have highlighted the ways in which ideas can contribute a mechanism of change to institutional theories which stress path dependency and are characterised by

stability bias (Béland, 2005, 2016a; Schmidt, 2008b). Building on this, the ideational literature has recently taken a theoretical turn, attempting to account for *how* ideas matter, not merely showing that they do (Mehta, 2011; Padamsee, 2009). In doing so, it has highlighted how process of agenda-setting, framing and problem definition can shape future policy decisions (Béland, 2009, 2016a).

This thesis draws on this literature to investigate the different trajectories of German and English work-family policy reform. It demonstrates that the processes by which new ideas came onto the agenda and the way in which they affected the development of work-family policy in each country explain why policy change in Germany was more extensive than in England. It argues the period in question is characterised by deep ideational change in Germany, during which the ideas underpinning previous policy approaches towards families, employment and child-raising fundamentally changed, enabling path-shifting policy change. By contrast, in England new ideas about work-family policy came onto the agenda, but the fundamental ideas that had shaped the state's approach to families remained unchanged, placing a limit on the extent of policy change. As such the thesis contributes to the comparative policy literature and to the literature specifically on work-family policy reform, where ideas are often mentioned, but rarely form the focus of accounts (although see Ellingsæter, 2012; Mätzke and Ostner, 2010b; Rüling, 2010; White, 2012, 2017).

However, the thesis also makes a substantial contribution to the theoretical ideational literature. The starting point is a critique of the literature's reliance on the 'paradigm shift' model of change which conceptualises change as the result of extremely rare episodes of deep uncertainty in which dominant ideas crumble and are replaced by new ones. Instead of this model, which was derived from economic policymaking (Hall, 1993), the thesis offers an alternate theory of incremental ideational change, more appropriate to the less technical policy domains of social policy, not typically characterised by competing schools of thought, but by a multitude of cognitive and normative beliefs.

In doing so, this thesis rejects many of the theoretical assumptions about ideational change that are explicitly or implicitly predominant in the literature. First, it replaces the notion that ideas are stable and coherent, with an alternative conception of fluctuating constellations of ideas. Second, it rejects the notion that ideational change must be driven by crises, arguing that over time ambiguities and tensions within these constellations of ideas, and between them and environmental conditions, create possibilities for change. Third, it argues that actors are

not powerless over ideas but 'use' ideas for strategic goals, taking advantage of these ambiguities and tensions to challenge and change existing ideas.

The thesis further provides a framework for analysing this kind of ideational change. By focusing on the interaction of ideas at different 'levels', it highlights three crucial and interlinked elements of ideational change – framing, timing and agency. These three elements embed the framework in the socio-economic, institutional and political context in which ideational change takes place, and therefore reduces the contingency inherent in some ideational explanations. The elaboration of this framework and then using it to analyse the different kinds of change evident in German and English work-family policy are the major contributions of this thesis.

Thus the thesis makes both a theoretical and empirical contribution. The overarching empirical puzzle the thesis seeks to solve relates to variation in the expansion of work-family policy and why Germany's reforms were more extensive than those undertaken in England. Adopting an ideational approach and especially the notion that the way that new ideas come onto the political agenda is important to their subsequent influence, the thesis aims to address the following three research questions:

> RQ1) How did new ideas about work-family policy come onto the political agenda in Germany and England?
>
> RQ2) How did these new ideas influence the policymaking process of work-family policy reform in Germany and England?
>
> RQ3) What explains the differences in the influence of new ideas in the two countries?

1.5 Research Strategy and Methods

1.5.1 Research strategy and case selection

As these research questions relate to the way that ideas impacted the policymaking processes in the two countries, the chosen methodology for this study is a form of historical analysis known as 'process tracing' (Bennett & Checkel, 2015). According to George and McKeown, process tracing:

> is intended to investigate and explain the decision process by which various initial conditions are translated into outcomes…The process tracing approach attempts to uncover what stimuli the actors attend to; the decision process that makes use of these stimuli to arrive at decisions; the actual behavior that then occurs; the effect of various institutional

arrangements on attention, processing, and behavior; and the effect of other variables of interest on attention, processing and behavior" (George and McKeown, 1985: 35).

> Process tracing has been found in the literature to be an appropriate way to study political processes and, in particular, processes of policy and ideational change (Jacobs, 2015). It necessitates a research strategy of comparative historical analysis based on in-depth case studies. Comparative historical analysis entails "the detailed examination of an aspect of a historical episode to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events" (George & Bennett, 2005, p. 5).

In terms of case selection the focus on the processes of change has informed the research strategy of 'contextual comparison' which was pioneered by Locke and Thelen (1995). This approach is broader than the 'matched comparison' case selection that characterises 'most similar' or 'most different' research designs (see Gerring, 2008). Contextual comparison highlights the importance of both the institutional and ideational context in which phenomena of interest occur, contexts which are particularly relevant to attempts to ascertain differences in apparently similar cross-national trends and processes of policymaking. Locke and Thelen (1995) note that matched comparisons can obscure important aspects of the changes under consideration. In particular, they highlight two aspects undervalued by matched comparisons, which are potentially important in a study of work-family policy expansion. First, there is often an assumption that the broad socio-economic and demographic trends that are the underpinnings of change are equally important in both contexts (Locke and Thelen, 1995). The pressures that welfare states have confronted when enacting work-family policy change are general trends across developed countries: demographic ageing, falling birth rates, changing labour market conditions and behaviour, as well as family change (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014). However, they are multifaceted and have occurred in different combinations and constellations in different contexts. Contextual comparison focuses therefore on the pressures that confronted welfare states as they were understood in particular national contexts. Second, matched cases can obscure the different meanings that particular changes have in countries with different normative traditions (Locke and Thelen, 1995). This is a particularly important point given that the role of ideas is a key focus of the thesis.

Thus the approach of contextual comparison aims to "move beyond the conventional practice of comparing nominally analogous changes across countries and instead can select *analytically parallel* (even if formally diverse) phenomena for comparison." (Locke and Thelen, 1995: 344 emphasis in original). Based on the research questions, these analytically parallel phenomena are the new ideas about work-family policy and the processes by which they led to policy change. As such, instead of a matched comparison, in which the aim would

be to select cases on a 'most different' basis in order to highlight how a similar change is mediated in different contexts, "contextualized comparisons put cases side by side to highlight the distinctive features of particular systems" (Locke and Thelen, 1995: 360). That is, such an approach will involve both similarities and differences.

Having identified the overall topic of interest as variation in work-family policy expansion, and highlighted the role of ideas in that expansion as the analytical focus of case selection, the logical case selection method is that of 'diverse cases' in which cases represent variance along variables of interest (Gerring, 2008). Germany and England represent diverse cases of work-family policy expansion in that although both countries undertook significant expansions which shifted the approach of the state to families and family policy away from one characterised by male-breadwinner model assumptions, they differ in the extent and type of change. As Chapter 2 will discuss in more detail, the two cases therefore represent diversity in work-family policy expansion in that Germany represents dramatic 'path switching', while the English reforms can be conceptualised as a more gradual 'path departure' (see Ebbinghaus, 2009 for these terms). These two types of change represent the two main trajectories of latecomer work-family policy reformers that have taken place since the late-1990s (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015). Cases in which work-family policy did not expand in any meaningful sense (for example Italy) and 'early bird' cases which had already introduced work-family policies at an earlier date (for example Scandinavian countries) are considered outside the world of cases of interest for this examination of trajectories of work-family policy expansion.

A challenge of case study research is ensuring that its findings can be generalised beyond the specific cases; this is particularly the case for contextual comparisons, which does not attempt to 'control' for similar variables in diverse cases. However, as Gerring (2008) notes, diverse cases make claim to representativeness by also acting as 'typical cases' of relevant properties. In this thesis, while Germany and England both represent traditionally strong-male breadwinner model countries, they are also representative of the two main routes by which this model was arrived at, reflecting a divide between family-based approaches to welfare in much of continental Europe and market-based approaches in anglophone countries (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Korpi, 2000).

(West) Germany is the prototype of Esping-Andersen's (1990) conservatist-corporatist welfare regime, characterised by contribution-based social insurance schemes which aim at status preservation through earnings-related benefits. Shaped by the influence of the Church

and Christian democracy, conservative-corporatist social policy was designed to fortify the institution of the traditional family, which was seen as the primary distributor of welfare. The principle of 'subsidiarity' here means the state adopts a non-interventionist position towards the family, intervening only when "the family's capacity to service its members is exhausted" (Esping-Andersen, 1990: 27). As such, in family-based male-breadwinner model countries, family policy is 'explicit' in that it focuses on the institution of the family, rather than its members (Kaufman, 2002) and is based primarily on providing families with cash transfers, rather than services (Korpi, 2000).

The UK is a 'liberal' welfare regime in which welfare is primarily distributed according to need and social policy is characterised by tax-funded, modest benefits which are targeted at poverty relief (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Liberal welfare regimes place a strong emphasis on the role of the market and individual self-reliance with the role of the state limited to providing residual safety nets which can be supplemented by market provision (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Families are viewed as a private realm, free from state intervention, with market services available to those families that choose to purchase them. As such, the state makes no attempt to reduce the welfare function of the family, like in conservative-corporatist welfare regimes but for a different reason (Esping-Andersen, 1999). Policy towards families is 'implicit', in that it tends to concentrate on the needs of individual members of families rather than the institution itself (Kaufmann, 2002) and is characterised by residual benefits. Market-based male-breadwinner model countries are therefore traditionally equally 'service lean' as the family-based welfare regimes of the conservative-corporatist world (Korpi, 2000).

As such, they are representative of the two predominant approaches by which the male-breadwinner model family was fostered in OECD countries: in family-based welfare regimes it was through explicit policies that aimed to support the traditional family; in market-based welfare regimes it was fostered more implicitly through the lack of any attempt to reduce the family's welfare function. Both approaches were characterised by a lack of state interest in work-family policies, including almost no service provision. The recent expansion of work-family policy has seen countries from both traditions expand ECEC and leave for parents and move away from the male-breadwinner model. As typical cases of the family-based and market-based approach, Germany and England are therefore representative of a broader set of latecomer reformers of work-family policy (Morgan, 2012). Indeed, the literature has highlighted similarities between English reforms and those in other anglophone countries (Baird and O'Brien, 2015; White, 2017; White and Friendly, 2012), while Germany's reforms

have been compared to similar expansions in other continental European countries (Blum, 2012; Häusermann, 2018; Lewis, Knijn, et al., 2008). Thus the conclusions drawn from the English and German cases have the potential to apply across a broader set of countries, and therefore provide generalisable findings about work-family policy expansion and the departure from the male-breadwinner model.

1.5.2 Empirical scope and research methods

Policies related to how families balance work and care can include aspects of, *inter alia*, family policy, labour market policy, education policy, pension policy, tax policy. This study focuses on two interrelated policy areas, first, early childhood education and care (ECEC), that is services for pre-school children which remove the care responsibility from families, and second, the provision of leave for the purposes of looking after children. The literature has often linked these two policies together and to a certain extent they can be seen as complementary (Daly and Ferragina, 2018; Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015; Hegewisch and Gornick, 2011).

ECEC is a composite of policies that relate to childcare, that is, services that provide a place for non-familial care of children, and those that relate to education services for children under school age. It is worth pointing out that the distinction between the two is blurred and varies considerably cross-nationally (OECD, 2017b). As will be set out in Chapters 2 and 5, in England, early education and childcare have different policy legacies and in the early period of work-family policy expansion (1997-2001) were conceptualised as different policy areas, with responsibility for the two split between different parts of government (Lewis, 2013a). After 2002 services for young children were conceptualised as a more coherent package and the 2006 Childcare Act's definition of childcare included services that provide education (West et al., 2020). This distinction has become blurred through more recent policy changes, although the legacies of the different approaches to early education and childcare is still somewhat visible (Lewis and West, 2017). By contrast in Germany, ECEC is almost exclusively referred to as 'childcare' (*Erziehung/Betreuung*) although it has been assumed that childcare services will have an educational component (West et al., 2020).

This study's scope includes government attempts to improve the availability of ECEC services. In both countries this has involved central government providing funding to local government in order meet targets for the expansion of ECEC places and has also included legislation regarding children's entitlement to ECEC places. Part of increasing the availability

of ECEC services has also been attempts to reduce barriers to ECEC access, which has involved efforts to reduce the costs to parents and to improve the quality of ECEC settings. In Germany the federal government's competency in childcare policy is very limited, so most of the legislative efforts from the German federal government related to providing the Länder with funding and targets for ECEC provision (Gerlach, 2010). The English central government's power was not limited in this sense, and legislation aimed to improve the quality and affordability of ECEC as well as overall levels of supply.

This thesis also focuses on employment leave policies that are designed to enable parents to care for young children, including parental leave, maternity leave and paternity leave, paid or unpaid. Other legislation on working-time, such as limiting hours or providing employees with rights to change working patterns, are outside the focus of this thesis due to the need to keep it to a manageable scope. Likewise, while some studies that focus on work-family policies also include the provision of family benefits, this project excludes these policy areas. The reason for delimiting the study in this way is that it is policies relating to ECEC and leave that have seen the most dynamism across welfare states in the past decades; providing benefits to families has a much longer history that would divert the project from its focus on dramatic policy expansion (Daly and Ferragina, 2018).

The period of policy expansion began with the election of a centre-left government in both Germany and the UK, in 1998 and 1997 respectively. The period of interest concludes with the onset of the financial crisis in 2008, which put an end to the momentum for this initial period of reform in both countries and was shortly followed by elections in which the centre-left parties were removed from power.[4] In Germany, the last significant reform under the Grand Coalition was concluded in 2008, and elections were held the following year. The victorious conservative-liberal coalition placed emphasis on austerity and little family policy expansion occurred during its term (Henninger and von Wahl, 2014). In the UK, the financial crisis brought a fiscal tightening which meant that the last two years of Labour's third term were more constrained than the previous 11 years. The change of government in 2010 to a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition signified the end of the period of expansion.[5]

[4] In Germany the SPD had only been a minority partner in a Grand Coalition since 2005, but in 2009 they were replaced in this role by the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP).

[5] Both countries have seen further changes to work-family policies since then, although the trajectory of reform has been more mixed than during the period 1997/8-2008 (Henninger and von Wahl, 2014, 2019; Lewis and West, 2017; Stewart and Obolenskaya, 2015; Stewart and Reader, 2021).

The primary research conducted for this thesis involved documentary analysis and 42 expert interviews with policymakers and other stakeholders with first-hand knowledge of the policymaking process. 22 interviews were conducted in England and 20 in Germany. This dual strategy was intended to permit triangulation of findings, increasing the validity and reliability of the interpretations of the data (Trampusch and Palier, 2016). This research strategy underwent the LSE Department of Social Policy's internal ethics review process.

Documentary evidence was gathered from a range of different sources to provide insight both on the processes of policy formation and also on the key ideas involved in those processes. In both countries, documentary evidence relating to the parliamentary passage of key pieces of legislation was collected. This included bills and regulations, including amendments promoted in parliament, debates in parliament over specific bills and select committee hearings and reports.[6] All of these documents were available for download from the website of the respective national parliaments. While in Germany the key legislation was all undertaken in the same pattern, in England reforms were not always implemented through discrete pieces of legislation but formed part of budget announcements. Relevant budget statements, reports and parliamentary debates were therefore included in English document analysis. Further, in England, it was common for the government to release policy proposals for consultation through 'green papers' before the legislative process began. Green papers as well as consultation responses were therefore also collected. These documents provided valuable information about the initial intentions behind reforms and also on the positions and influence of stakeholders in the consultation process. In both countries government departments responsible for reforms published a number of policy documents throughout the reform period which summarised the approach towards work-family policy reform or towards elements therein. These were also available to download from the archive of government websites.

As part of the research focus was on how new ideas came onto the political agenda, part of the strategy for document collection involved collecting information on how key actors and political parties' approaches to work-family policy changed. Therefore, documents produced by political parties in the years leading up to 1997/98, outlining their position on work-family policy were also collected. These include proceedings of party conferences, policy papers and election manifestos. As Chapter 3 will argue, a focus on ideas requires that attention be paid to key figures who 'carried' ideas into the political arena. Such figures were identified through a

[6] In Germany, some parliamentary hearings are not publicly available, so document analysis was limited to those available.

close reading of the secondary literature as well as through the above sources of documentary analysis; these were further confirmed through interviews with participants (see below). Public speeches, contemporary media interviews, books and policy papers authored by these actors were collected (e.g. Harman, 1993, 2017; Hewitt, 1993; Mohn and von der Leyen, 2007; R Schmidt, 2002; Schmidt and Mohn, 2004). Finally, contemporary press coverage was used to help provide context for the policymaking process and to provide details of interactions, not documented in policy documents, such as cabinet meetings or meetings between ministers and employers' representatives.

Complementing this collection of documentary sources, interviews with participants in the policymaking processes were conducted to obtain information about the details of policy development. Participants were identified through a number of different processes. First, analysis of policy documents and parliamentary debates revealed some key actors involved in the policy development processes. Politicians were the most straightforward to identify because of their participation in parliamentary debates, select committee hearings and their association with the work-family policy agenda in contemporary media reports. Second, interest groups were identified through their participation in consultation responses, committee hearings and taskforces or through being mentioned in media reports. Third, participants who remained more 'behind the scenes' in the policy development processes, such as government advisors and civil servants, were identified through the secondary literature and by contacting relevant government departments for information, although given that the period of interest was 10-20 years before the research was conducted, few civil servants or advisors were still in position, especially in England. Further identification of these less publicly accessible figures was conducted through asking interview participants if they could recommend further participants.

Prospective interview participants were contacted by email and, if consent was given, interviews were arranged through follow-up emails and phone calls. Reflecting availability of participants, sample numbers are different in the English and German cases. In England, politicians are under-represented, although insight into policymaking processes was provided by political advisors and interest groups, a category which includes employers, trade unions and other interested parties such as campaigning organisations and family representatives. In Germany, interest groups are under-represented compared to the English case, although documentary analysis helped provide the perspective of some of these groups. Table 1.5 shows the different sample of participants in the two countries.

Table 1.5: Category of interview participants

	England	Germany
Politicians	2	10
Political advisors	5	3
Civil servants	5	3
Interest groups	10	4

Interviews were conducted between August 2017 and June 2018. The majority were conducted face-to-face (in 34 cases), but some were done by phone (in eight cases), where more convenient for the participant. Interviews mainly took place in London or Berlin, but also in some other locations in England and Germany. All interviews were semi-structured with customised interview guides depending on the type of interview and participants' specific involvement in policy development. Interviews varied in length from twenty-five minutes to two hours and were mainly conducted in English in both countries although, where the participant preferred, they were conducted in German (in nine cases). Interviews were recorded and most were fully transcribed by me.

Interviewees were guaranteed anonymity and care has been taken in the text to ensure this, which has involved ensuring that the labelling of interview participants remains in the categories set out in Table 1.5. In the thesis participants are referred to by a code that refers to their country and the order in which they were interviewed (e.g. DE_3 was the third participant interviewed in Germany). These codes can be cross-referenced with the tables in Appendices 1 and 2, which provide anonymised details of the interview participants in each country.

Documentary analysis focused on drawing out themes related to the research questions. In doing so the analysis aimed to identify the new ideas in work-family policy and to reconstruct the processes of policy reform. However, documents do not reveal a great deal about the behind-the-scenes processes of reform. Interview data was used to fill gaps specifically in this area, with questions focused on the participant's recollection of the processes of policy reform, including their own role, that of others and their interpretation of these processes. Care was taken to ensure that findings from interviews were corroborated through documentary sources or another interview participant in order to reduce the chance of biased interpretations. Interviews were also used to ensure that my interpretation of what happened is consistent with that of those who were actually there, one of the crucial aspects of successful process tracing (Vennesson, 2008).

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis proceeds as follows. Chapter 2 sets out the comparison of the cases of work-family policy reform in Germany and England in more detail. It elaborates on the nature of the comparison and the means by which this thesis evaluates and compares change. Subsequently it provides a historical overview of the two countries' approaches to policies related to families, before undertaking a detailed summary of the changes in work-family policy between 1997/98 and 2008. It therefore substantiates the claim that German reform during this period was more extensive than that in England, making the case that the former undertook 'path switching', while in the latter the reforms represent a less dramatic 'path departure'.

Having set out the focus of the thesis in more detail, Chapter 3 moves on to address the theoretical approach. It sets out a framework for analysing ideational change that argues that ideas can change at different ideational 'levels' and highlights the role that framing, timing and agency play, elements that are closely linked to the structural and institutional contexts. It introduces key distinctions between foreground and background ideas and between problem definitions and policy solutions and highlights the various roles that ideas can play in processes of change and stability, each of which form an important part of the empirical analysis.

Chapters 4 and 5 undertake detailed empirical study of the processes of work-family policy reform in Germany and England respectively. These chapters address the first two research questions, investigating how new ideas about work-family policy came on the political agenda in the two countries and how these new ideas subsequently affected policymaking. While the focus of these chapters is on the ideas, through process-tracing of the reforms, both engage with the institutional and political context and demonstrate the interconnectedness of ideational and other factors in the processes of reform.

Chapter 6 addresses the third research question in comparing the role of ideas in the two countries. It highlights fundamental differences in the way that ideas impacted the respective policymaking processes and seeks to explain these differences with reference to the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3. It argues that German ideational change was deeper than that in England, and highlights the respective roles of framing, timing and agency in explaining this difference. Chapter 6 thereby provides the thesis's answer to the overall empirical puzzle. The concluding chapter (Chapter 7) provides a brief overview of thesis's main arguments but focuses primarily on elaborating the thesis's contribution to the empirical and theoretical

literatures. It ends with a section discussing the limitations of this study and makes some suggestions for further research.

Chapter 2: Work-Family Policy Change in Germany and England

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 highlighted the research puzzle that this thesis aims to solve: why was work-family policy change more extensive in Germany than it was in England? This chapter provides an account of those trajectories of reform and sets them in their respective historical contexts. It substantiates the claim that the German trajectory of reform was more extensive through a detailed and comparative examination of the specific reforms to ECEC and leave policy in the two countries. It therefore prepares the ground for the project's investigation of the processes of reform that follow in subsequent chapters.

The chapter begins by identifying the dependent variable; that is, defining an approach for measuring the 'extent' of work-family policy change (Section 2.2). Section 2.3 provides an historical overview of policies towards families in both countries and Section 2.4 sets out the policy expansion that took place in both countries between 1997/98 and 2008. The chapter concludes (Section 2.5) with a comparative assessment of the changes that took place in this period.

2.2 Measuring Change

The dependent variable in this thesis is the extent of change in work-family policy in Germany and England. This leads to two key questions: how can we define 'change in work-family policy'? and how can we compare 'the extent of change' in the two countries? Specifying the answer to these two questions more closely will help address the 'dependent variable problem' that plagues much welfare state analysis (Clasen and Siegel, 2007; Green-Pedersen, 2004).

2.2.1 The dependent variable problem

The dependent variable problem emerged as an important concern in the debate about extent and variation of welfare state change. This was launched by Pierson's (1994) examination of why governments committed to welfare state retrenchment in the UK and US had not managed to undertake significant cuts to welfare provision. With reference to this debate, Green-Pedersen set out the problem: "the 'dependent variable problem' is about defining the object of the entire retrenchment debate. This involves such questions as which changes to welfare states should be classified as retrenchment; how one can separate retrenchment from reform and reconstruction; and which data are most appropriate for empirical investigations of retrenchment outcomes" (2004: 4–5). The crux of the issue concerns

how we can define welfare state change: “To put it bluntly, the debate about explanations of variation in retrenchment cannot move beyond the stage of hypotheses before the dependent variable problem has been addressed, and the same goes for the debate about welfare state persistence or change” (Green-Pedersen, 2004: 4). As an illustration of these problems, Kühner (2007) has shown that the choice of dependent variable has led to differing conclusions on the nature and extent of welfare state change across different countries, with studies finding “not only dissimilar but, in several cases, contrary results” (Kühner, 2007: 16).

As Green-Pedersen (2004, 2007) points out, the conceptualisation of change depends on the researcher’s theoretical perspective and research questions. In particular, he highlights two different conceptualisations, which he argues should be kept separate: changes in output and in outcome (see also Bauer and Knill, 2014). The former refers to changes in welfare state policies, the latter to changes in social factors which governments aim to impact through social policies. If one is interested in the effects of policies, then the dependent variable should be linked to such effects and should therefore take the form of outcome measures, for example levels of inequality or poverty. On the other hand, if the focus is on the determinants of changes in social policies, the dependent variable needs to reflect this through measuring output, that is, the design of policies themselves. For example, Pierson’s (1994) study of retrenchment has as its focus the political ability of governments to make changes, therefore output measures were the appropriate dependent variable for his study. Given that this project is focused in a similar way on what English and German governments did to change their work-family policies, an output measure is clearly the most appropriate form for the dependent variable to take.

However, there are many potential measures of social policy output. The classic approach, following Wilensky (1975), is to measure ‘welfare effort’ as the proportion of GDP spent on social policies. While this choice may be made for a number of reasons, including that such a measure is perhaps the most straightforward and easily available, researchers have highlighted a number of problems with using welfare effort measures. These include that they depend on both GDP and welfare spending and therefore may capture changes due to the former rather than the latter, and further that changes in spending may not be the best measure of fundamental elements of policy design (Jensen, 2011; Olaskoaga et al., 2013). For example, it is plausible to imagine a situation in which a long, low-paid period of maternity leave is replaced with a shorter, high-paid period of parental leave, without huge impact on the overall level of spending. Yet such changes can indicate a fundamental shift from a policy that is designed to reinforce the male-breadwinner model family to one that encourages more equal

sharing of caring and employment responsibilities between men and women (Gornick and Meyers, 2009a; Korpi, 2000).

The appropriate choice of output measure is a theoretical one. For example, Esping-Andersen's (1990) analysis of the 'Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism' is based on the degree of decommodification, rather than on aggregate spending. This was because, working within the power resources theoretical perspective, he sought to demonstrate the power of social democracy in shaping welfare states. Social democrats fought to ensure workers could live independently of the market, not merely for more spending; as Esping-Andersen (1990: 21) stressed: "it is difficult to imagine anyone struggled for spending *per se*". From the power resources perspective therefore, aggregate levels of social spending would be an inappropriate dependent variable and Esping-Andersen's decommodification measure was a much closer fit to what his perspective led him to focus on.

2.2.2 Categorising work-family policies

Because the theoretical perspective of this project is that ideas matter for welfare state change, the principles and assumptions underpinning social policy are key focuses. Hence, the dependent variable required is an output measure that takes into account such principles and assumptions. The literature on family policies and gendered social policy is therefore a good source for an appropriate measure of change as it has focused on how social policies are underpinned by normative assumptions about the appropriate form that families should take, which have implications for the gender division of labour within families, particularly in relation to employment and care (Kremer, 2007; Leitner, 2003; Lewis, 1992, 1997; Lewis and Ostner, 1994; Lister, 1994). Because many early studies in this vein criticised Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes (e.g. Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993), a feature of this literature has been to create its own typologies and families of welfare states, based on factors that Esping-Andersen's analysis ignored. Most notably, Lewis (1992) highlighted the importance of adding consideration of unpaid household work to Esping-Andersen's welfare and employment nexus. Through historical analysis on the position of women in welfare states, Lewis developed a typology based on the extent of countries' adherence to the male-breadwinner model family, and the gender roles therein. She argued that in 'strong male-breadwinner model countries', such as Britain and Germany, strict distinctions are drawn between paid employment and the private realm of the family; in these countries, women could make claims to welfare based on their status as wives/mothers or workers but not both, and the normative assumption was the former. By contrast 'weak male-breadwinner model countries',

such as Sweden, treat both men and women similarly and operate on assumptions of 'dual breadwinner model families', with institutional support for women to engage in the labour market (Lewis, 1992, 1997; Lewis and Ostner, 1994).

While the extent of adherence to male-breadwinner model assumptions is a useful way to categorise different welfare states' historical approach to women and unpaid work, the typology is less useful for examining recent changes. In particular, gender focused scholars have argued that most countries have, since the 1970s, moved away from policies founded on such assumptions, and the dominant family model today resembles an 'adult worker model family' in which all adults are engaged in the labour market (Lewis, 2001b; Lewis and Giullari, 2005). However, the latter designation was not intended as a way of comparing different countries; rather it charted a general trend across welfare states with the aim of critiquing the gap between these assumptions and social reality for women and families (Daly, 2011). Accordingly, while the shift in England and Germany from a strong male-breadwinner model towards an adult worker model is the context of this thesis, it is not sufficiently specified to be able to highlight their different trajectories. Further, the aim of this thesis is not to categorise whole welfare states but to evaluate change specifically in work-family policies; while the approach of evaluating the underpinning norms and principles is a useful one, it is necessary to focus more closely on the design of such policies and the norms and principles embedded therein.

The gender-oriented literature has generated a number of different ways to categorise different policies, often with the aim of specifying countries' greater or lesser adherence to policies which advance gender equality (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Fraser, 1994; Gornick and Meyers, 2003; Leitner, 2003; Lister, 1997). However, attempts to do so have struggled with the question of what might actually constitute gender equality as a policy aim. Indeed, this runs up against the 'Wollstonecraft dilemma': whether gender equality requires that women are treated the same as or as different from men (Pateman, 1988). Policies that promote equality-as-sameness would aim for an equal division of paid and unpaid work between men and women, what Gornick and Meyers (2003) call a dual-earner/carer model. However, some would argue that in practice this devalues unpaid care work, for the focus on the labour market forces women to engage with it on the same terms as men, which results in women undertaking a 'double shift': both paid employment and the majority of unpaid care work. Equality-as-difference policies would aim to revalue and possibly reward this disproportionate share of care work, albeit at the risk of entrenching the existing gender division of labour and thus inequalities of power, which are often linked to income and access to employment (Lister, 1997).

One approach has been to evaluate policies on the extent to which they facilitate 'defamilialisation'. This concept attempts to capture the ways in which policies enable individuals to exist independently from family relations, in a similar way that Esping-Andersen's decommodification captures the extent to which social protection policies allow people to exist free from labour market relations (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Leitner, 2003; Lister, 1994; McLaughlin and Glendinning, 1994). However, scholars have interpreted the focus of the concept differently, with some foregrounding women's economic independence as the key aim, and others the location of care provision. This is evident in disagreements over how to categorise parental leave which encourages fathers to take leave, with some describing it as 'familialising' (e.g. Daly and Scheiwe, 2010; Leitner, 2003), as it maintains the responsibility of the family for care, and others as 'defamilializing', as it provides women with more economic independence (by encouraging sharing of unpaid care) (e.g. Hantrais, 2004; Lister, 1994). Such difficulties in establishing an unambiguous basic concept have led to differences in how countries are categorised (see Saxonberg, 2013). As this example shows, the relation of social policy to gender inequality is highly complex; reducing such complexity to a single binary measure such as 'defamilialization' is therefore inadequate.

Korpi (2000) categorises welfare state institutions according to the extent to which they aim to impact on inequalities through the provision of social rights. His work is influenced by the feminist critique of Esping-Andersen's 1990 typology as ignoring gendered inequalities because women's claims to social rights are made not only as workers but also as family members (Leira, 1992; Lewis, 1992; Lewis and Ostner, 1994; Lister, 1994; Orloff, 1993). Korpi notes that unlike class inequality, gender inequality involves not only a consideration of "material achievements but also inequalities with respect to agency as reflected in citizens' capacities to achieve and in terms of the range of alternative achievements among which an actor has the capability to choose" (Korpi, 2000: 132). Drawing on Orloff's (1993) notion that social rights from this perspective should be seen as the capacity to form an independent household, Korpi's typology focuses on the extent to which welfare states aim to facilitate women's continuous employment and/or encourages their unpaid care work. He highlights that such an approach not only gives an insight into the outcome of differential patterns of gender inequality in different countries, but also that it indicates "differences in goals with respect to gender relations" (Korpi, 2000: 144).

Given this project's focus on ideas in the context of a shift away from male-breadwinner model assumptions, Korpi's typology is a useful way of examining the logic of individual

countries' work-family policies. However, while he categorises countries by examining a range of policies including cash benefits, tax incentives and old age care arrangements, many of these are outside the scope of this project. The following paragraphs show however, that Korpi's categories can be applied to work-family policies and to an evaluation of the differences and changes over time of work-family policies in Germany and England.

Korpi makes the distinction between three 'ideal-typical' models of welfare state institutions: general family support, dual-earner support, and market-oriented. Policies that follow a general family support model are those that "give support to the nuclear family, while having institutional characteristics presuming that or being neutral to whether or not wives have the primary responsibility for caring and reproductive work within the family and only enter paid work on a temporary basis as secondary earners" (Korpi, 2000: 143–4). Countries characterised by general family support policies would be categorised by Lewis (1992) as strong male-breadwinner model countries, or by Esping-Andersen (1999) as 'familialist', the classic examples being continental European countries such as Germany and Austria, as well as Mediterranean welfare states (Hantrais, 2004; Lewis and Ostner, 1994). While it can be assumed that general family support policies support the traditional gender division of labour, in the context of a general departure from male-breadwinner model assumptions, policies in this model may also facilitate part-time employment for mothers, but their caring role, especially for very young children, will be emphasised.

By contrast, dual-earner support policies are those that "encourage women's continuous labour force participation, enable parents, men as well as women, to combine parenthood with paid work, and attempt to redistribute caring work within the family" (Korpi, 2000: 143). Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden, are the archetypal examples of dual-earner support model countries (Ellingsæter and Leira, 2006; Leira, 1992; Ruggie, 1984), which have also been described as 'defamilialised' or 'dual-earner, dual-carer model' countries (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Gornick and Meyers, 2003).

Finally, market-oriented countries are those that "provide citizens with relatively few claim rights in this area… leaving individuals to find private solutions within the context of their market resources and/or family relations" (Korpi, 2000: 144). Liberal welfare regimes, such as the USA or the UK, have traditionally been associated with a lack of state policies addressing families and therefore would fit into this model (Kaufmann, 2002; Land, 1980; Lewis and Ostner, 1994; Ruggie, 1984). It is worth noting that this lack of policy attention to work-family issues does not imply the state is neutral in its assumptions about families;

historical accounts highlight that assumptions about the desirability of traditional gender roles were important drivers of the development of policies towards families in the UK (Lewis, 2013a, 2013b; Randall, 2000; Riley, 1983; Ruggie, 1984). Furthermore, in the context of shifts away from male-breadwinner model assumptions, market-oriented policies are synonymous with Lewis's (2001b) 'adult worker model', in which all adults are expected to be in employment, but have to rely on the market, rather than the state, for assistance with care responsibilities.

The following paragraphs set out three ideal-typical work-family policy packages with respect to ECEC and leave policies that align with Korpi's three models (see Table 2.1). As ideal-types, these three models are not intended as descriptions of real-world configurations of any particular countries' package of work-family policies; indeed, countries contain complex policy mixes which combine elements of each, for example Scandinavian countries, largely characterised by dual-earner support policies all also provide childcare allowances, which would be associated with the general family support ideal type (Ellingsæter, 2014). Nevertheless ideal types provide a measuring stick against which countries work-family policies can be evaluated.

ECEC Policies

ECEC policies can be designed in a myriad of different ways (e.g. OECD, 2017b). In Korpi's typology, the key aspect is the extent to which parents can use formal ECEC provision to help combine employment and childcare. Key elements here, which can be influenced directly by policy design, are the age at which ECEC services are available to children, whether services are full- or part-time, whether they offer provision throughout the year, and the level of costs borne by parents. Quality of provision is also a key factor in enabling parents to feel confident using ECEC services.

Dual-earner support policy would ensure ECEC was available from whenever leave ends (see below), most likely from a child's first birthday. It would be available on a year-round, full-time basis and subsidised to ensure affordability. Dual-earner support policies would also make efforts to ensure high quality services, in order that parents are willing to use them. On the other hand, the general family support model would include no state provision or funding of childcare, as childcare would be undertaken within families. In this sense there is little clear difference between general family support model policies and market-oriented model policies, which would also lack state involvement. However, given the huge changes in mothers' labour

market participation in the decades since the 1970s, a modern general family support model would recognise that mothers do enter the labour market, albeit preferably on a part-time basis. Therefore, the provision of part-time ECEC for older children (three and over) could also be categorised as general family support, as indeed Korpi (2000) does. A further element of policy intervention from a general family support model could be the implementation of childcare allowances, cash transfers paid to parents who care for children at home. These allowances are often considered to be functional equivalents of long leave policies in that they encourage one parent (almost always women) to leave the labour market in order to undertake care (Duvander and Ellingsæter, 2016). Care allowances are thus antithetical to the dual-earner support model. Finally, a market-oriented ECEC policy could attempt to stimulate the market through start-up funds or through demand-side funding such as voucher schemes, which would promote competition and non-state provision (Gambaro and Stewart, 2014; Lloyd and Penn, 2012; West et al., 2010, 2020).

Leave policies

The specific design of leave policy also makes a significant difference to how it should be categorised. In particular, long periods of maternity leave may contribute to reinforcing gender roles in the family, and to a range of negative outcomes such as eroding women's skills and lowering their pay, and increasing the gender pay gap and gender segregation. On the other hand, if a leave period is too short, mothers might be forced back into the labour market before they are ready, or out of it if they are not ready to return (Adema et al., 2015; Deven and Moss, 2002; Gornick et al., 1997; Gornick and Meyers, 2009b; Morgan and Zippel, 2003). In terms of contributing towards women's agency, leave policies may also reinforce the maternal caring role or contribute towards a more equal sharing of unpaid childcare and of leave through paternity or parental leave entitlements, although the likelihood of this depends on the policy design, especially on the level of pay (Adema et al., 2015; Deven and Moss, 2002; Koslowski et al., 2020). The most important issues relating to leave policies therefore are who is entitled to leave, the duration of leave entitlement and the level of pay. Other key questions include whether parental leave is provided as a family or an individual right and the extent to which it can be taken flexibly; both of which have an impact on take-up, particularly on encouraging fathers to take on more caring responsibilities (Huerta et al., 2013; Koslowski et al., 2020).

Ideal-typical general family support leave policies would be aimed at mothers (i.e. maternity leave), be available to all regardless of past employment. It would have little regard for women's labour market attachment and may therefore be provided for a long period of time.

Maternity leave benefits would not be designed as compensation for lost wages, but as a contribution to the 'family wage'; the replacement rate paid would therefore be low and likely be flat-rate. It would be available to all mothers, including those who had not previously been employed. By contrast the ideal-typical dual-earner support leave policy would involve gender neutral parental leave (or a mixture of maternity, paternity and parental leaves), which would be short enough not to impact on the labour market attachment of parents. The benefit would be paid for the duration of the leave period and would be of a sufficient level to compensate parents for lost earnings, and to encourage continued attachment to the labour market. Finally, each parent would have an individual right to portions of leave, meaning that if either parent did not take their leave, it could not be taken by the other. Such use-it-or-lose-it rights, known as 'daddy months' are aimed at incentivising fathers to take their leave, often in the face of prevailing employment and social norms (Bünning, 2015; Duvander and Johansson, 2012; Huerta et al., 2013; O'Brien and Moss, 2010). Market-oriented leave policies would be expected to provide the bare minimum required by health concerns for mothers and babies after childbirth. Any further provision would, from this perspective, rely on voluntarist agreements between employer and employee, rather than a legislative approach. In such a system, leave provision would be an employee benefit which employers would compete to offer.

Table 2.1: Key features of ideal-typical work-family policy packages, following Korpi's (2000) three models

	General family support	**Dual-earner support**	**Market-oriented**
Leave policy	Maternity leave	Parental leave (and maternity and paternity leave)	Maternity leave (for health reasons)
Leave entitlement	All mothers	Employed mothers and employed fathers	Employed mothers
Length of leave	More than 12 months, up to three years	12 months or less	Less than six months
Individual entitlements	No	Yes	No
Ability to use over a period of years/combine with employment	No	Yes	No (voluntarist arrangement)
Level of pay	Low/Medium level; flat-rate	High level; earnings-related	Low level; flat-rate
ECEC	No provision for children under three; part-time provision for children aged three to school age	Full-time, affordable provision for all children aged over one.	Market provision with some market supporting mechanisms
Childcare allowances	Yes	No	No

2.2.3 Measuring change

A further issue relating to the dependent variable problem is the question of what constitutes change and how some change can be defined as 'more' than other change. Debates over the nature of change have dominated the institutional literature for the last thirty years.[7] Neo-institutionalism, which rose to prominence in the 1980s, followed Lindblom (1959) in emphasising incrementalism as the normal mode of change, and adopted a punctuated equilibrium model, in which long periods of stability with only incremental change are interrupted by dramatic change (Krasner, 1988). Hall's (1993) typology of change exemplifies this; he distinguishes between first order change in the settings of a policy and second order change in the instruments of policy, both of which occur relatively frequently and constitute 'normal policymaking'. Third order change of the goals underpinning policy on the other hand is exceptional and constitutes a 'paradigm shift', marking a fundamental overhaul of policy and institutions. Historical institutionalists, particularly Pierson (2000), adopted the concept of 'path dependency' to describe the predominance of stability: the importance of past decisions and the institutionalised rules, commitments and norms that emerge from them, in structuring the available courses of action in the present. In particular, the notion of self-reinforcing processes, in which early decisions in a certain direction create incentives for further movement in the same direction, has been central to this concept (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2000). From this perspective, 'normal policymaking', that is, first- and second-order changes, are essentially marginal adaptations in response to environmental changes and are therefore characterised by self-reinforcing processes: they are 'path-stabilising' adaptations rather than change (Ebbinghaus, 2009).

Thus the model of change on which orthodox historical institutionalism relies essentially only conceptualises two forms of change: minor, path-stabilising change or dramatic, path-switching change. Yet incremental change, in which seemingly small changes can, over time, add up to significant change, are a reality of policy development (Streeck and Thelen, 2005). Ignoring such changes is a weakness in the literature and has led to an empirical over-emphasis on path-switching change or on "the study of comparative statics" (Thelen and Steinmo, 1992: 14). Incremental accounts highlight this gap and have focused on how small changes over time can lead to significant change (Hacker, 2005; Mahoney and Thelen, 2009; Streeck and Thelen, 2005). A feature of such accounts is that the hierarchy of settings, instruments and goals

[7] See Section 3.2 for a more in depth survey of this literature.

outlined by Hall (1993) is in reality less rigid[8], and there are examples of gradual change in policy goals without dramatic overhaul of policy instruments or settings, through processes such as institutional layering or conversion (Streeck and Thelen, 2005). In Thelen's terms, such conceptualisations "provide a way of thinking about institutional reproduction and change that steers a course between deterministic "lock-in" models on the one hand, and overly fluid "one damn thing after another" models on the other hand" (2000: 107). Incremental change therefore requires a further conception of change than the path stabilisation and path switching provided by the punctuated equilibrium model: path-departing change, in which incremental changes occur but elements of the previous path are still evident (Ebbinghaus, 2009).

Following Ebbinghaus therefore, we can identify three modes of change, which can be used to evaluate the degree of change undertaken in work-family policies in England and Germany: "(a) path stabilization: marginal adaptation to environmental changes without changing core principles; (b) path departure: gradual adaptation through partial renewal of institutional arrangements and limited redirection of core principles; (c) path cessation or switching: intervention that ends the self-reinforcement of an established institution and may give way to a new institution in its place" (Ebbinghaus, 2009: 17). The next section sets out the historical context of work-family policy in the postwar years in Germany and England, using Korpi's distinctions to evaluate each countries' historical trajectories. Subsequently the expansion of work-family policy in each country between 1997/98 and 2008 will be analysed comparatively using Ebbinghaus's three modes of change.

2.3 Historical Context

This section sets out the historical context of the work-family policy reforms that form the focus of the remainder of the thesis. Drawing on secondary literature, it examines the approach that both German and English governments have taken towards families and towards care of young children and maternal employment. Using Korpi's ideal types, it evaluates each country's trajectory leading up to the period of reform. In Germany it begins with the division of the country after the Second World War, which had significant implications for the German trajectory. The roots of the English trajectory lie earlier in the twentieth century, although the majority of the analysis presented here also focuses on the postwar years.

[8] Others have criticised Hall's three-level typology as too reductive and have emphasised a greater variety of types of change, emphasising distinctions such as 'means' and 'ends' and highlighting that third-order change can, in reality, take place without significant change in policy instruments or settings (e.g. Capano, 2009; Capano and Howlett, 2009).

2.3.1 Germany, 1945-1998

After the Second World War Germany was partitioned by the Allied powers, a process that was formalised in 1949 through the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) from the British, French and US zones (including west Berlin) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from the Soviet zone (including east Berlin). Divergence between the two Germanys was immediate and dramatic. In the West, many of the legal and social institutions of the pre-Nazi era Weimar Republic were reinstated after the war, while in the East, the creation of a centralised economy on the Soviet model marked a clear break with past traditions (Gerlach, 2010; Hagemann, 2006; Moeller, 1993).

Postwar reconstruction in West Germany placed a focus on the family as a bulwark against both the totalitarianism of the Nazi-era and the communism of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe (Ostner, 1994). The family was seen as one of the only institutions unsullied by National Socialism and as a bastion of stability in the war-ravaged country (Hagemann, 2006). This focus influenced the formulation of the Basic Law in May 1949, especially Article 6 which provided state protection to marriage and the family, and the continued use of marriage and family law from the 1900 Civil Code. Under these laws, a wife was obligated to provide familial care and required her husband's permission to seek employment (Ostner, 1994). Ideas stemming from the Catholic Church, propagated by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and its more conservative Bavarian sister-party the Christian Social Union (CSU), who in coalition with the Free Democratic Party (FDP) governed continuously until 1969, were particularly influential. According to these ideas, the family was seen, unlike the state or society, as created by God and therefore a privileged sphere which, according to the principle of subsidiarity, must not be impinged on and must be protected by the state (Hagemann, 2006).

The main function of the family was to produce and raise children, the latter task being seen in the postwar period as reserved exclusively for mothers. Contemporary social scientists reinforced such beliefs through assertions that children could only properly develop through unlimited maternal attention (e.g. Schelsky, 1955). As such, employment of married women was frowned upon, and dual-career families were viewed as 'materialistic' and greedy (Mätzke and Ostner, 2010b). For example, public discourse around maternal employment in the 1950s used negatively imbued terms such as '*Doppelbelastung*' (double burden) and '*Schlüsselkinder*' (latch-key children), while the stigmatising term '*Rabenmutter'* (raven mother) was associated with working mothers (Kolbe, 2002; Ostner, 2010). Even political organisations of the left, such as the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and trade unions, supported

the traditional family model, and highlighted maternal employment as a social welfare problem requiring relief (Hagemann, 2006). Until the late 1960s therefore, the dominant familial ideal was the 'breadwinner/housewife' model, which was explicitly backed by both main political parties, societal actors such as unions and church organisations as well as social scientific consensus.

Hagemann (2006) notes that one reason that this model was so dominant was that the strength of the West German economic 'miracle' in the 1950s and 1960s meant that it was not limited to middle- and upper-class families; during these decades many working-class families were able to survive on a male-breadwinner's income. The limited role for the state was reinforced by the federal structure of West Germany in which education and childcare were responsibilities of the Länder, meaning that the tools available to central government were limited. This situation led to very limited provision of childcare facilities in West Germany, with coverage of only around a third of children aged between three and six until the late 1960s (Hagemann, 2006). Largely designed to serve social welfare functions, the majority of these institutions were run by non-profit private organisations, mainly church-affiliated associations; and as with primary schools, the vast majority of childcare institutions were only open for half days (Hagemann, 2006; Moeller, 1993). Based on normative ideas about the male-breadwinner model family, the centrality of the family unit to the functioning of society and the principle of subsidiarity, the early postwar years in West Germany thus consistently followed a general family support model.

Postwar East Germany took a different path. Despite some initial continuities with West Germany, such as the predominance of half-day primary schools and the assertion that childrearing was the responsibility of parents, in 1946 nurseries were incorporated into the education system and, in stark contrast to the West, were made the responsibility of the state. From the early 1950s, labour shortages combined with ideas about female emancipation and equality in employment, led to the formal abolition in 1950 of women's economic dependence and hence the demise of the male-breadwinner model family (Ostner, 1994). Women were expected to participate in the labour market on the same basis as men; that is, as full-time workers. A highly centralised system of childcare services was therefore systematically created, in which the state provided all of the funding and municipalities ran almost all services, with only three percent being provided by independent, not-for-profit providers (Klinkhammer, 2014: 156). Provision was for all pre-school aged children and was provided on a full-time basis; after-school care for primary school children was also provided (Hagemann, 2006). Not

only did these policies enable full-time maternal employment, but they also placed young children's education under the control of the state; indeed childcare services had been integrated into the educational administration as early as 1946 (Hagemann, 2006). This control was a central feature of East German family policy: it was the state, rather than parents, that made decisions about children's futures, including schooling, training and job placement and location (Ostner, 1994). Unlike the West therefore, a feature of East German family policy was the breaking down of the division between public and private spheres.

A further motivation for such policies was pro-natalism: policies designed to help women combine employment and family were introduced in East Germany after the birth rate began to sink in the mid-1960s (Blome, 2016b). These included the 1972 introduction of a 'baby care year' of leave after childbirth, the reduction of women's working time and the further expansion of daycare services. Further, policies which rewarded childbirth were introduced: extended maternity leave and reduction of working years before retirement were available to mothers of more than two children (Ostner, 1994). These policies combined to foster an ideal model in East Germany that can be labelled a 'dual-earner/housewife model', with women expected to participate in paid employment and undertake child rearing and housework duties (Hagemann, 2006). Policy logic in East Germany was therefore much closer to the dual-earner support model: by the late 1980s East Germany had the highest female employment rate in Europe and the highest rate of provision of ECEC in the world, with over 70% of children aged under three attending childcare services, and practically all children between three and six (Ostner, 2010: 224). Yet one should not exaggerate the East German commitment to gender equality. Despite the emphasis on women's financial emancipation through employment, the expectation remained was that women would still undertake the work of care; only in the late 1980s could fathers claim parental leave and even then had to provide good reasons (Ostner, 1994).

Hagemann (2006) notes that ideological competition between East and West served to keep both countries on their particular paths. In particular the idea of the East German 'working mother' was often used as a kind of 'bogeyman' in the West, associated with collective childcare reminiscent of Nazi programmes aimed at indoctrinating children into the regime's ideology (Hagemann, 2006: 238). This had the effect of reinforcing the status quo, with any suggestion of reform to the 'breadwinner/housewife' model seen as implying a shift towards totalitarian approaches. Thus, proposals in the West to introduce all-day primary schools, or to increase childcare were political non-starters, and policy remained firmly on a general family support trajectory.

Nevertheless, incremental change did occur in West Germany in the late 1960s. This was the time of the emergence of the student and women's movements, and a leftward shift in the country more broadly. In 1969 a coalition of the SPD and FDP took power, promising to modernise policies and laws regarding the family. This period saw a series of legal reforms including the removal of wives' obligation to undertake housework (1976), reform of divorce law (1977), replacement of the 'principle of parental authority' with the 'principle of parental responsibility' (1979) and the strengthening of the rights of children born out of wedlock (1969) and adopted children (1976) (Gerlach, 2010). Other significant social changes were also taking place; in particular labour shortages had led to increasing levels of part-time employment for married women and mothers. Indeed the level of female employment had been steadily growing for the previous two decades, with the proportion of mothers in the labour market increasing from 22.7 percent in 1950 to 33.1 percent in 1970, and with half of all employed women with children working part-time (Hagemann, 2006: 239).

Concomitant attitudes to married women's employment also began to shift, becoming more favourable towards the idea of wives earning a 'supplementary income' through part-time employment (Pfau-Effinger and Smidt, 2011). Notably, social scientific opinion on the dangers of maternal employment also softened, provided it was part-time and did not interfere with mothers' primary role as child-raiser; indeed the ideal family model was modified in this period to a 'breadwinner/housewife with supplementary income' model (Hagemann, 2006). This was reflected in policymakers endorsement of Myrdal & Klein's (1968) 'three-phase' model of women's life course in which full-time employment was followed by withdrawal from the labour market for a 'family phase' of approximately 15 years after childbirth and then a subsequent return to employment (Kolbe, 2002).

This limited change was reflected in changes to work-family policies, which moved towards a modified general family support model. Kindergartens catering for children between three and school-age were established throughout the West from the late 1960s, but these were intended as a supplement to, rather than replacement for, familial care and education (Ostner, 1993). This expansion was significant: by 1975 kindergarten places were available to two thirds of all children aged three to six (Gerlach, 2010). Yet it remained embedded in the conservative ideals that had dominated the West German approach since 1945: the vast majority of places were provided by independent, welfare associations with public provision highly stigmatised and intended for families reliant on a mother's income. Full-time provision was rare, with only 12 percent of kindergartens in 1975 providing full-day places, and these were reserved for

'social problem cases' (Hagemann, 2006: 242); further, only five percent of half-day schools had after-school programmes, which were also heavily stigmatised (Hagemann, 2006: 243). All responsibility for funding and levels of provision lay with the municipalities, which led to large regional variation in levels of provision: in general higher provision could be found in cities and affluent regions and lower provision in rural and poorer areas, a division which can still be seen today (Klinkhammer and Riedel, 2018). With the exception of the big cities, provision for children under three remained basically non-existent and was also highly stigmatised.

While neither main party favoured extra-familial childcare for children under three, so that policy logic remained on a general family support trajectory, there were differences about how to address maternal employment. These related to each of the main parties' specific approach to the family. While the CDU/CSU remained committed to the male-breadwinner model family as a key institution, its approach had shifted away from outright condemnation of maternal employment towards accepting the three-stage model. This manifested itself in a rhetorical commitment to choice, particularly that women should not be 'forced' into employment through financial circumstances and instead should have the choice to stay home to look after children (Kolbe, 2002). The SPD's attitude to families was more equivocal. Historically the party had been wary of engaging with the family as a political topic, seeing it as an inherently conservative policy area; indeed the party had been against the formation and continued existence of a specific ministry for families in the 1950s, and as late as 1969 had called for its abolition (Blum, 2012; Gerlach, 2010). The SPD focused on issues related to individual family members rather than the family as a whole, such as the rights of women workers and inequality (Gerlach, 2010). The implications this had on policy can be seen in the debates over maternity leave in the 1970s.

Before reform in 1979, working mothers had been entitled to six weeks leave pre-childbirth and eight weeks after, paid through sickness insurance. Reform to this began to be discussed in the late 1960s, spurred by concern that some mothers were unable to provide appropriate care for their children in the first three years due to the financial necessity to work (Kolbe, 2002). In 1974, the CDU proposed a parental leave scheme, but this failed due to disagreements about whether the measure would cover all mothers (as the CDU intended) or only those in employment (as the governing SPD preferred), and whether it should be accompanied by a flat-rate or earnings-related allowance (Blome, 2016b). Essentially, the CDU wanted to institute a generous version of a general family support maternity leave, while the SPD favoured a leave policy which would involve elements of a dual-earner support model,

such as keeping the benefit related to employment and earnings. Significantly however, a move to provide leave for fathers was not considered, meaning that the eventual policy is best described as a further modification of a general family support model, this time with an employment focus: in 1979 a law was passed extending maternity leave for employed mothers to six months with a remuneration of up to 750 DM (383€) per month for four months (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004).

The 1982 return to power of a CDU/CSU-FDP coalition initially marked a return to more conservative family policy and retrenchment including cuts in the value of the maternity leave benefit (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004; Blome, 2016b). However, in 1985 the government launched what it called 'new family policy', the central plank of which was the replacement of maternity leave with a nominally gender-neutral parental leave in 1986. The job-protected leave period (*Erziehungsurlaub*) was initially set at 12 months and extended in a series of steps up to 36 months by 1992. The benefit (*Erziehungsgeld*) level was set at a flat-rate of 600 DM (307€) per month and was paid initially for 10 months, raised subsequently to a year in 1988 and then raised in steps to two years payment by 1993. An income ceiling was applied after six months, so that only families with an income under 30,000 DM (€15,032) received the full payment. Erziehungsgeld could be combined with up to 19 hours of work per week. While nominally gender-neutral, a key rationale for the CDU was that the universality of the new benefit would redress the discrimination against stay-at-home mothers that was inherent in the employment-focused maternity leave law of 1979 (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004). By paying it to parents, irrespective of their previous employment status, the government argued that Erziehungsgeld recognised the value of familial childcare, as well as reducing the need for costly and potentially harmful extra-familial childcare (Blome, 2016b). However, given that neither the value of the benefit, nor the income ceiling were altered for the next 15 years, this valuing of familial childcare is best seen as symbolic (Morgan and Zippel, 2003). Indeed, the 1986 reforms can be conceptualised as a further modification of general family support policy logic. While the leave was nominally gender neutral, and permitted the combining of leave and employment, the long leave duration and the low levels of pay reveal that the main function of the policy was to permit women to exit the labour market at childbirth for a period of at least two years. Indeed research has shown that the proportion of women returning to the labour market decreased as the period of leave was lengthened (Ondrich et al., 1996, 2003; Vlasblom and Schippers, 2006). The lack of attention to extra-familial childcare compounded this effect, so that mothers who wanted to return to work after the leave period were likely to do so part-time. All of this reflected a

continued adherence to a sequential model of women's life course employment (Blome, 2016b; Gerlach, 2010).

The reunification of Germany in 1990 largely saw the imposition on the East of Western ideas and institutions related to the family, with Erziehungsurlaub and Erziehungsgeld replacing their East German counterparts (Ostner, 2010). However, some countermovement can be seen in the 1992 introduction across the whole of Germany of a legal right to a childcare place for all children aged between three and school age, originally planned for 1996 but eventually delayed until 1999 due to implementation problems and difficulties in ensuring that municipalities complied. This was a side-effect of a new abortion law in the reunified Germany, which sought to reconcile the restrictive approach of West Germany with East Germany's more liberal laws. Childcare became part of the law along with a number of other social welfare provisions as a way in which the state could meet its court-obligated duty to 'protect life' (Kamenitsa, 2001). By 1999 an extra 600,000 childcare places had been created, almost exclusively in the western Länder, where there was a need for them in contrast to an oversupply in the eastern Länder, because of a reduction in birth rates in former East Germany and internal migration from the former East to West. However, the majority of these extra places were part-time, further reinforcing the modified general family support model that had been institutionalised by the 1986 parental leave reforms (Gerlach, 2010; Hagemann, 2006; Kolbe, 2002).

2.3.2 England, c.1900-1997

The history of work-family policy in England before 1997 is largely one of neglect and 'missed opportunities' (Randall, 1995). In contrast to most other European countries, no explicit 'family policy' was developed as part of the British welfare state. This is not to say that policies were never developed for families, but that they were, in Kaufmann's (2002: 432) terms, implicit, that is, "measures which from the perspective of a scientific observer can be interpreted as being effective towards relieving or solving family-related problems, though the measures are not legitimized by political discourse as family policy." One example of this is that there has never been a ministry for the family in Britain, unlike in Germany. Many observers have cited the dominance of the liberal tradition as a key reason for this lack of explicit family policy (Daly, 2000, 2010; Hantrais, 2004; Hantrais and Letablier, 1996; Kaufmann, 2002; Land, 1980; Lewis, 1992, 2013a; Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Randall, 2000). The central tenets of the liberal tradition are the primacy of the individual and the limited role of the state (Marquand, 1988; Ruggie, 1984). Liberal welfare regimes typically provide

low levels of cash benefits, targeted at those most in need, and very few social services (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Ruggie (1984: 182) argues that in the liberal welfare model, "[s]tate action is not intended to alter significantly the terms of the situation that required state intervention: rather, it is intended to alleviate the misfortunes of the situation".

In terms of families, liberal welfare states have tended to view the family as a private realm, out of the scope of state intervention, unless prompted by need. England's work-family policy legacy certainly demonstrates these features; as Randall (1995: 348) notes, an "exaggerated respect for the autonomy of the family" has been a defining feature of the English approach to childcare policies for most of the twentieth century. From a comparative perspective, it is notable that, in contrast to many other European countries, pronatalism never developed as a motive for more explicit family policy in England; for example, the 1944 Royal Commission on Population dismissed the idea of a demographic crisis at the same time as France and Sweden were doing the opposite (Gauthier, 1996).

However, implicit family policy did not imply a lack of interest in families on the part of the state; on the contrary, Lewis (1992) has highlighted that Britain was an example of a 'strong male-breadwinner model' welfare state, in which assumptions about gender roles underpinned the development of much social policy. Indeed, the Beveridge Report cited the "marriage needs of a woman" (Beveridge, 1942: 124) as one of the eight 'primary causes of need' for social security. The explicit assumption was that wives would withdraw from paid employment at marriage and the Report therefore recommended derived social security rights for wives based on their husbands' contributions. Feminist authors have questioned the notions of separate spheres of public and private and argued that governments do intervene in the family, pointing out that policymakers' assumptions of male-breadwinner model families (persisting into the 1970s even though most families had two earners by this stage) led to policies which influenced how families organised themselves (e.g. Land, 1980; Pateman, 1988). For example Land noted that for employed wives of men who become unemployed or sick, substantial incentives existed in the social security system to give up paid employment if their wage could not support the entire family; in this sense the welfare state "actively discourages role reversal and encourages women to give priority to their responsibilities in the home" (Land, 1980: 145). Such examples demonstrate that Kaufmann's (2002) explicit/implicit division is mainly relevant in terms of the way that family policy is conceived and articulated, rather than its impact on families. Indeed, Hantrais notes (1994: 155) that "it is the efforts to avoid intervention which are most characteristic of British governments: while they are conducting policies which are likely to

have an impact on family life and, ultimately, even on the structure of the family, they are reluctant to admit to doing so and do not describe them as family policies."

The first government involvement in policies relating to the care of young children came in the early 20th century, when the number of children aged three to five attending elementary schools became a source of concern (Randall, 2000; West, 2020).[9] The Board of Education[10] saw elementary schools as unsuitable for very young children and aimed to discourage their attendance. The basis of this policy was the belief that children were best cared for at home by their mothers. However, for children whose mothers were "compelled to leave home during the day to go to work", a new kind of institution, a purpose built nursery school, was promoted as more suitable for young children than elementary schools (Board of Education quoted in West, 2020: 570). Nursery schools were only intended to be used by poor children and "better parents should be discouraged from sending children before five" (quoted in Randall, 2000: 27). The 1918 Education Act provided grants and gave local authority education departments the power to establish nursery schools and the cheaper option of nursery classes in schools for children from 'inadequate homes', but it did not provide an obligation to do so and few local authorities took up the option (West and Noden, 2019). This was due in part to local authorities prioritising other areas, having been granted a range of new responsibilities in this period. However, it also resulted from what Randall (2000: 33) has described as "a kind of stop-go rhythm" from national policy, in which periods of slow expansion were punctuated by periods in which pressure on public expenditure halted any progress, for example in the early 1920s and again for most of the 1930s. By 1938 there were only 118 nursery schools in England (Randall, 2000: 33).

Nursery schools were therefore conceived as an educational institution for the benefit of poor children but were not intended to support women's employment. Childcare for working women, referred to historically as daycare or day nurseries, had emerged in some urban centres in the nineteenth century though charitable provision (Randall, 2000). The state showed no interest in such institutions, as the "view that mothers of young children should stay at home to look after them was so widespread as to amount almost to a consensus" (Randall, 2000: 30).

[9] 43 percent of children aged three to five were in such schools in 1900 (Randall, 2000: 21).

[10] The Board of Education was the government body responsible for education between 1899 and 1944 when it became the Ministry of Education. Subsequent name changes reflected changing responsibilities that were added, along with the core responsibility for education: Department of Education and Science (1964-1992); Department for Education (1992-1995); Department for Education and Employment ((1995-2001); Department for Education and Skills (2001-2007); Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007-2010). Since 2010 it has once again been called the Department for Education.

The First World War (1914-1918) saw the first expansion of public day nurseries, due to the need for women to work in armaments factories, but these were mostly disbanded after the war (Ruggie, 1984). Indeed, Randall (2000) notes that the wartime period shifted views about maternal employment only on a temporary basis, and the previously dominant view that mothers of young children should be at home returned strongly after the war.

However, the war also revived concerns about the physical health of the population, stemming from the poor physical condition of conscripts which had first been noted in the Boer War (Randall, 2000). Such concerns led to the creation of the Ministry of Health[11] in 1919 and also to the Maternity and Child Welfare Act of 1918, which empowered local authorities to set up antenatal and child welfare clinics and also gave them the power to set up daycare, or give grants to voluntary providers, for children in "exceptional circumstances" such as "children of women without husbands … or from very poor homes" (quoted in West and Noden, 2019: 149). While the state had no interest in maintaining wartime day nursery provision, the origins of childcare policy can be found in a concern for the physical health of particularly poor children; administration of such provision lay with the welfare departments of local authorities and responsibility with the new Ministry of Health. Randall (2000: 32) notes that this split between education and health aspects of childcare was institutionalised at this point and was "in some ways a quite arbitrary fragmentation" as previously the two aspects were difficult to distinguish. Nevertheless, this fragmentation would have a long legacy: childcare was treated as a welfare service for children whose mothers could not care for them for one reason or another, of which employment was one, and was custodial rather than educational.

The Second World War also saw a rapid expansion of nursery provision followed by rapid reduction in the immediate post-war period, with the Ministry of Health arguing that a lack of demand meant they were no longer necessary; within two years the number of nurseries had almost halved (Riley, 1983: 122).[12] In fact, the government had been keen during the war to emphasise that the nurseries were a temporary wartime measure, not social services in themselves: "childcare while and where women's labour was needed" (Riley, 1983: 137). In part this was driven by concern that if women remained in employment there would not be

[11] The Ministry of Health brought together the medical and public health functions of central government. In 1968 it was amalgamated with the Ministry of Social Security to create the Department of Health and Social Security (DHSS). In 1988 these functions were re-separated and the Department of Health (DH) was created. It was renamed the Department of Health and Social Care in 2018.

[12] Riley (1983) argues that this justification emerged because the Ministry of Health could not publicly use the argument that the nurseries were detrimental for children's health, given that it had been in favour of childcare for the war effort. Nevertheless it was concerns about children's physical, and later psychological, development that was behind the consensus that the nurseries should be closed.

sufficient jobs for men returning from war. Indeed in 1945, Ministry of Health guidance to local authorities emphasised that in relation to childcare that "the right policy to pursue would be positively to discourage mothers of children under two from going out to work" (Ministry of Health, quoted in Ruggie, 1984: 204). In practice government policy in the following decades took this approach to all children under five (Ruggie, 1984) and while local authorities had the authority to offer free early education places after 1944, few did. The introduction of a contributions-based, flat-rate Maternity Allowance, paid for 13 weeks to women who left the labour market at childbirth and had previously made National Insurance contributions, further exemplified this trajectory.[13]

This approach was influenced by views about women's employment and concerns about the health of children that were not looked after by their mothers. While pre-war the benefits of maternal care were seen in terms of children's physical health, in the 1950s John Bowlby's theory of 'maternal deprivation', which argued that children's psychological development is harmed if they do not receive one-to-one care from their mothers when they are young, became very influential in the civil service, particularly in the Ministry of Health, as well as among professional groups concerned with children (Land and Lewis, 1998; Lewis, 2013b; Randall, 1995). These 'maternalist' views were widespread and shared by both major political parties, trade unions and the general public in the 1950s and early 1960s, with significant social disapproval of employed mothers and the expectation that mothers who did take up employment would make their own childcare arrangements, with family, friends or neighbours (Land and Lewis, 1998). In this inhospitable policy environment, existing provision dwindled until it reached an all-time low in the mid-1960s, with gaps being filled by voluntary playgroups and private childminders (Lewis, 2013b). England's policy trajectory in the first few decades after 1945 can therefore be defined as adhering to a market-oriented approach.

The late 1960s and 1970s saw some changes in this consensus, but these only amounted to what Lewis has called 'a false dawn' (2013b: 262), with little overall change to the market-oriented trajectory. Women's employment had grown strongly in the 1950s and so had the use of private nurseries and childminders (Randall, 2000). Furthermore, as the employment situation changed, Bowlby's theories were beginning to be challenged by other approaches that focused on different conceptions of children's needs and links between the early years and poverty (Randall, 1995). These links were evident in the influential 1967 Plowden Report,

[13] This benefit was not attached to any period of job-protected leave. Maternity Allowance was increased to 18 weeks in 1953.

which was set up to examine primary education, but contained a chapter on pre-school services. It advocated expanding full-time nursery education to the most deprived children, and part-time places for parents of three- and four-year-olds who wanted it; estimated to be 35 percent and 74 percent respectively (DES, 1967). The report was strongly influenced by research about the 'compensatory' effects of early education for children in poverty and therefore advocated full-time provision for those who would most benefit from this 'compensation'. But it explicitly rejected doing so for working mothers; the influence of Bowlby thus remained strong, and the focus remained in general on part-time provision. Despite supporting the expansion of compensatory early education, the Labour government (1965-1970) did not implement the recommendations, citing concerns about cost and that expanding provision would stimulate further demand, and prioritised increasing a means-tested benefit instead (Lewis, 2013b). However, some nursery expansion was achieved in deprived areas through its inclusion in the 1968 Urban Programme (Randall, 2004).

In the 1970 election, both main parties committed to expanding nursery provision and in 1972 the Conservative Education Minister, Margaret Thatcher, announced plans to provide free places for 50 percent of three and 90 percent of four-year-olds by 1982 together with funding for a nursery building programme (DES, 1972). However, progress was slow which proved fatal to the plans given the worsening economic climate in the 1970s[14]; funding was cut by 20% in 1974/75 and in 1975/76 was only half what it had been the previous year (Randall, 1995: 335). Beset by shrinking budgets, civil servants resorted to concentrating on provision in schools in poorer areas, reinforcing early education as a 'compensatory' welfare service, rather than part of the universal education system (Lewis, 2013a, 2013b). In this environment, despite all parties once again committing to expanding nursery provision in the 1974 election, political will waned and the second half of the 1970s saw little significant expansion, beyond a growth in the number of four-year-olds in schools, which was the cheapest form of provision.

While part-time nursery education had risen up the political agenda in the early 1970s, daycare for working parents continued to be neglected. Indeed, the influence of maternalist ideas can be seen in Thatcher's statement that her proposals were intended "to enable children to learn and not to provide a day-care service" (quoted in West and Noden, 2019: 150). Ideas about maternal employment remained overwhelmingly negative within government; Lewis (2013a, 2013b) has catalogued the ways in which civil servants in the Ministry of Health

[14] For an account of the effects of the economic context of the 1970s on British social policy see Glennerster (1995).

actively sought to reinforce the position, first expressed in 1945, that daycare services should be limited to mothers who cannot care for their children, either for health reasons or due to being "constrained by individual circumstances to go out to work" (Ministry of Education circular, quoted in Lewis, 2013b: 361). Civil servants repeatedly rejected attempts to broaden eligibility for daycare to employed mothers more generally and also any attempts, such as in the 1968 reorganisation of social care at the local level, to combine early education and childcare into a single administrative area (Lewis, 2013a, 2013b). However, the 1960s also saw the rise of alternative views about the importance of early childhood in terms of life chances; increasingly beliefs about the dangers of separation of children from mothers had to be balanced against other views, particularly of social workers, which stressed the overriding importance of good care (Randall, 2000). The 1968 reorganisation therefore saw a redefinition of the need for childcare in terms of a child 'at risk' of poor care and in need of protection. While the government rejected any responsibility for providing childcare for children not 'at risk', it did concede that it could no longer neglect regulation of a private and voluntary sector that was increasingly used by employed mothers.

A further change in the 1970s was the introduction, as part of the Employment Protection Act, of the first job-protected maternity leave scheme in 1976, intended to reduce the disadvantages that women experienced due to childbirth. It provided women who had been continuously employed for at least two years at the 11th week before expected childbirth with 29 weeks after childbirth and up to 11 weeks before.[15] The following year saw the introduction of maternity pay, which was paid for 18 weeks in total, the first six of which were at 90% of the woman's previous salary and the remaining 12 at a flat-rate level. The qualifying contributions for these were the same as for maternity leave (Gregg et al., 2007).

The 1970s had therefore seen some slight modifications to the market-oriented approach and revealed that if ECEC was conceptualised as education rather than childcare, politicians were more willing to intervene. Further, some hints of a move towards a modified market-oriented approach can be seen in the acceptance of a regulatory role of government and the introduction of job-protected maternity leave and pay, albeit with relatively tight eligibility restrictions and low levels of pay.[16] In part, these changes were a recognition of changing social circumstances: female employment had continued to grow, as had the proportion of children in

[15] For women who worked less than 16 hours per week, the employment condition was five years.
[16] In 1979 54% of women employees qualified for the right to return and 15% returned to the same employer (Daniel, 1980).

lone parent households. By the late 1970s the government was facing increasing calls from campaigning organisations to take more responsibility, with local authority associations, trade unions and the Equal Opportunities Commission all calling for more government involvement (Randall, 2000). Also, within the Labour Party, calls for more comprehensive provision of daycare services were heard more frequently. But the Labour government (1974-1979) was ambivalent, preferring in constrained budgetary circumstances to focus on how to stimulate the provision of low-cost services, including childminders and voluntary provision. Indeed, in 1978 the Labour Prime Minister, James Callaghan, adopted a familiar refrain, stating that "[t]he overriding social concern is to preserve and enhance the influence of the family" (quoted in Randall, 1995: 341). Thus while some modifications to the market-oriented model were beginning to occur, the ideas of limited state intervention and of maternalism remained strong.

Any momentum towards more government involvement in either early education or care was stymied in 1979 by the election of a Conservative government, now led by Thatcher, committed to retrenchment and 'rolling back the state' (Randall, 2000). While the 1970s had seen a general acceptance of nursery education as a positive service for children, the Thatcher governments (1979-1990) were explicit that early education was a matter for local rather than central government. The 1980 Education Act made it clear that local authorities were not obligated to provide early education[17], while in 1985 the government reaffirmed that it had no intention to do any more than maintain existing levels of funding, and that expansion was a question for local government (West and Noden, 2019). In 1988, in response to the House of Commons Education Select Committee calling for increased nursery provision, the government stated that it "accepts that some pre-school experience is beneficial to under-fives, both at the time and later on. But this sector must compete with others for the resources available" (quoted in Lewis, 2013a: 369).

As in previous decades, childcare was more politically controversial than nursery education, although by the 1980s the government's attitude to mothers' employment had shifted away from outright condemnation, recognising the large increases in employment of married mothers that had taken place over the past two decades. Increased maternal employment had led to growing calls outside government for increased provision, with feminist campaigners joining trade unions, local authority associations and child service professionals to launch the

[17] This had been ambiguous since the 1944 Education Act, which without placing a statutory duty on local authorities, had been widely interpreted to require the expansion of early education as and when possible, although this interpretation varied between local authorities (see Lewis, 2013a).

National Childcare Campaign in 1980 (Randall, 1996). Childcare became an issue of national attention in the late 1980s in relation to addressing concerns raised in a high profile report about a 'demographic timebomb', which predicted a dramatic fall in the number of school leavers in the early 1990s and thus the prospect of labour shortages (Randall, 1995). This led to calls for improved childcare provision from across society including from employers (e.g. CBI, 1989; Opportunity 2000, 1991) and even from a minister-led report into early education services (DES, 1990), while women's organisations, centre-left think tanks and the EOC all began to discuss childcare in terms of its potential labour market benefits, demonstrating how far views on women's employment had shifted (e.g. Cohen and Fraser, 1991; Coote et al., 1990; EOC, 1990; Holtermann and Clarke, 1992).

However, the government remained resolutely opposed to public provision beyond 'at risk' children, insisting that in general childcare was a private matter that should be firmly outside state involvement, and introduced the new argument that government intervention would negatively impact on the diversity of provision and parental choice (Lewis, 2013a). Instead, the government saw its role as regulatory, ensuring that the quality of private and voluntary provision was sufficient; the 1991 Children Act required local authorities to regularly review the supply of under-fives services. Further, some limited attempts to stimulate non-state provision were attempted: £7 million was spent on pump-priming projects of voluntary providers for new provision; furthermore, in the early 1990s, the government attempted to encourage employers to provide childcare, offering tax incentives for them to do so (Randall, 2000). Neither of these schemes were effective in ensuring sustained increases in childcare provision (Lewis, 2013a), although they do represent an extension of the market-oriented approach, with the state now taking an interest in not only regulation of the market but also in stimulating it, albeit in an extremely light way.

The 1980s were equally sparse in terms of leave policy. A series of reforms restricted the 1976 right to return and made it more complex, for example by permitting small employers not to offer a woman her previous job or 'suitable alternative employment' if they could show it was not 'reasonably practicable'. In 1985 the UK government vetoed European Community attempts to legislate on parental leave, arguing that it was inappropriate for government and should be left to employers and employees (Fusulier, 2009). In 1987 eligibility requirements for the flat-rate Maternity Allowance were relaxed, while those for Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) were amended, creating a complex system with different eligibility requirements for

leave and payment.[18] In 1994 the government was required by a European Directive (Council of the European Union, 1992) to introduce an entitlement of 14 weeks paid maternity leave for all employed women; this was done by introducing a universal entitlement to 14 weeks 'ordinary maternity leave' (OML) without eligibility conditions, and ensuring that Maternity Allowance, the lower rate of maternity pay, would be paid at the level of sickness benefit.[19] By the late 1990s therefore leave policy was complex and meagre, and firmly on a market-oriented trajectory, as more generous leave provision could be an employee benefit used to 'top up' basic statutory provision.

The Conservative government of John Major (1992-1997) continued to resist calls for increasing provision of childcare, insisting that childcare was not a matter for government (e.g. DfEE, 1996). Nevertheless, the mid-1990s did see some policy change in both childcare and early education. In the late 1980s and early 1990s the government became concerned over the number of lone parents claiming means-tested benefits[20], and in the context of a failed attempt to reduce this through increasing the amount of support provided by absent fathers, the Conservatives began to try to encourage lone parents into the labour market (DSS, 1990). This involved providing limited financial help for low-income working parents towards the cost of childcare through the childcare disregard in Family Credit (FC) in 1994 (Land and Lewis, 1998).[21] The entailed an expansion of the role of the state, to include children in 'welfare dependent' families in the category of those 'in need' and reflected the particular place that lone mothers occupied on the dividing line between public and private spheres (Lewis, 2001a). Further, under pressure from a resurgent Labour Party, who had since the mid-1980s committed to universal nursery provision, Major announced in 1994 his government's intention "to provide [nursery] places for all four-year-olds whose parents wish them to take it up" (Major, 1994). The chosen policy instrument was a voucher scheme, under which parents of four-year-olds could use these vouchers to 'purchase' £1,100 worth of early education, covering a minimum of five two-and-a-half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks. This voucher could be redeemed with any state, private or voluntary provider and could be 'topped up' with parental fees (West, 2006). Vouchers were seen as promoting choice and would stimulate the market of pre-school

[18] See footnote 34.
[19] This further complicated an already complex system and meant that some women could qualify for 18 weeks benefit but only 14 weeks leave.
[20] The proportion of lone parents in employment had declined from 45 percent in 1981 to 39 percent in 1993-4 (Randall, 2000: 94).
[21] Eligibility criteria meant that this disregard was only limited in its scope and by 1998 only approximately 37,000 families were benefiting from it (Bradshaw et al., 2000: 21)

provision; there was no intention of increasing public provision[22] (Land and Lewis, 1998). These changes represent a further extension of the market-oriented approach: efforts to stimulate market provision of nursery education through voucher schemes, and provision of limited help to some low-income families with the high fees of market provided childcare.

2.3.3 Germany and England in comparative perspective

This discussion of the historical trajectories of work-family policies in England and Germany has demonstrated similarities in the two countries. In both countries the first decades after the Second World War were characterised by strong normative assumptions of the existence and desirability of male-breadwinner model families, held not only by the conservative parties, but by organisations of the left, such as the Labour Party, the SPD and trade unions, and by high profile social scientists as well as the general population. This model manifested itself in different ways in the two countries. In England, the liberal underpinnings of the welfare state led to a market-oriented trajectory in which the state avoided any appearance of interference within families, although the influence of maternalist ideas is evident and policymakers rejected policy intervention in childcare and early education because they did not want to support maternal employment. In Germany, the influence of Christian ideas and the importance of the image of the family as a bulwark against instability led to the development of a general family support trajectory, albeit with a similar reluctance from politicians to 'interfere' with the family.

From the late 1960s onwards, strong male-breadwinner assumptions began to be challenged in both countries, and gradually more acceptance of at least some maternal employment was evident by the 1980s and 1990s. However, the respective trajectories of the policy logic in each country remained remarkably stable. In West Germany, the general family support model was modified by maternity leave legislation in the late 1970s and the parental leave law of 1986, which both recognised the fact of women's employment, but the promotion of a sequential model of women's employment merely modified the general family support trajectory. Similarly, the right to a part-time childcare place for children aged three and over, introduced in the 1990s cannot be seen as a deviation from the overall trajectory that existed since 1945. In England the market-oriented approach was extended when the state took an interest in childcare regulation in the late 1960s and attempted to stimulate the market in 1980s. While from the 1970s there was an acceptance of the idea that the state had a role in the provision of nursery education, this did not lead to an increase in provision. In the 1990s some

[22] In fact, much of the funding for the voucher was taken out of the existing funding for local authority provision, leaving only £165 million of 'new' money for new places (West and Noden, 2019).

increases in state involvement were attempted, with the introduction of limited support for childcare costs and a voucher scheme for early education. Nevertheless, the principles of very limited state intervention, reserved for certain cases of 'need' (now expanded to lone parents), and of maternalism remained strong. England remained on a market-oriented path in the 1990s.

In both countries therefore, this period was characterised by what Ebbinghaus would call 'path stabilization' of their respective paths. While the erosion of strict male-breadwinner model assumptions in the 1970s saw some modifications to each model, these represent "marginal adaptation to environmental changes without changing core principles", rather than an indication of more significant change (Ebbinghaus, 2009: 17). East Germany stands as an anomaly here, with path-switching change occurring twice in this period, once in 1948 with the creation of the communist state and the associated adult-worker model and again in 1990 with German reunification and its absorption into the West German model.

2.4 Work-Family Policy Development, 1997-2008

In both countries the stability of the previous four decades was challenged in the late 1990s and early 2000s by dramatic expansion of work-family policies. This happened after the replacement of long-standing centre-right governments with the centre-left. In the UK, the Labour Party, led by Tony Blair, won the 1997 general election by a landslide, bringing to an end 18 years of Conservative governments under Thatcher (1979-1990) and Major (1990-1997). In Germany the SDP and the Greens formed a coalition for the first time, and Gerhard Schröder became Chancellor, marking the end of 16 years of CDU/CSU-FDP governments under Helmut Kohl. The period of focus of this thesis is from the election of these new governments (1997 and 1998) until 2008, when the onset of the global financial crisis ended the momentum of reforms in both countries. While in the UK, Labour remained in power for the whole of this period, winning subsequent general elections in 2001 and 2005, in Germany the SDP-Green coalition narrowly won the 2002 federal election but in 2005 did not win enough seats to continue in government and was replaced by a 'Grand Coalition' of the CDU/CSU and the SDP, headed by Chancellor Angela Merkel, which governed until 2009. This section details the policy expansion that took place during in the late 1990s and early 2000s and analyses it comparatively in the context of the historical trajectories of work-family policy.

As German childcare policy is the responsibility of the Länder, the scope of intervention in this area from the federal government is much more limited than in England. Therefore, while the account of English reforms includes detailed policies related to ECEC costs, hours of

provision and quality, in Germany these are outside the remit of the federal government, which focused on expanding provision.

2.4.1 Germany

The first term of the SDP-Green coalition (1998-2002) did not result in great changes to work-family policies, the sole piece of legislation being a 2000 reform to parental leave (Bundesregierung, 2000a). Some reform had been required by the European Parental Leave Directive (Council of the European Union, 1996), mandating an individual right to parental leave, because under the 1986 law people whose partners were not employed did not qualify for leave. The new law did not change the basic structure of parental leave but did introduce greater flexibility: parents were permitted to take leave simultaneously and the permitted employment during the leave period was increased from 19 to 30 hours per week. Furthermore, a 'budget option' was introduced in which parents could opt to receive a higher monthly benefit of 900DM (€460) over 12 months, rather than the standard 600DM (€307) over two years. This choice was limited to those parents who qualified for the means-tested full benefit after the seventh month. The annual income ceilings for qualification for the full benefit for the first six months were set at 100,000DM (€51,130) for couples and 75,000DM (€38,350) for single parents. The income ceilings applicable after the seventh month of benefit for receiving the full benefit were uprated to 32,200DM (€16,463) for couples with one child and 26,400DM (€13,498) for single parents with one child and were increased by 4,800DM (€2,454) for each subsequent child.[23] While these represented a rise of 9.5% for couples and 11.4% for single parents, most parents did not qualify for the full benefit after six months (Gerlach, 2010: 217). Finally, the term *Erziehungsurlaub* (child raising holiday) was replaced with *Elternzeit* (parental time). Also in 2000, a law introduced the right to part-time work for employees in firms with at least 15 employees (Bundesregierung, 2000b). This applied to all employees, not only to parents, providing they had been employed by the company for at least six months and could only be rejected for demonstrable 'company reasons' (Bundesregierung, 2000b: 8(4)).

Significant German reform began in earnest in the SPD-Green government's second term (2002-2005). In 2004 the Day Care Expansion Act (Bundesregierung, 2004) was passed, which placed an obligation on the municipalities to provide enough childcare places for children under three and school-age children to meet demand, which was interpreted as the children of parents

[23] These increases were partially undone from January 2004 when the income ceiling for qualification for the first six months or *Erziehungsgeld* was reduced to €30,000 for couples and €23,000 for single parents. Further the value of the two-year benefit was reduced to €300 while the budget option was reduced to €450 (Bundesregierung, 2003)

in employment or training. This was forecast as requiring the creation of 230,000 places, which would be achieved through a mixture of childcare institutions and formal childminders. The deadline for municipalities to achieve this 'needs-based' level of provision was October 2010, and regular updates on progress were required. To fund this expansion, the federal government committed €1.5 billion per year, which, due to the huge disparities in available childcare between eastern and western Germany, would be mainly used to maintain childcare coverage in the eastern Länder and expand it significantly in the western Länder. The law also set out common quality criteria for childcare institutions and childminders, although this had no legal force as the Länder have responsibility for quality in education and care.

In 2006 a new parental leave benefit (*Elterngeld*) replaced the 1986 provisions (Bundesregierung, 2006). The new law replaced the flat-rate benefit with an earnings-related measure, paid at 67 percent of net income up to a monthly cap of €1,800. This new benefit was paid for a maximum of 14 months, but each individual parent could only claim up to 12 months, with each parent therefore entitled to two months on a use-it-or-lose-it basis (*Partnermonate)*. Complex rules were introduced to improve the payment for those with low income: parents earning under €1,000 per month became entitled to a higher replacement rate[24]. The benefit also contained some small incentives for larger families, with those who already had a child also being able to qualify for a '*Geschwisterbonus*' (sibling bonus), depending on the age of the other children.[25] Finally, people not in employment remained entitled to a minimum benefit of €300 per month, although this was only paid for twelve months. Recipients were permitted to combine Elterngeld with up to 30 hours employment per week.

In 2008, a law containing a further expansion of childcare took place (Bundesregierung, 2008). It introduced a legal right to a childcare place for children older than one from 2013, which was foreseen to require an additional 750,000 places and a coverage rate of 35 percent among children under three. The federal government created a special fund (*Sondervermögen*) to pay for investment costs, with a total of €2.5 billion being allocated between 2008 and 2013 (Bundesregierung, 2007). Furthermore, the federal government also committed to increasing its contribution to running costs from €100 million in 2009 to an ongoing annual commitment

[24] For parents earning less that €1,000 the replacement rate is raised by 0.1 percent for every second Euro earning below €1,000. So, for example, if a mother earned €800 net per month, then her replacement rate would be increased by 10 percentage points (the difference between €1,000 and €800 is €200. For every other Euro of this €200, the replacement rate is increased by 0.1 percent (100 x 0.1 = 10)). This means this particular parent would qualify for a replacement rate of 77 percent.

[25] For parents with one other child under three, the parent qualifies for a replacement rate that is 10 percent higher (or €75 per month, whichever is higher). Parents with two or more other children qualify if at least two of them are under seven.

of €770 million after 2013. Once again, thirty percent of the places were to be provided by childminders and the majority of the expansion would take place in the western Länder. As part of a political compromise over the introduction of a legal right to childcare, a care allowance (*Betreuungsgeld*) of €100 per month (€150 from 2014) for parents who chose not to use public childcare was planned for 2013. Betreuungsgeld was struck down by the Constitutional Court in 2015.[26]

2.4.2 England

Change came about in England through a succession of laws, policy announcements and initiatives between 1997 and 2008. The policy reforms that took place in Labour's first term (1997-2001) introduced a much expanded role for the state in work-family policy, and while significant expansion followed in Labour's second (2001-2005) and third terms (2005-2010), these built on the approach set out in these first years.

In 1998, Labour launched the National Childcare Strategy, the first large-scale government intervention in ECEC policy since the closure of the war nurseries, which was updated in 2004 with a new ten-year strategy (DfEE and DSS, 1998; HMT et al., 2004). The aim of both was to foster a mixed market of ECEC, comprising public, private and voluntary provision. To this end a series of administrative and regulatory reforms was enacted, aiming at integrating education and care provision and improving and standardising its quality. Responsibility for childcare was transferred from the Department of Health to the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) in April 1998, ending the longstanding administrative split between education and care (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 2.8). However, early education and childcare remained administratively in separate units until a reorganisation in 2002 brought them together (DfES et al., 2002: 6.2.2).

Responsibility for coordinating childcare markets and applying for funding lay with local authorities through Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships (EYDCP) which were made up of local government officials as well as representatives of private and voluntary providers (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 5.14). From 2008, local authorities were given a legal obligation to "secure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the provision of childcare (whether or not by them) is sufficient" to meet the requirements of parents in work, seeking work or in work-related training (HM Government, 2006: 6(1)). Reinforcing the market approach, it was

[26] The Constitutional Court ruled that mandating the introduction of Betreuungsgeld was an overreach of federal responsibility and whether such a benefit is provided should be decided at the Länder level. In 2021 only two out of the sixteen German Länder (Bavaria and Saxony) provide a form of care allowance.

made clear that local authorities should only provide childcare themselves, if "no other person is willing to provide the childcare" (HM Government, 2006: 8(3)(a)). This complemented the legal requirement for local authorities to "secure provision of nursery education (whether or not by them)" for children covered by the entitlement to free hours of early education (see below) (HM Government, 1998: 118).

In 2000 an early years curriculum was introduced for all providers in England (QCA, 2000), and updated in 2008 (DCSF, 2008), while efforts were also made to introduce a new qualification for ECEC workers (HMT, 2006: 5.26). In 2001 responsibility for inspection and registration of childminders and daycare services was transferred from local authorities to the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), who already regulated early education services (DfEE, 2001).

Besides regulation, the strategy had three main elements which involved significant government spending: provision of free, part-time early education; support for some parents' childcare costs through demand-side funding; and attempts to stimulate the market through provision of some supply-side funding (DfEE and DSS, 1998).

In 1998 the nursery voucher scheme was scrapped and replaced with a universal entitlement for all four-year-olds to a free, part-time early education place. This was an entitlement to 12.5 hours of early education per week, to be taken in five 2.5 hour daily sessions, for 33 weeks per year. The entitlement could be used with any registered early years education provider, who were not permitted to charge 'top up fees' for the 12.5 hours (DfEE and DSS, 1998).[27] The government aimed to expand this provision to all three-year-olds by 2004 (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 4.8). Labour's second and third terms saw further expansion of early education, with the entitlement for all three- and four-year-olds extended to cover 38 weeks in 2006 (HMT, 2004b: 5.19), and between 2007 and 2010 early education was increased to 15 hours per week (HMT, 2007b: D1.7).[28] Furthermore, parents would be able to use the entitlement more flexibly; they could choose to spread it over a minimum of three days instead of five (HMT et al., 2004: 4.18). Following a pilot in which the entitlement was offered to 10,000 of the most disadvantaged two-year-olds (HMT, 2004a: 5.24), funding was provided for a wider rollout

[27] In practice many providers charged extra fees for certain services and childcare to 'wrap around' the free hours of provision was almost always paid for (West, 2006)

[28] The promise to extend of the entitlement to all three-year-olds was honoured by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010 (Lewis and West, 2017).

with the intention of eventually providing a place for all disadvantaged two-year-olds, although this was not achieved by the time Labour left office in 2010 (DCSF, 2007: 3.41-3.42).[29]

The second aspect of the strategy was to support working parents with the costs of market childcare provision. The childcare disregard in Family Credit had been increased to £100 for families with more than one child in 1997. Support for childcare costs was increased through the replacement of Family Credit with the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) in October 1999, which contained a childcare tax credit that would pay 70 per cent of eligible childcare costs up to a limit of £100 for one child and £150 for two or more children (HMT, 1998b: 3.42). Like Family Credit, the WFTC was means-tested on family income and only paid to those working at least 16 hours per week. Yet with higher earnings limit and lower taper rate, the childcare element of the WFTC reached many more parents than the Family Credit disregard had done (Dilnot and McCrae, 1999). Furthermore, because the childcare element was additional to the main WFTC entitlement the poorest working parents could access it, unlike the childcare disregard in Family Credit, which made no difference to families already claiming the maximum amount (Strickland, 1998). The weekly limits were increased to £135 for one child and £200 from June 2001 (HMT, 2001: 4.19). Labour's second and third terms saw further expansion of this approach. In 2003, the WFTC was replaced by two new tax credits, the Working Tax Credit (WTC) and the Child Tax Credit. The childcare element of WFTC was attached to the WTC and therefore remained employment dependent (HMT, 2000b),[30] but as the taper rate was further reduced, partial support for childcare costs was extended to families with higher incomes than the WFTC had served (HMT and Inland Revenue, 2002). The limits of support were further increased in 2005 to £175 and £300 for one child and two or more children respectively, while the proportion of costs paid by the childcare element of the WTC was increased to 80 percent in April 2006 (HMT, 2004b: 5.21). Some non-means-tested support was also provided through permitting employers to provide tax-free childcare vouchers worth up to £50 per week, and this was raised to £55 in 2006 (HMT, 2003b: 5.34).

Third, there were a series of initiatives to fund childcare expansion directly. In 1997, Chancellor Gordon Brown announced an allocation of £300 million over five years to create out-of-school childcare places and to train 50,000 childcare workers (HMT, 1997a, 1997b). The

[29] The Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government (2010-2015) extended the entitlement to 20 percent most disadvantaged two year olds in 2013 and then to the 40 percent most disadvantaged in 2014 (Lewis and West, 2017).

[30] As with Family Credit and the WFTC, to qualify for the WTC lone parents or in the case of couples, both parents, needed to be employed for at least 16 hours per week.

National Childcare Strategy announced a further £170 million funding of 'start-up' grants, which local authorities could apply for (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 4.2, 1998: 5). Funding was also allocated to the creation of 20 Early Excellence Centres by 2000 which would provide 'best practice' models of integrated early years education and care (DfEE, 1997; DfEE and DSS, 1998: 2.15). In 2000 start-up funding was announced, targeted at disadvantaged areas where the market was failing to provide sustainable ECEC provision, for 900 'Neighbourhood Nurseries' by 2004 which would provide 45,000 daycare places in the 20 percent most disadvantaged areas (HMT, 2000a: 3.27). Labour's second and third terms saw further growth in start-up funding and 'sustainability grants', particularly in disadvantaged areas. In 2002, funding for childcare was doubled, aiming at producing 250,000 new places by 2006 (HMT, 2002b: 4.50). The 2004 Budget promised a further increase of £669 million by 2007-08, which represented an annual growth rate of 17.3 per cent (HMT, 2004a: 5.24), although this included funding for early education and Sure Start[31]; a further increase in the unit's funding of £340 million by 2010-11 was announced in 2007 (HMT, 2007a: 5.31). These latter expansions were linked to the roll out of Sure Start Children's Centres, which were amalgamations of Early Excellence Centres, Neighbourhood Nurseries and Sure Start Local Programmes, and which initially aimed to provide a range of family services including integrated early education and childcare in the most disadvantaged communities. This aim evolved so by 2010 there were over 3,500 Children's Centres, one in every community, according to the government, although not all of these would provide ECEC (DCSF, 2007: 3.32).[32]

In terms of leave policy, a similar pattern can be seen, with initial reforms in Labour's first term being built upon with significant expansion after 2001. Having signed up to the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty in June 1997, the UK was required to implement the European Parental Leave Directive (Council of the European Union, 1996) by December 1999.[33] In 1998

[31] Sure Start was a centre-based early intervention programme which aimed to combat social exclusion and child poverty (HMT, 1998a). It focused on disadvantaged areas and combined a range of services including parenting support, health services, job search support and some provision of childcare, although mainly in the form of drop-in and 'stay and play' sessions. Initially run by a cross-departmental team, Sure Start was administratively merged with childcare and early education in 2002 and the programme was subsequently altered to become the Children's Centres initiatives discussed here (Eisenstadt, 2011). As a service that was not initially focused on ECEC provision, Sure Start is outside the main empirical focus of this thesis.

[32] Only Centres in the 30 per cent most deprived communities were required to provide childcare, and even then it was still based on market provision and intended to be funded by parental fees (House of Commons, 2010, 2013).

[33] This Directive mandated the introduction of a parental leave scheme granting employed parents an individual, non-transferable right of a minimum of 13 weeks off work. The Directive granted member states discretion in the specific regulations of the scheme, including setting the eligibility criteria in terms of the age of the child and permitting a restriction of eligibility to those employed with the same employer for a year. The Directive did not

the Government published proposals aimed at simplifying the complex eligibility criteria for maternity leave and pay[34] and aligning them with those of the new parental leave scheme (DTI, 1998: 5.14, 5.18 and 5.20). These reforms were implemented in the Employment Relations Act (1999). Parental leave was introduced for the first time, providing every parent and adoptive parent of a child up to the age of five, or 18 for disabled children, with the right to 13 weeks unpaid leave, which could be taken in blocks of one to four weeks per year, unless the employer permitted more.[35] The Employment Relations Act also extended ordinary maternity leave (OML) to 18 weeks, the same period of time for which payment could be received, while the employment requirement for additional maternity leave (AML) was reduced to one year (HM Government, 1999b). In terms of payment, the reforms extended entitlement to Maternity Allowance[36] to an estimated 14,000 low paid women in part-time employment or self-employment (Hansard, 1999a).

Another round of reform was planned in 2000/01, aiming to improve leave provision (DTI, 2000), with many of the measures announced in 2001 Budget (Hansard, 2001). The flat-rate of Statutory Maternity Pay (SMP) and Maternity Allowance would increase from the 2001 level of £62.20 per week to £75 in April 2002 and £100 in April 2003, while from 2003 the duration of payment would increase from 18 to 26 weeks (HMT, 2001: 5.9). Two weeks of paternity leave, paid at the same rate as the flat-rate of SMP, was also introduced in April 2003 (HMT, 2001: 5.10), as was adoption leave, paid for 26 weeks at the SMP flat-rate level (HMT, 2001: 5.10-11). The government also announced that from April 2002 it would expand the eligibility for its Small Employer Relief, which reimbursed small businesses for maternity pay and also compensated them for administrative costs[37] (HMT, 2001: 5.12). Legislation in 2001 and 2002 set out further reforms including both reducing the qualifying criteria for AML and

specify whether the leave should be paid, nor how flexible the leave should be, for example, whether it could be taken in one block or be combined with part-time work (Falkner et al., 2002).

[34] All employed women were entitled to 14 weeks ordinary maternity leave, while women who had been employed for two years by the same employer on the 11th week before childbirth were entitled to additional maternity leave up to the 29th week after childbirth. Further, the criteria for qualifying for maternity pay were different: all women who had been employed paid National Insurance contributions for at least 26 weeks in the previous 66 months were entitled to some form of maternity pay. Those who had been in continuous employment with the same employer for 26 weeks on the 15th week before childbirth were entitled to SMP paid at six weeks at 90 percent of previous salary and then 12 weeks at a flat-rate level. For those that did not qualify for SMP, those employed at the 15th week before childbirth were entitled to 18 weeks of Maternity Allowance at the SMP flat-rate, while those no longer in employment were entitled to a lower flat-rate for 18 weeks (Daly and Borrell-Porta, 2016).

[35] This approach represented minimal compliance with the Directive. The UK was the only European Union member not to permit parents to take the full entitlement in one block (Moss and O'Brien, 2019).

[36] It extended Maternity Allowance to any woman earning over £30 per week, removing the requirement that they must have earned enough to have paid National Insurance contributions (HM Government, 1999c).

[37] Larger employers were reimbursed 92 percent of their costs.

extending it to 26 weeks, meaning that eligible women would qualify for 12 months leave in total, of which the first half was paid (DTI, 2001b; Employment Act, 2002; HM Government, 2001, 2002b).[38]

The Government had committed during these reforms not to make any further legislative changes related to work and parents until at least 2006 (HMT et al., 2004: 4.9). However, the ten-year childcare strategy announced a series of long-term intentions, including extending maternity pay to 9 months by April 2007 and eventually to 12 months for all employed women, to increase the level of payment of maternity, paternity and adoption leave, to investigate permitting mothers to transfer a portion of pay and leave to fathers and to extend the right to request flexible working to the parents of older children (HMT, 2004b: 5.18; HMT et al., 2004: 4.4). The Work and Families Act marked the final piece of major legislation on leave under the Labour government and implemented some of these plans. It lengthened the paid period of maternity and adoption leave for all employed women to 39 weeks from April 2007 and gave the Government powers in the future to extend it to 12 months, which to date has not been taken up (HM Government, 2006b: 1–2). Further, 12 months leave was extended to all employed women by removing the requirement of one year of employment for AML. It also gave the Government powers to introduce up to 26 weeks of Additional Paternity Leave, for fathers whose partner returned to work with an unused entitlement to AML (HM Government, 2006b: 3–5); up to 13 weeks of APL could be paid, at the level of SMP, dependent on the amount of the mother's entitlement to SMP remaining (HM Government, 2006b: 6–8; 10). In September 2009, the Government announced that APL would be introduced in April 2011 (BIS, 2009). After Labour lost power in the 2010 general election, the coalition government continued with the planned implementation of APL.

2.4.3 Comparison of German and English policy change

The above sections outline the policy changes that took place in the two countries. While these accounts were necessarily detailed, it is important for the analysis to 'zoom out' in order that change can be categorised and compared. The sections detailed that both countries underwent significant policy expansion in ECEC and leave policy; yet how do these changes compare, when using Korpi's categories to analyse them?

[38] The eligibility criteria for AML were aligned with those of SMP, reducing the employment criteria from 12 months of continuous employment at the 11th week before childbirth to 26 weeks at the 14th week before childbirth (DTI, 2001b). Also, parental leave was extended to parents of children born before December 1999, who had not been covered by the original legislation, and parents of disabled children became entitled to a total of 18 weeks (DTI, 2001a).

Germany entered the period in question with policies that can be characterised as modified general family support policies. The 2000 leave policy reforms served further to modify this model, without fundamentally changing it: it left in place the long period of low-paid leave, and while it provided a 'budget option', with little availability of extra-familial childcare for children under three, there was little prospect of mothers being able to work more than part-time hours. On the other hand, a gender-neutral right for parents to part-time work, also legislated for in 2000, could be a sign of the beginning of a more significant shift, as it provides a mechanism for fathers to reduce their hours of employment, and therefore to increase their childcare responsibilities. However, it could also be interpreted as another aspect of a modified family support model that supports mother's labour market participation on a part-time basis as a secondary earner.

Nevertheless the subsequent reforms mark a clear shift towards a dual-earner support model. Through legislation in 2004 and 2008 childcare for under-threes was significantly expanded, with an entitlement to a childcare place for all one-year olds by 2013 introduced as part of the latter reform. Such policies are ideal-typical dual-earner support model policies. The reforms to leave policy in 2006 also mark a shift in this direction: paid leave was reduced to a maximum of 12 months, which helped women's labour market attachment and the payment was made earnings-related, denoting leave as a compensated and temporary period away from the labour market rather than a family benefit. Further, fathers' participation in childcare was encouraged through the earnings-related benefit and through individual 'use-it-or-lose-it' rights to at least two 'partner months' of leave. A system of comprehensive work-family policy support was therefore enacted, in which a legal right to a childcare place came into force at the end of parents' leave period. Therefore it can be concluded that in Germany, work-family policies in this period saw a shift away from modified general family support model policies, towards dual-earner support policies.

In England, which entered the period in question on a market-oriented trajectory, the picture is less clear. The changes implemented in ECEC certainly marked a significant expansion of the government's willingness to involve itself in ECEC, yet the divide between early years education and childcare remained a feature of policymaking, and the different policies appear to move in divergent directions. The entitlement to free early years provision for all three- and four-year-olds has marked a shift in government policy. Before the introduction of the nursery voucher, there was essentially no national early education policy in England, although publicly funded and provided provision did exist in some localities (West

and Noden, 2019). The nursery voucher introduced a market-oriented element into early education that Labour's reforms did not remove, although the provision of an entitlement to places for three- and four-year-olds was a shift away from the market-oriented model. Yet it is not clear that part-time provision for three- and four-year-olds represented a move to a dual-earner support model; indeed, the part-time nature of provision proved difficult for parents to combine with employment, and the government faced pressure to increase the flexibility of the offer, which it did partially in 2004 (Eisenstadt, 2011). Nevertheless, it is the case that the free hours were explicitly designated as 'early education' rather than childcare and therefore are perhaps best seen as an expansion of the education system into the early years, rather than representing a particular model of work-family balance.[39] The fact that parents rely on both the free hours of early education and market-based childcare to permit full-time employment suggests that the early education offer is best categorised as a hybrid of the market-oriented model and a modified general family support model, due to its lack of specific support to working families.

The other parts of ECEC provision remained relatively market-oriented, albeit with more state intervention than a pure market-oriented model would entail. The explicit aim of ECEC policy, put into legislation in 2008, was that voluntary and private provision was preferable to public provision; indeed, almost all of the new places came from private or voluntary provision (Blanden et al., 2016; Gambaro et al., 2014). Further, in the design of time-limited, start-up funding, there remained an assumption that market forces would provide comprehensive and sustainable provision; and while means-tested support for childcare costs was available, childcare remained comparatively very expensive in England throughout this period (Lewis, 2009). However, childcare policy also represented a large expansion of the level and intensity of government intervention, as well as some limited change in the direction of dual-earner support: childcare support through tax-credits specifically aimed to encourage dual-earner families. Childcare policy is therefore best seen as moving towards a hybrid between the market-oriented model and the dual-earner support model.

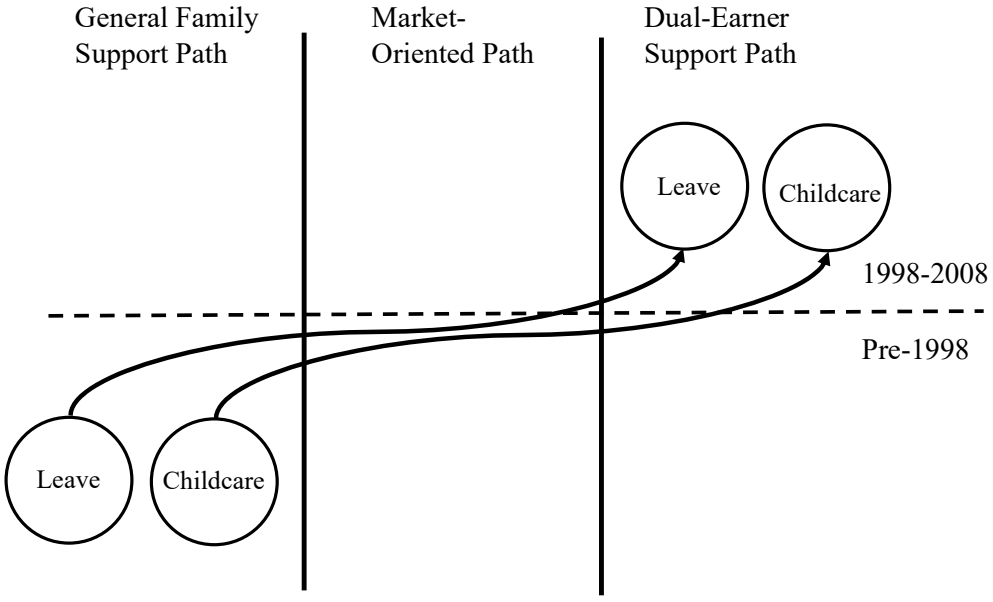
Leave policy in England also represented significant continuity, with the vast majority of policy expansion being concentrated on increasing maternity leave. At the end of the period in question, employed mothers were entitled to 12 months leave, with earnings-related pay for six weeks followed by 33 weeks of low-level, flat-rate pay and then three months of unpaid leave.

[39] See Chapter 5 for a fuller discussion of this.

The intention was that this should be a minimum level of provision, which could be topped up by good employers, analogous to other aspects of the British welfare state such as pensions in which individuals are expected to make private arrangements to top up low-level state provision (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Provision for fathers was sparse and not designed in a way that would incentivise significant take-up, with unpaid parental leave and two-weeks paternity leave, paid at the same low flat-rate. While from 2011 mothers could transfer a portion of their leave and pay to fathers, this did not provide fathers with any individual rights to leave and the low-level, flat-rate remuneration meant that very few fathers took up this leave (BBC News, 2014). This 'maternalist' focus demonstrated continuity from pre-1997 leave provision, and represented a partial shift towards a general family support model, in that it reinforced women as the primary carer. But it was also a continuation of the market-oriented trajectory in that individuals were expected to receive 'top-up' entitlements through their employer (Daly and Scheiwe, 2010). Once again, it is best to designate leave policy as a hybrid model.

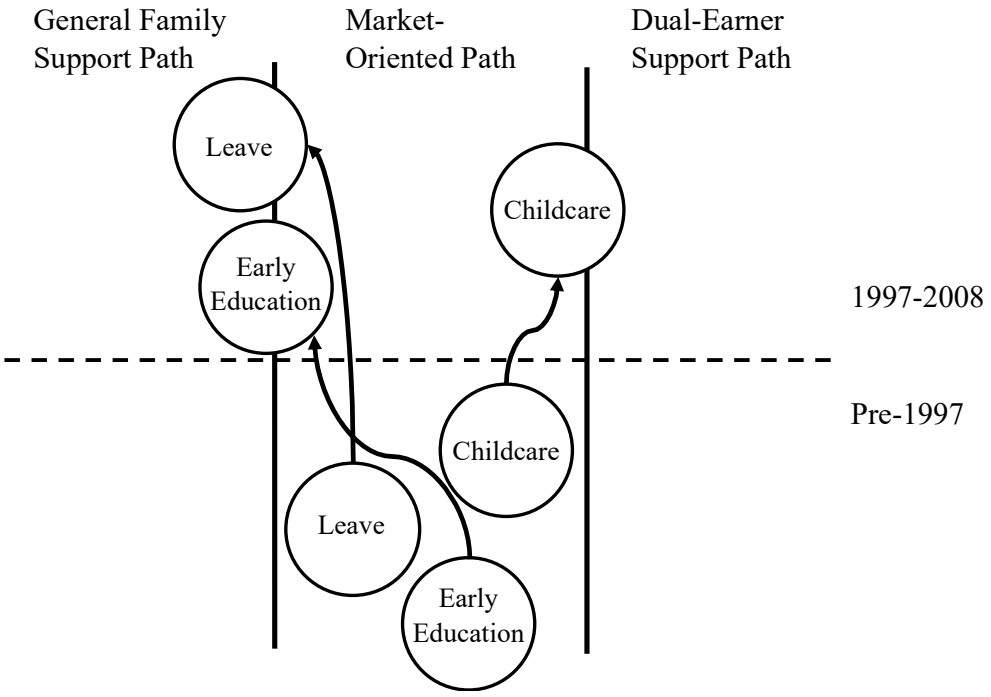
These summaries show that in Germany policy change was relatively unambiguous, moving from a modified general family support model to a dual-earner support model. In England, on the other hand, policy change was more disjointed, with early education, childcare and leave policies all moving in different directions. In the English case, each of the policy areas retained something of the market-oriented trajectory, while taking on elements of either the dual-earner support model (childcare policy) or the general family support model (early education policy and leave policy). Using Ebbinghaus's terms to compare change, Germany underwent 'path switching' during this period (see Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1: Germany: path switching change



In England, one can conclude that 'path departure' occurred, although the different policies shifted in different directions (see Figure 2.2), and unlike Germany whose work-family policies in 2008 could be described as following a dual-earner support path, different policies appear to be on a number of hybrid paths, without a clear unified trajectory.

Figure 2.2: England: path departing change



A brief survey of the relevant literature provides support for these conclusions. The notion of a shift away from the male-breadwinner model in both countries during this period is corroborated by accounts that focus on either Germany, England, or both. The literature on German work-family policy reform is clear that it represents a "paradigm shift" (Blome, 2016b: 159; Henninger et al., 2008: 289; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2010: 417; Wiliarty, 2010: 180), "third order change" (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015: 10) or a 'Nordic turn' (Erler, 2009). As in this chapter, accounts highlight the implications in particular of the institution of a right to a childcare place and the overhaul of parental leave, including the introduction of the 'partner months' as signifying a 'path shift' away from its traditional policy trajectory (Blum, 2012; Fleckenstein, 2011; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013; Ostner, 2010; Pfau-Effinger, 2008).

By contrast, the literature on changes in England is more contested, depending on the perspective taken. Lewis and Campbell (2007) used Hall's three-level model of change (see section 2.2.3) to argue that there has been 'third order' change in policy goals, with the expansion of the role of the state highlighted as particularly dramatic in moving England from

its male-breadwinner trajectory. However, Daly (2010) also makes use of Hall's typology to argue that in fact a great deal of continuity can be seen in the English case, especially in the continued dominance of liberal ideas and of state intervention for those 'in need' rather than on a universal basis. Others also note the particularly 'liberal' character of English reforms and highlight continuity particularly in the market approach in childcare and the maternalist trajectory of leave policy reform (Baird and O'Brien, 2015; Daly and Scheiwe, 2010; Kremer, 2007; Moss, 2014; Moss and O'Brien, 2019; White and Friendly, 2012).

Few of these evaluations are comparative in nature, and, as highlighted in Chapter 1, those that are are more concerned with stressing that Germany and England undertook similar departures from the male-breadwinner model, rather than assessing the nature of that trajectory (Fleckenstein, 2010; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013). Two exceptions to this stand out. A qualitative comparison of four European countries' reforms in 2008, which included Germany and the UK, argued that "[i]n Germany, the shift from reconciliation policies as family policies within the context of the male-breadwinner model, to employment policies within the context of the adult worker model family has been the most dramatic" (Lewis, Knijn, et al., 2008: 275). More recently Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser (2015) conducted a quantitative study of reforms in 18 OECD countries. Borrowing Hall's terminology, their analysis found that while Germany's reforms represent "third order" change "from Christian Democratic to social democratic space", reforms in the UK are best seen as "first order" change "within the realm of the liberal space" (Ferragina and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2015: 10).

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated the dependent variable of this project. It has established that German work-family policy underwent more extensive change in the period 1997/8 to 2008 than English work-family policy. In this period Germany's policy path switched, from one that was following a general family support model to a dual-earner support model trajectory. In England the change was less dramatic and involved elements of path dependency as well as significant change. Perhaps the most striking feature of the English case is the fragmentation between the different policy areas which make up English work-family policy. In Korpi's terms one can see English policy as moving from a market-oriented path, characterised by little or no national policy in ECEC and very limited maternity leave provision, to a hybrid market-oriented path in which different elements of policy point in differing directions. In this, the ideas that have long dominated the English approach to families, such as the limited role of the state, the private realm of the family and assumptions based on maternalism, remain evident. By contrast

in Germany, the normative preference for male-breadwinner model families has disappeared from work-family policies, replaced by policies which favour dual-earner families. As such policy change in Germany underwent 'path switching' during this period, while in England it is best described as 'path departure'.

With the terms of the comparison established, the following chapters move on to explaining this difference in change. As discussed in Chapter 1, the primary approach is one that focuses on the role of ideas in policy change. The next chapter sets out this approach in detail, before the empirical chapters investigate the processes of change in Germany and England.

Chapter 3: An Ideational Approach to Change

3.1 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the overall context of the project is to compare the ways in which England and Germany have departed the male-breadwinner model. Both Germany and England had, before the changes investigated in this thesis, been described as 'strong male-breadwinner model countries' due to the way social policy in the two countries was underpinned by assumptions about the way that paid and unpaid care is and should be organised within families (Lewis, 1992; Lewis and Ostner, 1994). Chapter 2 described the evolution of these strong male-breadwinner regimes over time; it highlighted how ideas about families, gender roles, maternal employment, children, and the role of the state helped shape the way in which both countries approached policies relating to families over many decades. It also evaluated changes in work-family policy in England and Germany between 1997/8 and 2008. It argued that in Germany, work-family policy underwent 'path switching' change, defined by Ebbinghaus as "intervention that ends the self-reinforcement of an established institution and may give way to a new institution in its place" while in England, the change is better described as 'path departing', that is, "gradual adaptation through partial renewal of institutional arrangements and limited redirection of core principles" (Ebbinghaus, 2009: 17). This reference to 'core principles' indicates that a key feature of change in both countries related to these long-standing ideas which had kept work-family policy on its male-breadwinner path in both countries for so many decades. To study change therefore is to engage with the question of why the policy changes in Germany broke with ideas underpinning its historical trajectory in a more fundamental way than did those in England. As Section 1.4 set out, to explore this question we need to examine how and under what circumstances new ideas came onto the political agenda in the two countries, and how these new ideas affected policymaking, including the extent to which they posed a challenge to previously dominant ideas.

This chapter sets out an approach that examines ideas and ideational change. It aims to specify a framework for analysing the two countries that will be followed in the empirical chapters. It is divided into three sections. Section 3.2 describes how the ideational literature emerged to help address problems of stability bias that were inherent in neo-institutional theories of change, but how many of the same blind spots to issues of change are evident in the ideational literature as well. Section 3.3 elaborates on these 'blind spots' and how certain assumptions of the dominant 'paradigm shift' model of change need to be set aside to better conceptualise a framework of ideational change. Section 3.4 sets out such a framework.

Drawing on the theoretical discussion in the second section, it highlights the interplay between different 'levels' of ideas and the importance of timing and agency in ideational change. Crucially, it sets out the concepts of 'ideational windows of opportunity' and 'ideational entrepreneurs', concepts which link changing ideas to their structural and institutional context, thus minimising the contingency which characterises some accounts of ideational change.

3.2 Institutions, Ideas and Change

3.2.1 Neo-institutionalism and the problem of change

In the last few decades, the ideational literature has emerged as a distinct approach to investigating policy stability and change (e.g. Béland, 2005, 2009, 2016a; Béland and Cox, 2011a; Campbell, 2004; Parsons, 2007; VA Schmidt, 2002; Schmidt, 2008b). In the public policy, social policy and political science literatures, a focus on ideas arose in response to problems within the neo-institutionalist literature, which had developed in the 1980s and 1990s as the dominant theoretical approach to understanding policy stability and change. Before discussing the ideational literature in detail, it is worth outlining the critique of neo-institutionalism that it emerged in response to, especially as the ideational literature has developed many of the same blind spots.

The three original forms of neo-institutionalism – rational choice institutionalism, sociological institutionalism and historical institutionalism – share a focus on the power of formal and informal institutional rules in constraining political action. Rational choice institutionalism understands institutions as formal rules which structure self-interested actors' behaviour through limiting possible action and providing information about what opponents are likely to do, thus altering their cost-benefit analyses. Institutions therefore help overcome collective action problems and reach equilibria (North, 1990). Sociological institutionalists see institutional rules as constituting norms, symbols and routines, which structure the way that actors behave through a 'logic of appropriateness' (March and Olsen, 1984, 1989; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991). For historical institutionalists, institutions are both formal and informal 'rules of the game' that structure actors' behaviour both through the 'calculus' approach of rational choice institutionalism and the 'cultural' approach of sociological institutionalists (Hall and Taylor, 1996). What is distinctive about historical institutionalism is its emphasis on the concept of 'path-dependence': the importance of past decisions and the institutionalised rules, commitments and norms that emerge from them, in structuring actors' possible courses of action in the present (Pierson, 1994; Thelen and Steinmo, 1992). Path-dependence has been

theoretically refined from the broad statement that 'history matters' to a series of self-reinforcing processes, in which early decisions in a certain direction create incentives, through mechanisms such as increasing returns and sunk costs, for further movement in the same direction (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2000).

These theories have dominated the comparative policy literature, and the influence of historical institutionalism in particular can be seen in both of the main approaches in comparative welfare state research of the 1990s and early 2000s: regime theory and retrenchment studies. In the former, Esping-Andersen's (1990, 1999) welfare regime theory and Hall and Soskice's (2001) Varieties of Capitalism approach both explain cross-national differences through long-standing nationally-specific institutional configurations which are constantly reproduced. In the latter, Pierson's (1996, 2001) influential discussion of the 'new politics' of welfare emphasises the influence of historically-determined policy legacies, which constrain policymakers' options for welfare reform.

Neo-institutionalists therefore share a conception of institutions as self-reproducing, stable structures that shape political outcomes by constraining the agency of individual and collective actors.[40] While useful for explaining stability, accounting for change was more problematic, for if institutions lead to stability through constraining political action, how can actors overcome these constraints to change the institutions that constrain them? Many neo-institutionalists implicitly or explicitly adopt a 'punctuated equilibrium' model of change, in which long periods of stability are interrupted by dramatic change (Krasner, 1988). Hall's (1993) influential three-level typology of policy change, discussed in Section 2.2.3, is an example of this, distinguishing between periods of 'normal policymaking', characterised by path-stabilising adaptation to changing environmental circumstances (first and second order change) and 'paradigm shifts' which are extremely rare moments of path switching (third order) change. Paradigm shifts are understood as being produced exogenously: in order for the institutional equilibrium of 'normal policymaking' to be 'punctured', a crisis, such as war, economic shock or natural disaster, is required to provide a 'critical juncture' (Collier and Collier, 1991). Under these circumstances, the normal institutional constraints on agency are

[40] This is particularly true for rational choice institutionalism, which sees political action as a process of utility maximisation within institutionalised games, and sociological institutionalism, which views political actors as constrained by institutionalised norms and conventions of behaviour. However, it is also true of historical institutionalists who, while less focused on equilibria producing institutions, emphasise path-dependent dynamics (Hay, 2006; Schmidt, 2008b). Indeed, in developing the theory of path-dependency, Pierson is explicit that while change does occur, it is "bounded change" which "continues until something erodes or swamps the mechanisms of reproduction that generates continuity" (Pierson, 2000: 265).

weakened and new or refigured institutions can be established, thus initiating the beginnings of a new path (Katznelson, 2003).

This approach has been heavily criticised for failing to provide a comprehensive account of change (Blyth, 1997, 2002; Campbell, 2004; Hay, 2001; Peters et al., 2005; Streeck and Thelen, 2005). From an empirical point of view, it was noted that instances of dramatic institutional replacement in response to exogenous shock are relatively rare, while incremental change, in which seemingly small changes, over time, add up to significant change, are a reality of policy development (Crouch, 2005; Hacker, 2005; Mahoney and Thelen, 2009; Streeck and Thelen, 2009; Thelen, 2004). One strand of the neo-institutionalist literature has focused on such changes, and, abandoning the punctuated-equilibrium model, has examined how through processes of 'conversion', 'layering' and 'drift', institutions can be incrementally altered in ways that eventually lead to significant change (Mahoney and Thelen, 2009; Streeck and Thelen, 2005; Thelen, 2004). Yet this literature has been criticised as better at describing and categorising change, rather than explaining it (Béland and Waddan, 2012; Peters et al., 2005; Schmidt, 2008b). In particular, these accounts struggle to combine the neo-institutionalist focus on the constraining function of institutions with the necessary impetus for such change. While crisis-driven change relies on exogenous shocks to free agency from institutional structures, how can endogenous change occur in the context of stable and constraining institutions? Specifically, why and how do actors push for change from within stabilising institutions?

In an attempt to solve this problem, some historical institutionalists turned to ideas. These scholars argue for examining the role of institutions and ideas together, as two parallel and complementary forms of explanation (Béland, 2005, 2009, 2016a; Béland and Waddan, 2012; Campbell, 2002, 2004; Lieberman, 2002; Peters et al., 2005), and a new kind of ideas-focused neo-institutionalism has been developed (Hay, 2001, 2006; Schmidt, 2008b, 2010, 2011b), which pays attention to the ways in which ideas and discourse, which are themselves institutionally structured, are key factors in understanding both stability and change. Parsons (2007) makes the important point that ideational explanations have a distinct logic to institutional explanations. Whereas the latter are associated with a 'logic of position' in which actors' behaviour can be understood as a function of their interests, which themselves are defined by their position within institutions, ideational explanation "explains actions as a result of people interpreting their world through certain ideational elements" (Parsons, 2007: 96).

It is this interpretative logic that underpins why ideational theorists argue that change cannot be fully understood without a focus on ideas. While historical institutionalism is

equipped to provide comprehensive accounts of how institutions provide opportunities and constraints for potential reforms, without an understanding of policymakers' ideas, we cannot understand the specific policy choices that are made. This does not deny that institutional factors are important but asserts that they alone do determine political outcomes: as Blyth (2001: 29) notes, "structural explanations of institutional change are indeterminate regarding subsequent institutional form." Using an example of comparative welfare state development, Béland and Hacker (2004: 54) set out this advantage of an ideational account: "If the question is merely why the American welfare state is 'smaller' or 'less developed' than European welfare states then it may be enough to cite America's distinctive framework of political institutions. But if the question is why the American welfare state has taken the structure that it has, then systematically unpacking the forces that shape actual policy choices seems unavoidable."

3.2.2 Ideas and change

Ideas can be defined as "claims about descriptions of the world, causal relationships, or the normative legitimacy of certain actions" (Parsons, 2002: 48). Béland (2009) highlights that focusing on the role of ideas can aid historical institutionalist accounts of reform in three broad ways. First, ideas help to set the political agenda as they are crucial to the interpretive process by which social conditions become understood as political problems. Second, ideas can also take the form of the cognitive and normative assumptions of the day which guide how policymakers attempt to solve these problems. Third, ideas are important in the ways in which actors can build support for proposed reforms. Each of these three contributions of an ideational approach to episodes of reform will be discussed in greater detail below. What should be highlighted here is that ideas are not solely associated with episodes of change; far from it, dominant ideas about what is legitimate and necessary have been widely understood as preventing change in numerous contexts by structuring the way that actors interpret their environment (Parsons, 2016). Indeed the outline of the history of policies towards families in Chapter 2 highlighted the long-standing influence of ideas about families, mothers' employment and the role of the state in the lack of change in England and Germany before the late-1990s.

Hall's (1993) influential notion of economic policy paradigms exemplifies this. Starting from the observation that "the deliberation of public policy takes place within a realm of discourse … Policies are made within some system of ideas and standards which is comprehensible and plausible to the actors", he defines policy paradigms as "a framework of ideas … that specifies not only the goals of policy and the kind of instruments that can be used

to attain them, but also the very nature of the problems they are meant to be addressing" (Hall, 1993: 279). Using Keynesianism and monetarism as two examples, Hall wrote that a dominant paradigm is "embedded in the very terminology through which policymakers communicate about their work, and it is influential precisely because so much of it is taken for granted and unamenable to scrutiny as a whole" (Hall, 1993: 279). As mentioned above, while Hall's work focuses on 'paradigm shifts' brought on by exogenous shocks, during periods of 'normal policymaking', that is, in periods of stability uninterrupted by exogenous crisis, policymaking takes place within the parameters of the dominant paradigm. Ideas in this sense are institutionally embedded: dominant paradigms are crystallised in the design of policy and institutions (Rothstein, 2005).

Blyth (2001, 2002) builds on Hall's work to elaborate the concept of a 'cognitive lock': "once ideas have become institutionally embedded, policymaking becomes possible only in terms of these ideas" (Blyth, 2001: 4). As such, institutionally embedded ideas, which are often taken-for-granted and unquestioned, have the effect of providing a boundary that narrows the range of action that actors consider. Potential problems and or policies that lie outside this boundary are cognitively locked out. For example, Steensland describes how 'cultural categories' of the deserving and undeserving poor "exert schematic influence in welfare policy development by shaping the range of cognitive perceptions and normative evaluations that actors find comprehensible or plausible" (Steensland, 2006: 1282).

A related strand of the ideational literature comes from studies of comparative policy. These accounts also see ideas as constraining and tend to conceive of them as nationally-specific ways of thinking, which exert an influence on policymakers in a similar way. For example, Vail (2014) has argued that different 'national traditions' shaped French and German policymakers' respective interpretations of the post-2008 economic crisis and therefore their different approaches to mitigating it. Similarly, Dobbin's (1994) work traces the comparative development of industrial policy and highlights that in the US dominant ideas relating to decentralisation meant reforms premised on centralised state authority were never seriously considered there, in contrast to contemporary debates in Britain and France. At the level of political parties, Berman (1998) explains the different actions and subsequent fortunes of the German and Swedish social democratic parties in the early 20th century by their different interpretation of Marxist theory, which shaped their understanding of the challenges they faced and the options available to them. Each of these examples highlight that ideas can form nationally-specific templates for how problems and solutions are thought about by actors, to

the extent that in times of crisis a common response is for decision-makers to 'fall back on old habits' (Chung and Thewissen, 2011).

This section has demonstrated that ideas initially emerged out of the neo-institutionalist literature as a way of providing a catalyst for incremental change. However, it also demonstrated something of a paradox: as ideational theory developed, it mirrored many of the features of neo-institutionalism, in that while ideas could sometimes provide an impetus for change, they were also seen as constraining political agency in a similar way to institutions, particularly the norms of sociological institutionalism and the informal institutions of historical institutionalism: ideas provide a constraining influence on political agency, structuring actors' interpretations of their surroundings and limiting the options for reform within the boundaries of long-standing, often nationally-specific ideas about legitimate and necessary reforms. This similarity between the stabilising effects of institutions and ideas leads back to the original problem that ideas were meant to solve: if ideas are stable and constraining, how do they change? In the terms of this project, if the underpinning ideas of male-breadwinner model norms and non-intervention of the state were powerful factors in shaping Germany and England's respective historical trajectories, how did change come about in the late 1990s? The next section examines this theoretical question and argues that the ideational literature has struggled to deal with it because of some key assumptions about ideas that have only recently been challenged.

3.3 Gaps in the Ideational Literature: Change, Agency and Timing

A primary concern for the ideational literature was to prove that ideas were worthy of study and were not mere epiphenomena. As such the literature developed through a series of empirical studies demonstrating that ideas 'matter', either through providing a catalyst for change, or through explaining stability as outlined above (Béland and Cox, 2011b). While this has successfully demonstrated that 'ideas matter', it has come at the expense of more systematic theoretical development, and it is only relatively recently that scholars have begun trying to focus on how and under what circumstances they matter (Béland, 2009, 2016a; Carstensen and Schmidt, 2016; Mehta, 2011; Padamsee, 2009; Parsons, 2016).

In particular, given their stabilising function, one must ask how dominant ideas change, and what role new ideas play in this process. Frameworks for addressing this, that is, the interaction between ideas as sources of change and ideas as sources of stability, are rare in the literature (although see Blyth, 2002; Campbell, 2004; Schmidt, 2008b). Indeed Hall's (1993)

paradigm-shift model remains widely influential and much of the literature adopts it either explicitly or implicitly (Béland and Cox, 2013; Daigneault, 2014b; Hogan and Howlett, 2015; Skogstad and Schmidt, 2011). However, a number of features in Hall's work reinforce this dichotomy between ideas as driving change and ideas as producing stability and make it difficult to see how ideational change can come about. First, as mentioned, Hall adopts a punctuated-equilibrium model of change, in which long periods of stability are interrupted by moments of great change, when the total replacement of one set of ideas with another takes place: a paradigm shift. Second, these moments of great change can only arise when the dominant ideas are destabilised by a crisis, which serves to undermine them and produce situations of extreme uncertainty. At other times, which Hall refers to as 'normal policymaking', the dominant paradigm has a stabilising influence that reinforces the status quo and prevents new ideas coming to the fore. The third point relates to the structure/agency debate. According to the paradigm shift model, actors with new ideas only become decisive in these times of great uncertainty, in times of 'normal policymaking' there is no opportunity for them to have influence: agency is only relevant in rare moments of deep uncertainty. If used as a general model of ideational interaction and change, the dynamics of Hall's model are open to criticism in much the same way as the neo-institutionalist literature: it is much better at explaining stability than change and it largely ignores less dramatic but more common forms of change.

In his defence, Hall's model was not intended as a general account of ideational change, rather a study of the particular kind of change evident in macroeconomic policy. It is notable that the other major theoretical contribution to ideational change, that of Blyth (2002), also takes macroeconomic policy as its focus, and also describes instances of revolutionary ideational change in moments of great uncertainty. Indeed, as Parsons (2016: 454) notes, this context "is especially favourable to highlighting distinct ideas. It is hard to find a clearer example of change from policies based on one explicit set of ideas to policies based on another." However, the validity of extending Hall's model to other policy areas has been questioned empirically (Daigneault, 2014b; Oliver and Pemberton, 2004; Princen and 't Hart, 2014; Wilder and Howlett, 2014; Wincott, 2011; Wood, 2015). Indeed, Hall (1993: 291) accepts that "not all fields of policy will possess policy paradigms as elaborate or forceful as the ones associated with macroeconomic policy-making". Family policy is an example of a considerably more untidy domain, in which the ideas underpinning policy are often made up of composites of many different perspectives, and in which normative values are as important as technical

problem-solution relationships (Ferrarini, 2006; Fraser, 1994; Kaufmann, 2002; Lewis, 1992, 2001b; Saraceno et al., 2012; Strohmeier, 2002). From this perspective, in order to account for change in work-family policy, the paradigm-shift model is less useful.

However, the model's influence is such that many of Hall's assumptions about how economic ideas work have been taken on by large parts of the ideational literature (Berman, 2013; Daigneault, 2014a; Skogstad and Schmidt, 2011). In order to move away from the stability bias that derives from this model, it is necessary to interrogate three of these assumptions in particular: that ideas are inherently stable, that actors cannot 'think outside' of dominant ideas and that an exogenous crisis is relied on for change.

3.3.1 Ideas and ideational change

First is the assumption that ideas are stable, and when they change, they do so totally. Keynesianism and monetarism, the paradigms that Hall (1989, 1993) focuses on, not only have different goals, controlling unemployment or inflation, and use different instruments, fiscal policy or monetary policy, but they are also based on "a fundamentally different conception of how the economy itself worked. Whereas Keynesians viewed the private economy as unstable and in need of intermittent fiscal adjustment, monetarists saw the private economy as stable and discretionary policy as an impediment to efficient economic performance" (Hall, 1993: 284). The incommensurability of paradigms is a key feature of Hall's model: "[b]ecause each paradigm contains its own account of how the world facing policymakers operates and each account is different, it is often impossible for the advocates of different paradigms to agree on a common body of data against which a technical judgment in favour of one paradigm over another might be made" (Hall, 1993: 280–281). Because of this, compromise between two paradigms is impossible and change requires the total overthrow of one paradigm with another.

This notion has been criticised empirically, with scholars stressing that incremental changes of ideas are much more common than Hall's 'paradigm shifts' (Carstensen, 2011a; Daigneault, 2014a; Princen and 't Hart, 2014). For example, Palier (2005) has demonstrated that French social security and health policies, often assumed to be resistant to change, actually underwent a series of changes throughout the 1980s and 1990s that were both incremental *and* paradigmatic. Similarly, reassessments of Hall's empirical case have argued that changes he highlights as paradigmatic were actually iterative and coexisted for some time with Keynesian ideas (Hay, 2001; Oliver and Pemberton, 2004). In the domain of work-family policy, research investigating the underpinning 'paradigms' in different countries have found that ideas from

different policy paradigms coexist, in ways that can lead to tensions and contradictions (Knijn and Smit, 2009; Mahon, 2006; White, 2012).

If the notion of incommensurability is abandoned therefore for a conception of dominant *sets* of ideas which can contain competing and contradictory elements, then this allows for an alternative, more gradual form of change. This is what theorists influenced by Bevir and Rhodes's 'interpretive approach' (2003) have argued: that institutionalised ideas are best seen as loose collections of meaning which are constantly being combined and recombined to form new configurations (Bevir, 2005; Carstensen, 2011a, 2015; Schmidt, 2016). Without ruling out the possibility of dramatic paradigm shifts, such a conception provides the possibility for further types of change including incremental forms of change that over time result in revolutionary change (Skogstad and Schmidt, 2011). Indeed, the history of work-family policy discussed in Section 2.3 demonstrates that in both England and Germany work-family policy was shaped by sets of ideas that evolved over time, with, for example, negative views about part-time maternal employment becoming less important while others, such as the limited role for the state, remained strong.

3.3.2 Ideational change: when and how?

If the possibility of incremental change in ideas is accepted, the logical next question is under what circumstances can this happen. As discussed, the ideational literature has demonstrated a "selection bias towards moments of radical uncertainty" (Seabrooke, 2010: 85) in part because of the assumption that, due to the stabilising function of institutionalised ideas, a crisis such as an economic shock, war or natural disaster is required to provide the uncertainty necessary for ideas to 'matter' in explaining change.

Gofas and Hay (2008: 37) point out that the lack of a theory specifying *when* uncertainty arises raises questions about its role in many theorists' understanding of the role of ideas: "in the absence of such a theory, whether we are prepared to accord to ideas an explanatory role or not is essentially arbitrary – and to invoke uncertainty as the proximate justification for so doing is tautological." As in Hall's model, this uncertainty is often provided by crisis, yet this assumes an automatic relationship between structural conditions, crisis, policy failure and change which is simplistic and problematic from an ideational point of view (Hay, 2001, 2006). As Hay (2001: 203) notes, "[f]or "objective" contradictions to motivate a structural response requires an awareness and an understanding of current political and economic circumstances as indicative of contradictions and as indicative of contradictions that not only must be dealt with but that

can be dealt with." The important element in ideational change therefore is neither the presence of a crisis nor uncertainty per se, but that a situation arises in which policy failures come to be "widely identified, experienced, and associated with the dominant paradigm" (Hay, 2001: 193).

Importantly, this interpretation does not automatically follow dramatic events, but is itself a process of contestation about exact causes and therefore potential solutions; and this process is not a separate precondition for change but part of the process of change itself (see Widmaier et al., 2007). As Widmaier et al (2007: 749) note, "even exogenous shocks must be endogenously interpreted." That this is the case can be seen in Blyth's (2003: 698) statement that "structures do not come with an instruction sheet", meaning that the response to crisis cannot be derived from the crisis itself; rather the post-crisis trajectory emerges from the process of 'crisis narration' (see also Hay, 2001; Widmaier et al., 2007). For example, Blyth's (2002) account of US and Swedish economic policymaking demonstrates that struggles over how crises are interpreted and that the particular diagnoses used as 'weapons' to attack the previously dominant ideas were crucial in establishing the trajectory of institutional development post-crisis. This chimes with Cox's (2001) research, showing that the successful creation of an 'imperative to reform' is important in explaining the presence of welfare state change.

The emphasis on the importance of the interpretation of objective conditions as crisis does not imply that ideas can be simply changed whenever actors decide to do so; a framework for ideational change requires a conception of the importance of timing. When does the opportunity for change present itself? This section draws on the theories of neo-institutionalists who similarly sought to move beyond the punctuated-equilibrium model of change and explain incremental institutional change (Crouch, 2005; Crouch and Keune, 2005; Hacker, 2005; Jackson, 2005; Streeck and Thelen, 2005; Thelen, 2004). It builds on the above argument that ideas are not stable, monolithic entities and adds to it the notion of 'ambiguity', which provides actors with the opportunities and means to push for change.

The notion of ambiguity emerged in the theoretical literature as neo-institutionalists tried to identify a way for incremental change in seemingly stable institutions to emerge; as Mahoney and Thelen (2009: 7) state, "[i]f institutions are changed not just in response to exogenous shocks or shifts, then their basic properties must be defined in ways that provide some dynamic element that permits such change." Jackson (2005) in particular argued that institutions are characterised to a certain extent by internal ambiguity, which is a product of the fact that all institutions have their origins in political contestation, which involves actors with different

levels of resources, each with their own aims. Although the power of one actor or coalition may be so great that they can design institutions according to their preferences, in democracies institutions are usually the result of compromise which reflects the relative power of the actors involved (Jackson, 2005; Pierson, 2004). While any such compromise is likely to include diverse elements therefore, it is notable that compromise is often most effectively achieved when it is ambiguous, that is, when diverse actors can interpret the compromise in different ways (Palier, 2005; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). Ambiguity may therefore be 'built in' to institutions from their genesis. It is worth pointing out here that while this notion can be adapted to the study of ideas, it is itself actually about the ideas embedded within institutions and therefore applicable to ideational change.

Yet how does this ambiguity lead to the possibility of change? Institutions exist within constantly changing environments and therefore need adapting to new circumstances and challenges. Under Hall's model, this occurs through relatively technical processes of social learning, in which policymakers experiment with the instruments and settings of an institution in order to adapt it to new challenges. This means that under these situations of 'normal policymaking', institutional adaptation takes place fully within the dominant paradigm. However, ambiguity alters these assumptions. Because the meanings of institutions, that is the ideas embedded within them, are not fixed, but represent compromise between competing accounts, they require constant "working out and renegotiation" (Jackson, 2005, p. 230). This indicates that despite the apparent stability of periods of 'normal policymaking', political conflict exists "beneath the surface" (Peters et al., 2005: 1275); indeed even the process of institutional reproduction involves contestation between defenders of the status quo and those pushing for change (Thelen, 2004). One way this can result in change is that over time the balance of power between those that supported the initial compromise and those that opposed it may shift, leading to renegotiation of the institution under different political conditions (Pierson, 2004; Thelen, 1999). Another is when changing environmental circumstances lead to "perceived discrepancies between a problem situation and institutionalized rules and routine" (Jackson, 2005: 232): in other words, when changing environmental conditions lead to perceived contradictions or gaps between the ideas embedded in institutions and contemporary circumstances. These contradictions or gaps provide an opportunity for actors to engage in 'crisis narration' (Hay, 2001).

This provides an alternative conception to the notion of crisis-drive paradigm shifts. Drawing attention to the inherent ambiguity within dominant ideas and the potential for

environmental changes to exacerbate these ambiguities, reflects Pierson's (2004) notion of slow-moving causal processes and particularly his description of 'threshold effects'. As he argues: "many existing social arrangements are likely to exhibit strongly inertial qualities. These tendencies toward persistence imply that pressures will often build up for some time without generating immediate effects. When some critical level is reached, however, actors may reassess their options…leading to relatively rapid change" (Pierson, 2004: 85). Slow-moving social trends therefore can exacerbate ambiguities, but as the quote from Pierson highlights, such processes are insufficient to provoke change, which requires agency to undertake it.

3.3.3 Ideas and agency

The third assumption deriving from the paradigm-shift model relates to agency: overreliance on a punctuated-equilibrium model of change has been criticised for downplaying the role of agency and overstating the structural role of ideas (Carstensen, 2011b; Seabrooke, 2010). This is problematic because for ideas to have any impact at all, they require actors; as Berman (1998: 22) has pointed out "ideas do not have any impact by themselves … [they] influence politics only by acting through or on a particular political actor". Campbell (2004: 68) makes the point that in much historical institutionalist work, institutional structures are so constraining that, until a crisis punctures them and releases the power of agency, actors are "institutional dopes" blindly following institutionally-determined paths.

A similar criticism can be made of the punctuated-equilibrium model of ideational change. In particular, Carstensen (2011b: 148) argues that this stems from confusing the concept of institutionalisation of ideas, with their internalisation: "When it is argued that ideas are institutionalized, it often means that actors cannot imagine things differently … In this perspective, ideas are internalized by actors, who are not able to think critically or strategically about the ideas they hold." Hall's research exemplifies this: paradigms provide stability in part because the ideas therein are taken for granted and are unscrutinised by those operating within them. When events challenge the dominant paradigm, they are seen as anomalies which are "not fully comprehensible, even as puzzles, within the terms of the paradigm" (Hall, 1993: 280). If the build-up of such 'anomalies' is sufficient to undermine the dominant paradigm, both the paradigm and *its adherents* will be replaced by a new set of ideas, proposed by *a different group of actors*. Carstensen (2011b) argues that such a model means that actors do not use ideas so much as are used by them: "In effect, we end up with a model of ideational structures that actors are unable to change, because they cannot think outside the structure" (Carstensen, 2011b: 150) – they are ideational dopes.

However, if the assumption of paradigmatic coherence and incommensurability is replaced with the notion of ambiguity, then this model of ideas controlling actors becomes overdetermining, as ideas are contested more frequently than in Hall's model. Many sociologists who investigate the effects of culture on agency take actors to be simultaneously constrained by cultural structures and able to critically reflect and engage with these structures; culture provides both a constraint and an opportunity for change (e.g. Archer, 1995; Bourdieu, 1972; Campbell, 2004; Douglas, 1986; Pfau-Effinger, 2005b; Swidler, 1986).

The notion of strategic agency is highlighted through this conception and is picked up in the framing literature which applies such theories explicitly to politics. For example, Schön and Rein's (1994) study of intractable political problems notes that actors approach policies from particular 'mental frames', and these frames define the way that they interpret policy problems and solutions. Similar to Hall, they argue that compromise in the most intractable conflicts is unlikely, because actors operating within opposing frames have incongruous interpretations not only of policy problems and solutions, but also seemingly objective facts and data. However, noting that many conflicts are eventually solved, they argue that actors are both 'within' their frames and are also able to critically engage in 'frame reflection' in which they can re-evaluate the ideas they hold and modify them strategically. Similarly, Bevir and Rhodes (2003: 32) argue that "[t]o deny that subjects can escape from all social influences is not to deny that they can act creatively for reasons that make sense to them". According to this view, actors exist with a 'tradition', which acts as a "background to their latent beliefs and actions without fixing them. Tradition allows for the possibility of subjects adapting, developing and even rejecting much of their heritage" (Bevir and Rhodes, 2003: 32).

Unlike Hall's 'ideational dopes', this conception of actors sees them as strategic 'users' of ideas. Carstensen sets out the crucial distinction:

> To argue that ideas are 'outside the minds of actors' does not mean that actors do not really believe in them, but rather that ideas are not ready-made general templates. Actors cannot sit back and let the ideas do the thinking for them. Instead, political actors must employ ideas creatively and pragmatically to make them work, both in matters of intellectually grasping their world and in the strategic endeavour to satisfy their political preferences. Put differently, ideas are used by actors, not the other way around. (Carstensen, 2011b: 154–155)

This section has argued that in order to understand ideational change in a holistic sense, it is necessary to acknowledge that paradigm shifts are just one, particularly dramatic, way in which ideas can change. Indeed, while Hall's model may be appropriate for the domain of economic policy, its assumptions fit less well with other, less technical policy areas, such as work-family

policies. In particular, this section has argued that instead of monolithic and stable paradigms, it is better to conceive of dominant constellations of ideas which combine a number of different ideas in potentially ambiguous ways. Second, the section has argued that this ambiguity within this constellation of ideas and between it and changing environmental circumstances means that political contestation over the ideas embedded within institutions is much more frequent than in Hall's model and takes place during processes of institutional evolution as well as in more dramatic modes of change. Finally strategic actors can use this ambiguity as a resource to push for change. The next section draws on these points to elaborate a framework for analysing ideational change, focusing on the three key aspects of framing, timing and agency.

3.4 Shifting Background Ideas: A Framework for Ideational Change

The above discussion highlighted that instead of seeing dominant ideas as coherent and monolithic, it is more useful to conceptualise them as multiple and potentially ambiguous. This approach removes the stability bias of the paradigm-shift model of change and provides both an opportunity for change and the tools for actors, as the carriers of new ideas, to instigate change. Such a conception therefore gives a greater role to agency than the paradigm shift model allows, yet the question of how actors do this still requires elaborating: in particular, how can ideas both constrain actors and also be 'used' by them? In order to theorise about how ideas affect policymaking, rather than merely whether they do, it is important to delineate different kinds of ideas (Béland, 2009, 2016a; Mehta, 2011; Padamsee, 2009). A useful starting point is Campbell's (1998, 2002, 2004) distinction between ideas operating in the 'background' and those in the 'foreground' of political debate.

3.4.1 Background ideas

The above discussion of dominant ideas constraining political action involved what can be termed 'background ideas'. Background ideas are "the unquestioned assumptions of a polity, the deep philosophical approaches that serve to guide action, the unconscious frames or lenses through which people see the world, and/or the meaning constellations by which people make sense of the world" (Schmidt, 2016: 320). As such, background ideas tend to be largely taken for granted within a polity, they are rarely questioned or even discussed in political debate. They can be the all-encompassing assumptions of Hall's policy paradigms, or broad public sentiments (Campbell, 2004). Background ideas affect politics by "restrict[ing] the spectrum of possible policies of a welfare state" (Pfau-Effinger, 2005a: 4).

Background ideas can be cognitive or normative in character (Campbell, 2002, 2004; Schmidt and Thatcher, 2013). Cognitive background ideas "specify cause and effect relationships … [and] limit the range of alternatives policymakers are likely to perceive as useful" (Campbell, 2002: 22). For example, Esping-Andersen (1999) has argued that Southern European countries did not develop work-family policies during the second half of the 20th century because of background assumptions in those countries that families did not need them as mothers would provide care; such assumptions did not exist in Scandinavia and hence did not block the development of work-family policies there. Normative background ideas "constrain action by limiting the range of alternatives that elites are likely to perceive as acceptable and legitimate" (Campbell, 2002: 23). For example, differences in normative ideas about the acceptability of state intervention have been found to explain cross-national variation in employment policy responses to the 2008 financial crisis (Schulze-Cleven and Weishaupt, 2015) and in attempts at neoliberal reforms in Europe in the 1980s and 1990s (VA Schmidt, 2002). As well as explaining cross-national policy variation over time, background ideas are also often cited to explain why policy change did not take place at particular moments, such as why the US did not adopt a guaranteed income policy in the 1970s (Steensland, 2006), the persistence of the 'Scandinavian model' of welfare despite liberalising reforms in many Nordic countries (Cox, 2004), or the continued dominance of neo-liberal ideas despite the challenge of the 2008 financial crisis (Schmidt, 2016).

As such, background ideas are primarily seen as constraining change. They do this by being embedded within policy institutions; as Padamsee (2009: 418) describes, referring to the impact of institutionalised culture on politics, "from this background position, it helps perpetuate existing patterns of policy practice, shapes the conditions under which policy actors perceive a need for change, and informs the path of policy discussion."[41] The primary mechanism through which they do this is the cognitive lock (Blyth, 2001), outlined above, meaning that certain problems and/or solutions are not considered by policymakers due to their incompatibility with background ideas.

A further mechanism by which background ideas constrain change is related to the notion that new ideas must 'fit' with those already embedded in institutions (see Weir and Skocpol,

[41] In this sense, background ideas are analogous to the taken-for-granted informal rules that historical institutionalists cite in their arguments about path-dependency or the social norms that sociological institutionalists see as shaping political action through a 'logic of appropriateness' (Hall and Taylor, 1996; March and Olsen, 1989; Pierson, 2004).

1985). Background ideas act as a kind of 'touchstone' for successful framing of policy problems and solutions by politicians in the foreground of the political arena (VA Schmidt, 2002). Actors in the political foreground (see below, Section 3.4.2) frame their proposals in ways that fit with normative background ideas to make them seem legitimate and acceptable and with cognitive background ideas to highlight their effectiveness (Campbell, 2002). Background ideas therefore set a limit on what are likely to be successful framing strategies, and therefore what new policy problems and solutions are likely to be politically successful. For example, Ferree (2003) has used the similar concept of different 'discursive opportunity structures' to explain why feminist campaigners in the US and Germany placed different arguments at the heart of campaigns for abortion rights, with those in the US highlighting the importance of individual privacy and those in Germany the state's protection of women.

In order to make the concept of background ideas analytically useful, two steps are necessary. First, it is necessary to delimit the concept of background ideas to those ideas that are embedded in the institutions of the policy domain in question: work-family policies. This is for two reasons. First, from a methodological perspective it enables precision in specifying which ideas are the object of interest. Second, given that this project is comparative it helps ensure that the ideas that are being compared have the same role in the respective countries. Without this precision, comparative study of ideas can easily lapse into broad cultural explanations of difference.

The second step is to incorporate the above discussed notion of multiplicity and potential ambiguity into background ideas. From this perspective, particular policy domains are not structured by a rigid paradigm but by numerous and sometimes competing ideas. This redefinition of background ideas leads to less deterministic versions of each of the above cited stability mechanisms. First, multiple background ideas can still act as a cognitive lock, but because background ideas are not singular, actors are not cognitively locked into one particular interpretation of what to do. Rather they operate within a space which is bounded by a configuration of background ideas, which Jenson (1989) calls the 'universe of political discourse'. This is important because instead of assuming that all actors within a polity think in the same way it provides space for partisan politics in which different actors can assign different weights to the various background ideas, thereby emphasising different elements (Carstensen and Matthijs, 2018). The explains why in the decades before 1998, the CDU and SPD traditionally held different approaches to family policy in Germany, both of which fit within the dominant background ideas of the normative preference for the male-breadwinner model

family and the notion that the state should not interfere with family functions (see Section 2.3.1).

The second mechanism, in which background ideas act as a reference point by which actors can frame their problems and solutions is also broadened if background ideas are conceived of in this way. Instead of a narrow set of ideas which actors must refer to in order to make their proposals for change both necessary and legitimate, multiple background ideas offer actors a 'toolkit' from which to construct arguments about legitimacy and necessity. Such arguments can emphasise certain elements of background ideas while downplaying others (Swidler, 1986). Indeed, discursive opportunity structures are not themselves fixed and stable, instead ambiguity within them offers opportunities for different framing strategies (Ferree, 2003; McCammon et al., 2007). Indeed, a number of accounts of the politics of work-family policy have highlighted that politicians advocate for shifts in a progressive or traditional direction with appeals to different broad ideas (e.g. Ellingsæter, 2012, 2014; Knijn and Smit, 2009; Morgan and Zippel, 2003). However, while this framing appeals to background ideas, it takes place in the political foreground.

3.4.2 Foreground ideas

Foreground ideas are those that are proposed, promoted and implemented by actors in political debate. Unlike background ideas, foreground ideas are not general normative principles or overarching understandings of how the world works; they are "more precise guidelines about how already-existing institutions and instruments should be used in specific situations" (Campbell, 2002: 28). Further, they are not taken-for-granted but are explicitly communicated by political actors, who aim to get their preferred policy options onto the agenda and into legislation. Foreground ideas are therefore both the concrete proposals themselves, and the ideas used to promote these proposals. These ideas can take different forms which operate on different levels of abstraction: 'policy solutions' and 'problem definitions' (Mehta, 2011).

Policy solutions are policy proposals which aim to address a given problem and specify policy instruments and settings. For any given policy problem there are a plethora of potential solutions, so studies of this type of idea focus on why certain policies are chosen over others (e.g. Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 2003; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). While much of this public policy literature focuses on policymaking processes, there are some features of policy ideas that play a role in their political fortunes. Studies that examine this stress that new policy solutions must 'fit' with policy problems and the broader institutional and ideational

context (Béland, 2007; Dobbin, 1994; Hall, 1989; Kingdon, 2003; Lieberman, 2002; VA Schmidt, 2002; Weir and Skocpol, 1985). For example, in his comparative study of Keynesian policy solutions, Hall (1989) shows that the countries which adopted these ideas most fully were those in which unemployment was seen as the preeminent policy problem and in which such policies were compatible with their position within international economic regimes. The point here is not that these factors affected the success of failure of policy implementation, but that they are important in the process of policy formulation itself as "policymakers tend to judge new proposals at least partly in terms of the existing constraints on their implementation" (Hall, 1989: 373).

In order to win support therefore, policy solutions need to be not only a plausible solution to a given problem, but they must chime with background cognitive and normative ideas about how problems are solved more generally, which are embedded in institutional practices and already existing policies and what Hall refers to as the "long-standing administrative biases of the relevant decision makers" (Hall, 1989: 371). For example, Hall (1989: 373) notes that in Britain Treasury officials see themselves as "guardians of public expenditure" and therefore display a "long-standing bias against policies that entail further spending"; while interwar politicians in the U.S. were hesitant about Keynesian policies, not for any theoretical reason, but because they were deemed beyond the capacity of the U.S. state. Therefore the success of a policy solution is related directly to how well in fits a problem definition and indirectly with how well it fits with the background ideas in a particular policy area, in terms of both whether it is likely to be an effective response to a policy problem and whether it is a legitimate response. Due to the importance of policy solutions fitting within both problem definitions and background ideas for their consideration by policymakers, political debate over new policy solutions is relatively tightly constrained; debate at this level is therefore unlikely to result in change in background ideas.

At a broader level of abstraction than policy solutions, but still in the foreground of political debate, are problem definitions (Mehta, 2011). While policy solutions are specific policy ideas for a given problem, problem definitions encompass both an issue that requires policy attention and, by extension, the range of possible alternative solutions. The question of how problems get defined is one that lacks an overarching theoretical synthesis (Rochefort and Cobb, 1994); however, the public policy literature has long acknowledged that agenda-setting is, at least in part, an ideational process (Cobb and Elder, 1972; Kingdon, 2003; Rein and Schön, 1977; Schattschneider, 1960; Schön and Rein, 1994; Stone, 1989). As Kingdon states, problem

definition is the process of turning ‘conditions’ into ‘problems’: “Conditions become defined as problems when we come to believe that we should do something about them. Problems are not simply the conditions or external events themselves; there is a perceptual, interpretative element” (Kingdon, 2003: 109–110). This interpretive element is the focus of much political debate; as Mehta (2011: 33) notes, problems are defined through the “constantly competing ideas that highlight different aspects of a given situation”.

The process of establishing new problem definitions is one of framing: actors compete to present problem definitions in ways that resonate with other actors and build support for their particular viewpoint. As Stone points out in her study of the framing of problems: “Conditions, difficulties, or issues … do not have inherent properties that make them more or less likely to be seen as problems ... Rather, political actors deliberately portray them in ways calculated to gain support for their side” (Stone, 1989: 283). This involves the “active manipulation of images of conditions by competing political actors. Conditions come to be defined as problems through the strategic portrayal of causal stories” (Stone, 1989: 300). Through this ‘manipulation of images’, actors frame their problem definitions in ways that are likely to attract both attention and support. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) highlight that because attention is scarce, issues that chime with policymakers’ beliefs are more likely to attract their attention (see also Jacobs, 2009).

Background ideas therefore affect which conditions become problems; as above, actors seeking to make the case for new problem definitions will use background ideas as a ‘touchstone’ in order to frame their problems as cognitively coherent, and normatively legitimate (see Section 3.4.1). For example, Schmidt (2002) argues that Britain instituted an earlier and more radical set of neo-liberal economic reforms than either France or Germany in part because the Conservative government in the 1980s was able to present them as both necessary and appropriate through reference to background ideas: Margaret Thatcher was able to connect her pro-market, anti-state programme to a tradition of economic liberalism dating back to Adam Smith. Further, by stressing background liberal values of individual self-reliance, entrepreneurship and a limited state, she was able normatively to legitimise her programme.

The framing literature highlights that defining new problems involves the creation of an ‘imperative for change’ or ‘crisis narrative’, which involves ‘naming’ the problem and attributing blame for it (Baumgartner, 2013; Cox, 2001; Schön and Rein, 1994; Stone, 1989). As Stone (1989: 282) notes, actors “do not simply accept causal models that are given from science or popular culture or any other source. They compose stories that describe harms and

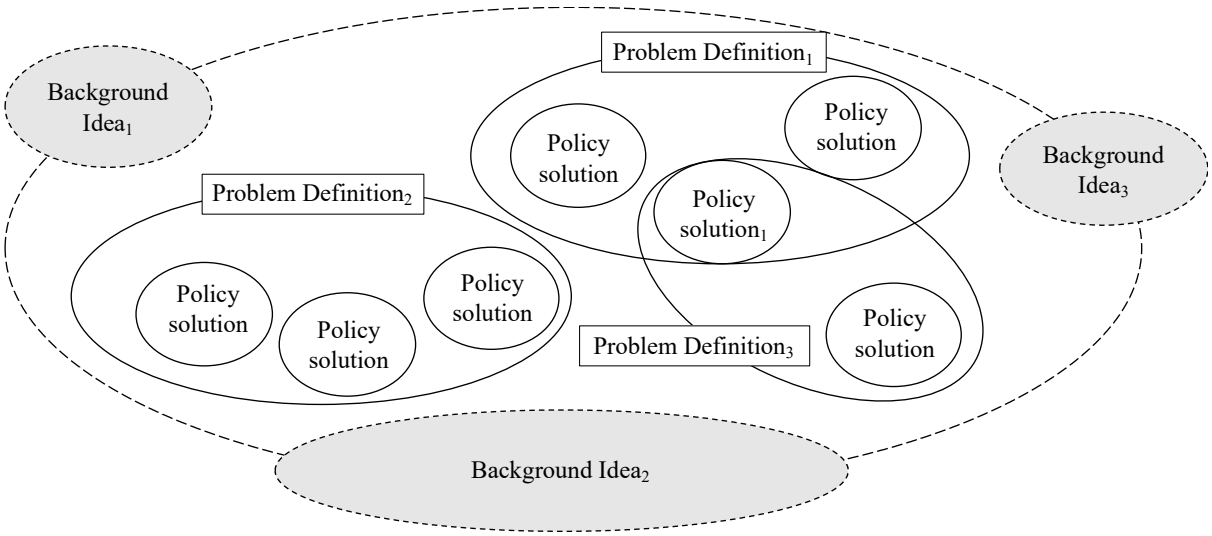
difficulties, attribute them to actions of other individuals or organizations, and thereby claim the right to invoke government power to stop the harm." As the public policy literature emphasises, this can be done through the use of a range of information, including statistical indicators and data, academic research and international comparisons, as well as through the use of rhetorical devices such as moral stories, categories and metaphors (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Fischer, 2003; Kingdon, 2003; Stone, 1989). It is worth stressing however, that such data or theories do not have objective value, they are important when they are brought into what Stone calls a 'causal story' that makes the case for a particular problem. For example, Conservative politicians consistently used the example of Greece's debt crisis to make the case for cuts in public spending in the UK from 2010, despite many economists questioning the validity of such a comparison (Blyth, 2013).

Indeed, what is important in such debates is the salience of a particular framing and the clarity of where the blame for a problem lies, rather than its credibility or sophistication (Hay, 2001). In their study of welfare reform in the US in the 1990s, Somers and Block (2005: 279) note that a moral panic about an alleged epidemic of teenage pregnancies "overwhelmed social science evidence and shaped the terms of the debate over the 1996 legislation." One way of increasing the salience of a problem is to broaden it, that is, to expand the definition of a problem so that it takes on a greater societal significance, and draws support from previously disinterested actors (Kingdon, 2003; Roberts and King, 1991; Stone, 1989, 2012). The process of ideational change at the level of problem definitions is therefore a more explicitly interpretive process than that of policy solutions; as much of the literature highlights, it is successful ideational change at this level which can result in lasting change to background ideas (Béland and Cox, 2013; Blyth, 2002; Daigneault, 2014b; Hall, 1993; Schmidt, 2011a; VA Schmidt, 2002).

3.4.3 Policy solutions, problem definitions and background ideas

The above paragraphs have presented a hierarchical typology of ideas, where ideas at each level of abstraction set limits on the possibilities of the subsequent level. Figure 3.1 outlines this structure: ideas in the political foreground of a policy domain are bounded by constellations of background ideas. Within this boundary, problem definitions exist, which in turn condition which policy solutions can be considered.

Figure 3.1: Illustration of ideational levels



As Figure 3.1 shows, problem definitions are closer to certain background ideas than others, perhaps emphasising different combinations of background ideas or stressing one background idea more than others. In Figure 3.1, Problem Definition$_2$ is closely related to Background Idea$_1$ and Background Idea$_2$ but relatively far from Background Idea$_3$. For example, the problem definitions of childcare and early education policy in England in the postwar period emphasised background ideas in different combinations. The former, which saw daycare provision as a solution only to the problem of children in 'great need' placed heavy emphasis on the normative idea of a limited role for the state as well as cognitive ideas about negative effects on child development of non-maternal care. These ideas were also present in problem definitions about nursery provision, which viewed part-time provision as enabling poor children in particular to improve their chances, but the limited role of the state was less of a dominant idea, while cognitive ideas about the benefits of education for child development were also present (Lewis, 2013b; Randall, 2000; West, 2020).

Problem definitions define the range of policy solutions that can be considered: policy solutions cannot succeed if they are not 'hooked' onto a problem definition (Kingdon, 2003). However, as Figure 3.1 shows, it is possible for one policy solution to fit with multiple problem definitions (see Policy Solution$_1$); for example, expanding childcare provision could be the solution to a problem of a lack of maternal employment as well as a problem of child development. As discussed above, this demonstrates that the respective space in which problems and solutions can be defined is limited by the constellation of background ideas within a particular policy domain. However, in order to elaborate on change it is necessary to see this model as dynamic with problem definitions playing a pivotal role in ideational change.

In comparison with policy solutions, problem definitions are more influential ideational elements in that they set the boundaries for which solutions can be considered and which are excluded (Béland, 2005). Blyth (1997: 235) notes that this "boundary setting function" is a key aspect of the power that ideas can confer as problem definitions become institutionalised as "once the parameters of discourse are institutionally set, then an important source of power is established." As discussed, problem definitions are shaped by background ideas in that the latter set the 'discursive opportunity structure' for what kind of problems are considered necessary and legitimate for policy to address. However, this is not a unidirectional process; successful problem definition invokes background ideas in order to demonstrate the 'imperative for change' and the necessity and legitimacy of that problem definition; in doing so ambiguities within background ideas can be exploited by framing (Campbell, 2004; Ferree, 2003; Stone, 1989). The process of establishing problem definitions therefore draws background ideas into the political foreground for a short period while new policy problems and solutions are constructed. During this brief period, background ideas, which usually have a taken-for-granted quality are discussed in the political foreground, until problem definitions are agreed on and they become crystallised in new policy institutions. At this point they recede once again into the background.

This notion of background ideas 'moving' into the political foreground through the process of problem definition reveals how they can be used as 'resources' by actors pushing for change. By placing the spotlight of political debate onto background ideas, actors can use the process of framing new problem definitions to challenge and redefine background ideas. One example of this is feminist campaigners attempting to make taken-for-granted notions about gender roles explicit in their framing, in order to renegotiate them in the political foreground (Adams and Padamsee, 2001; Ferree, 1987, 2003; Padamsee, 2009). Some problem definitions do not challenge existing ideas, and in legitimising such problem definitions actors will use familiar configurations of background ideas, perhaps recombined to emphasise certain aspects of the new problem (Carstensen, 2011a). However other problem definitions involve directly confronting background ideas and lead to more significant change. In these instances, actors will combine existing background ideas with new elements in order to forge new meanings and new ways to legitimise their problem definitions. If successful it is these new combinations of ideas that become institutionalised and become the new background ideas.

The above paragraphs have described a framework for analysis for ideational change. It has argued that attention should be paid to the ways in which ideas are communicated in the

political foreground, and in particular the level at which they are discussed. It suggested that debate about new policy solutions is bounded within the scope of existing problem definitions, and therefore the process of change at the level of policy solutions is unlikely to involve challenging or questioning background ideas. However, change at the level of problem definitions is more fundamental and involves the direct invoking of background ideas. Often this is to justify new problem definitions and may take place purely within the existing boundaries set by background ideas. However, at other times it can involve directly challenging elements of background ideas, drawing them into political debate and leading to change. However, while this framework elaborates on how background ideational change can occur, it says nothing about the circumstances under which change is likely to occur. Fundamentally, any change is driven by a combination of context and agency; that is, both circumstances and action are necessary but individually insufficient causes of change. The final section of this chapter integrates the concepts of 'windows of opportunity' and 'policy entrepreneurs' from the public policy literature with the above framework of different levels of ideas in order to explore how and under what circumstances ideational change is likely.

3.4.4 Timing and agency

Under what circumstances can we expect ideational change? The ideational literature focuses on the role of crisis to explain change in background ideas, but while a portion of the literature has argued, as this chapter has, that crisis-driven paradigm shifts are not the only form of ideational change, the question of when other modes of change arise is relatively unexplored. A focus on the question of timing raises overarching questions about the process of policymaking. One way the public policy literature conceptualises the policy process is through policy cycles, in which there are clear and sequential stages of policymaking including agenda-setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation (e.g. Howlett et al., 2009). However, the framework elaborated above highlights that the ways in which policy ideas interact does not align with this conception of policymaking, particularly the notion that there is a strict temporal order between problem definition, developing policy solutions and political decision-making. Further, the above described process of problem definition is explicitly political, so separating decision-making from the process of problem definition is not analytically useful here.

An alternative conception of the policymaking process is Kingdon's 'multiple streams approach' (MSA), which conceives of the stages of policy definition as parallel and interlinked processes. The approach is based on a metaphor of three 'streams', the 'policy stream', the

'problem stream' and the 'politics stream', which "flow along independently" of one another (Kingdon, 2003: 145). In the MSA change comes about when key actors, known as 'policy entrepreneurs' take advantage of 'windows of opportunity' to couple these streams, bringing consideration of problems, solutions and political factors together.[42] Such a conception has proved useful for a number of ideational authors (e.g. Béland, 2005, 2009, 2016b; Mehta, 2011) in part because it is based on a fundamental conception of policymaking not as a rational and linear process but one characterised by ambiguity and multiple interpretations. The MSA contains two key concepts that are useful for developing a framework of when change occurs, 'windows of opportunity' and 'policy entrepreneurs'. However, the MSA aims primarily at elaborating on how policy solutions are adopted; by incorporating these concepts into the above framework of ideational change, this section develops the notion of '*ideational* windows of opportunity' and '*ideational* entrepreneurs' in order to elaborate on when and how background ideational change comes about.

3.4.5 Policy and ideational windows of opportunity:

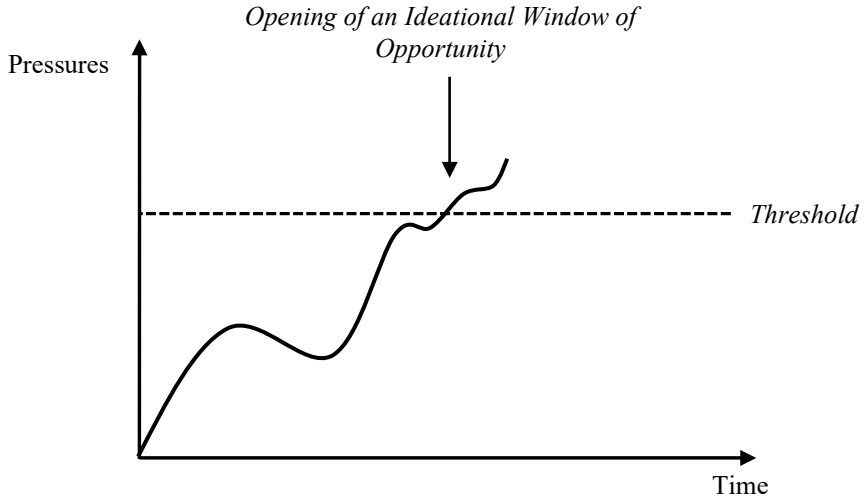
The focus of MSA is to provide a framework for understanding how policy change comes about. Windows of opportunity are, according to MSA, periods of time when the possibility for the three streams to be 'coupled' presents itself (see Cairney, 2018; Herweg et al., 2018), that is when policy entrepreneurs (see below) can attract the attention of decision-makers to get their preferred policy onto the political agenda. Policy windows can open in the political stream, through events that attract decision-makers' attention to new policies, or in the problem stream, through the emergence of new problems that require solutions. In the former, this can happen through changes in the composition of governments or legislatures or through regular political processes such as budget debates or coalition-forming negotiations (Herweg et al., 2018; Jones et al., 2016). Windows can also be opened through a shift in 'the national mood', which MSA theorists broadly define as 'what the public wants' (Herweg et al., 2018; Zahariadis, 2016). An example of this can be seen in German reunification, in which no policy actor was prepared for a rapid merging of the two German states but after the fall of the Berlin Wall the public support for immediate unification was so strong that no policymaker could resist (Herweg et al., 2015). In the problem stream the MSA literature highlights that a window can open if some kind of indicator deteriorates sufficiently or a 'focusing event' occurs (Birkland, 1998; Kingdon, 2003). An example of such a focusing event is the accident at a nuclear power plant in Fukushima,

[42] An example of how the MSA approaches temporal order of policymaking differently can be seen in Kingdon's assertion that sometimes "solutions chase problems" as well as vice versa (Béland and Howlett, 2016).

Japan, which prompted a sudden change in German nuclear energy policy. While the governing coalition had agreed in 2009 to an extension to the lifespan of German nuclear power plants, the accident opened up a new problem regarding safety that led to a U-turn in policy (Huß, 2014).

A policy window specifies the time period in which carriers of policy solutions are most likely to get them onto the agenda; how might this be adapted for carriers of problem definitions? The key point is that dynamics of ideational change take place *within* the problem stream. While policy entrepreneurs can take advantage of changes in the problem stream, ideational entrepreneurs create those changes. Attention to ideational windows therefore involves a closer examination of the dynamics of the problem stream itself. As the above discussion has stressed, ideational change can occur when a 'gap' between the background ideas that are crystallised in an institution and social reality emerges. These gaps can create openings in the discursive opportunity structure that can be exploited through framing to create change (McCammon et al., 2007). While sudden events can draw attention to emerging problems, the above discussion has highlighted that the emergence of a gap can be an incremental process that unfolds over a long period of time. An ideational window opens when this gap is sufficient for ideational entrepreneurs to highlight it as an emerging problem, through the creation of an 'imperative to reform' (2001). Because the emergence of this gap is dependent on ideational entrepreneurs seizing it, it is likely that the development of the 'gap' will take the form of Pierson's (2004) 'threshold effects', in which the gap is only able to be seized once the pressures that cause it have built up sufficiently for the imperative for reform to be persuasively constructed. As such an ideational window of opportunity can be said to be open when these pressures have crossed a certain threshold (see Figure 3.2).

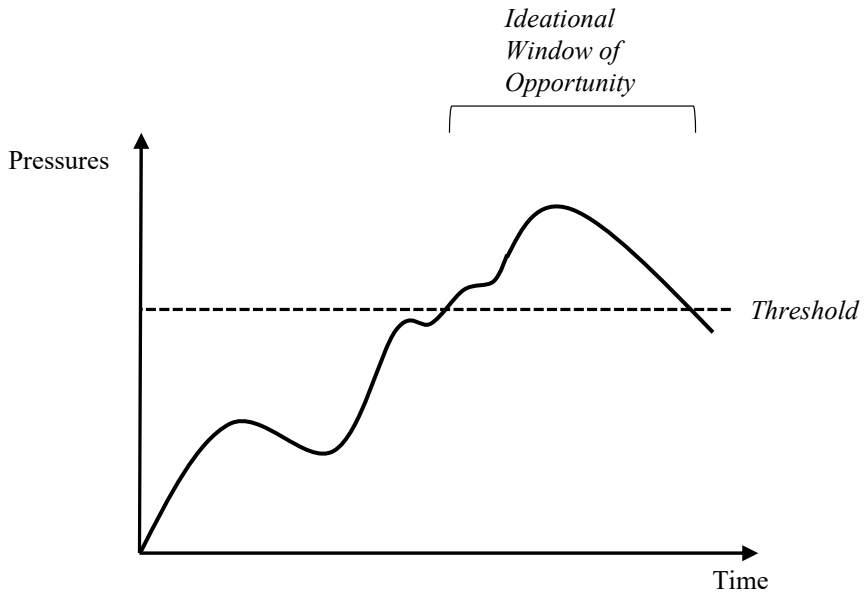
Figure 3.2: Threshold effects and 'ideational windows of opportunity'



However, an important aspect of the MSA concept of windows of opportunity is that they are temporary, that is, they "present themselves and stay open for only short periods" (Kingdon, 2003: 166) before political attention shifts elsewhere, so they must be seized by actors at the right time. This applies to ideational windows as well: for an ideational window to be seized, it is necessary that an ideational entrepreneur emerges while the window is still open. As such, for cases of ideational change, it is likely that the opening of an ideational window will coincide with political changes that provide a potential ideational entrepreneur with sufficient power to enact change. Absent this, the ideational window may close without being seized.

Neo-institutionalism stresses that institutions are not totally static in the face of environmental changes, rather that they evolve in a process of path-stabilising adaptions that remains within the boundaries of the institutionally-embedded background ideas (Hall, 1993; Ebbinghaus, 2009; Thelen, 2004). The point here is that ideational change is not the inevitable result of the emergence of an ideational gap, rather, if the window is not seized, institutional adaptation may mitigate the build-up of pressures and reduce the gap below the threshold once more, thus closing the window (see Figure 3.3). The extent to which this happens depends on the flexibility of the particular institutions under threat (including the flexibility of the ideas embedded therein) as well as the severity of the ideational gap.

Figure 3.3: Institutional adaptation to an ideational gap



The notion of a windows of opportunity has been criticised as a kind of *deus ex machina*[43] that is only recognisable through ex-post argumentation (Sabatier, 1999). Indeed, it is difficult to tell ex ante if a particular event constitutes a window opening or not, or in the case of ideational windows when a threshold has been reached (Béland, 2016b). This is because windows are not simply a set of conditions but are the link between those conditions and agency: windows are used by political actors to set the agenda. Indeed, MSA hypothesises that there are three necessary conditions for agenda change: streams that are ready for coupling, a window of opportunity that provides a chance for the coupling to take place, and an actor able to undertake the coupling (Herweg et al., 2018). Likewise, an ideational window of opportunity requires both a sufficient gap between background ideas and social reality and actors with new ideas that are able to exploit the gap. Windows of opportunity are therefore partly an ideational process, as actors must interpret them as such in order to seize them (Béland, 2016b).

3.4.6 Policy and ideational entrepreneurs

The concept of agency is key to ideational change; as Campbell (2004: 100) states, "ideas do not emerge spontaneously or become important without actors, and so it is important to situate these actors and theorize their roles vis-à-vis ideas in any account of institutional change". However, most ideational accounts are vague about the role of actors; as discussed above, this is in part because actors are often not provided with much agency, except in moments of great

[43] *Deus ex machina* refers to a plot device from Ancient Greek theatre in which a seemingly unsolvable problem is abruptly resolved by an unlikely event or character.

uncertainty. Therefore, this final section outlines the concept of an ideational entrepreneur, drawing on the MSA concept of a policy entrepreneur as well as insights from the framing literature.

As with windows of opportunity, this reliance on agency to provide the moving parts of a particular framework in explanations of change is problematic for two reasons. First, is that it is difficult to identify who might play the key role. They might be individuals, or may be members of an advocacy coalition or policy community (Haas, 1992; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). As Kingdon (2003: 179) notes, the institutional position of policy entrepreneurs varies: "No single formal position or even informal place in the political system has a monopoly on them"; they might be political insiders looking to further their power with a new policy or outsiders with a particular issue that has wide resonance. Policy entrepreneurs are defined by the act of successful entrepreneurship: it is only possible to identify them ex post. Attempts to overcome this problem by highlighting traits that entrepreneurs possess, such as charisma, social acuity or the capacity to bear risk, tend to run into the second problem of an overreliance on contingency. In any example of change it is possible to identify collective or individual actors who provide a driving force for action and, as Mintrom and Norman (2009: 651) point out, "in all such cases, the individuals, their motives, and their ways of acting will appear idiosyncratic. And idiosyncrasy does not offer propitious grounds for theorization." In particular, studies which highlight that change requires particular individuals with certain skillsets reduces change to pure chance: either a sufficiently entrepreneurial actor is there to carry out change, or they are not.

One way of reducing the role of chance is to focus on contextual factors and how context shapes agency (Bakir and Jarvis, 2017; Mintrom and Norman, 2009; Oborn et al., 2011). The neo-institutional literature highlights how formal and informal institutional rules constrain possibilities for change but also provide a space within which agency can operate. In particular, as discussed in Section 3.3.2, institutions are the result of particular power relations and tend to reproduce these relations over time through self-reinforcing processes (Mahoney, 2000; Pierson, 2000). These power relations can manifest themselves in the presence of veto players or veto points in the system (Immergut, 1992; Tsebelis, 1995), in policy legacies which strongly disincentivises change (Pierson, 1996, 2000) or through norms of behaviour, which preclude certain strategies of political action (March and Olsen, 1989). The ideational context also places boundaries on the possibilities for change. Institutionally-embedded background ideas place limits on which ideas are considered legitimate or necessary which serves to reinforce the power

of existing ideas and those supporting them, and place limits on the possibilities for successful strategies for change.

Key actors are therefore those that can navigate these institutional and ideational constraints and still seize opportunities to push for change. Accounts of successful policy entrepreneurship highlight the necessity for key actors to possess power resources in order to successfully navigate these constraints (Kingdon, 2003; Mintrom, 1997; Mintrom and Norman, 2009). However, successful agency is not only a function of key actors' positional power: it is well documented that institutional outsiders, such as social movements, have been able to create change through persuasion (Ferree, 1987, 2003). When considering the power resources that key actors possess therefore, it is important to note that power has both material *and* ideational elements: in Parson's (2007) terms change can comes about both through a 'logic of position' and a 'logic of interpretation'.

The ideational literature has only recently begun to move beyond generic references to the 'power of ideas' to theorise about power (Béland, 2010; Carstensen and Schmidt, 2016; Parsons, 2016). Critiquing the 'faces of power' debate[44] as too behaviouralist, in that it focuses on the ways in which actors can dominate others, Hay (2002) argues that it is more helpful to examine how power is used (see also Béland, 2010). In Hay's formulation, power is either used directly to shape others' conduct or indirectly to influence it through "'hav[ing] an effect' upon the context which defines the range of possibilities of others" (Hay, 2002: 185). Building on this notion of power as the ability to 'have an effect', Carstensen and Schmidt (2016) attempt to carve out a subset of categories of power that relate specifically to ideas, in three ways. First, "power through ideas" is the ability of an actor to persuade others to support their particular ideas. Second, "power over ideas" is the power of actors to impose their own ideas and prevent alternative ideas being considered. Third, "power in ideas" is the authority background ideas have to set the boundaries of legitimate political debate. When thinking about ideational change, the first two of these types of power are the most relevant, given that 'power in ideas' describes the constraining power of cognitive locks.

[44] The 'faces of power' debate developed out of critiques of the pluralist notion that power was the ability to achieve political decisions in one's favour (e.g. Dahl, 1961). Most notably, Bachrach and Baratz (1962) argued that power has two 'faces' and is evident not only in decisions that are taken, but also those that are not taken: the second face of power is the ability to rule out certain issues from consideration. This developed further through Lukes's notion of a third face of power, which serves to shape people's preferences to act against their own interests (Lukes, 2005).

Thus we can identify two types of power relevant for ideational change: power of institutional position and power of persuasion. Of course, these types of power are interlinked: it is much easier for powerful insiders to win support for their ideas than for outsiders. However, the point here is that ideational entrepreneurs need to possess power resources both in terms of their level of influence and also in the persuasiveness of their ideas and their framing. Indeed, the notion of power draws attention to the fact that agency is structured by both the institutional and ideational contexts. As such, cross-national differences in these areas will structure agency differently. For example, Oborn et al (2011) argue that policy entrepreneurship is more difficult in a hierarchical institutional contexts, where power (and control over the political agenda) is relatively concentrated. When analysing agency therefore, it is important to recognise the interaction between actors and their context.

What do key actors actually do to push for change? Kingdon (2003: 20) describes policy entrepreneurs as "people who are willing to invest their resources in pushing their pet proposals or problems, are responsible not only for prompting important people to pay attention, but also for coupling solutions to problems and for coupling both problems and solutions to politics". Policy entrepreneurs take advantage of windows of opportunity to attract political support for the policies they aim to promote. Successful policy entrepreneurship therefore involves 'social acuity', that is the ability to perceive that a window of opportunity is open, and therefore to take advantage of it (Mintrom and Norman, 2009). Policy entrepreneurs do this by 'hooking' their policies to emerging or existing problem definitions or taking advantage of political changes to attract the attention of decision-makers to their particular policy (Kingdon, 2003). In doing so, policy entrepreneurs take risks: they 'invest' their resources in the hope of future return. As such, policy entrepreneurs require political skills such as opportunism, a willingness to compromise and the ability to persuade others of the benefits of their policy proposal (Cohen, 2016). Further, they need to be able to frame their proposal in a way that highlights its 'fit' with perceived problems or frame new problems in ways that fit with their solutions (Jones, 1994).

Unlike policy entrepreneurs who *react* to emerging problem definitions, ideational entrepreneurs *cause* new problem definitions to emerge. Thus while the notion of an actor seizing on an open window is a useful conception of how agency leads to change, the actual activities of an ideational entrepreneur are not captured by the MSA. By contrast, Stiller's (2010) concept of 'Ideational Leadership' (IL) describes agency that uses ideas to deliberately push for change: IL is defined as being "exercised by key policy-makers who use strategies that are idea-based, and purposively aim for the achievement of change, even in view of reform

resistance" (Stiller, 2010: 33). She argues that IL involves four key activities that serve as mechanisms for change: Exposing drawbacks of the status quo; legitimizing new policy; framing reform resistance as problematic; and political consensus-building (Stiller, 2010: 34–37). This conception captures the various activities of ideational leaders, but Stiller does not specify *how* ideas are used in these processes to lead to change, nor does her conception incorporate the notion of timing. By linking Stiller's concept of IL with the emphasis that the policy entrepreneurship literature places on timing, and the above framework of ideational change, the concept of agency in ideational change can be fully specified through the following features.

First, ideational entrepreneurs recognise when ideational windows of opportunity are open. That is, they are aware when the discursive opportunity structure is one that contains sufficient ambiguity that can be exploited to create change. Like policy entrepreneurs therefore, it is necessary for ideational entrepreneurs to possess 'social acuity' (Mintrom and Norman, 2009). Second, and as noted by Stiller (2010), ideational entrepreneurs seize these opportunities for change by making the case for change. As discussed above, a key part of the framing of new problem definitions highlighted by the ideational literature is the establishing an 'imperative for change' (Cox, 2001). A crucial aspect of this establishing an imperative for change is to draw on existing background ideas to highlight the legitimacy and necessity of the new problem definition. This involves framing the problem within the terms of the existing discursive opportunity structure and involves drawing background ideas into the political foreground, through using them to establish the necessity and legitimacy of a new problem definition (Campbell, 2004; VA Schmidt, 2002).

However, creating an 'imperative for change' also involves assigning blame for a particular problem (Stone, 1989). As Palier (2005: 135) states in his account of French social policy reform: "An important element that allows diagnosis of failure to lead to change in policy is that most of the actors involved (experts, politicians, employers, unions) share the idea that the old policies cannot work anymore, either because they are unable to cope with the new problems, or because they produce new problems themselves." This formulation points to two types of 'blaming'. The first blames existing institutions for being unable to cope with new problems. To return to Hall's (1993) orders of change, this kind of problem definition is likely to lead to first- or second-order change; that is, change to policy instruments or settings but does not present a challenge to background ideas.

By contrast, the second type of blaming goes beyond issues of effectiveness and blames the ideas embedded within the status quo. In such cases ideas are used as 'weapons' not just against the way that institutions fail to deal with a problem, but against the ideas embedded in those institutions (Blyth, 2001, 2002). For example, in Hall's (1993) account, monetarist attacks on Keynesian economics highlighted that not only could Keynesian policies not solve the new problems, but that they themselves were causing them. Similarly, Palier's account demonstrates the process of problem definition that took place in the 1980s and 1990s turned existing ideas on their head: "protection of the workers did not support social integration anymore but led to social exclusion; the system was not contributing to economic growth anymore but rather impeding it due to its funding mechanisms; the *démocratie sociale* was not sustaining social peace, but was leading instead to demonstrations and blockages" (Palier, 2005: 135). Ideas were used as weapons to diagnose these problems and make the case that "the system was not a victim of the crisis, but one of the causes of the social, economic, and political difficulties experienced in France" (Palier, 2005: 132). Blyth's research on Swedish economic policy change, showed how, after decades of consensus, organised business, conservative politicians and allies in think tanks and the media undertook a sustained campaign of attack on the tenets of the 'Swedish model'. In doing so they were able to "break existing cognitive locks" and "cast previous institutional solutions as problems that could be diagnosed and cured only by their new ideas" (Blyth, 2001: 23). Using ideas as 'weapons' against background ideas, is thus a third way that ideational entrepreneurs push for change.

Whether or not this process is successful will depend on the level of support that new problem definitions that draw on different constellations of background ideas can attract. The fourth way in which actors can push for ideational change is therefore by forging 'coalition magnets', which Béland and Cox (2016, 429) define as "the capacity of an idea to appeal to a diversity of individuals and groups, and to be used strategically by policy entrepreneurs (i.e. individual or collective actors who promote certain policy solutions) to frame interests, mobilize supporters and build coalitions". Ideas that do this are able to transcend traditional political cleavages and create broad consensus around new policies or institutions. In order to do this, such ideas require the ability to appeal to a disparate set of actors and unite them behind the idea. The notion of polysemy, that an idea is sufficiently broad that it can be interpreted differently by different people, helps coalition magnets "stretch across diverse and previously separate actors and agendas" (Parsons, 2016: 456).

Without being specifically labelled ‘coalition magnets’, examples of polysemic ideas abound. For instance, Hall points out that the ambiguity of Keynesian ideas “enhanced their power in the political sphere. By reading slightly different emphases into these ideas, an otherwise disparate set of groups could unite under the same banner” (Hall, 1989: 367). More broadly, the policy analysis literature has highlighted the fact that coalition members often hold varying interpretations of shared ideas, with different groups emphasizing different elements. Going further, this literature also argues that if these shared ideas have a wide potential range of interpretations, the broader the potential coalition that can form around them, and therefore the greater the political impact they may have (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, 1993). A counterintuitive conclusion, therefore, is that ambiguity and even a lack of coherence may be positive features of successful coalition magnets. Palier’s account of French welfare state reform demonstrates that this ‘ambiguous agreement’ was a crucial feature of policy change: ideas which could “aggregate different – and even contradictory – interests, based on different, and sometimes contrasting, interpretations of the consequence” were a key driver of change (Palier, 2005: 138). Thus like ideas acting as weapons, ‘coalition magnets’ are a mechanism for ideational influence. Polysemy here acts, in Jenson’s terms, as a ‘mechanism of diffusion’ by which a particular idea persuades disparate actors to (re)define their interests in a way that is favorable towards policy change (Jenson, 2010).

This discussion has highlighted that ideational entrepreneurship differs from the concept of policy entrepreneurship in a number of important ways. While both kinds of agency are oriented towards change, this change takes place at different levels and the kind of change that ideational entrepreneurs seek is rarer and more difficult to achieve. For example, while policy entrepreneurs must make the case that current policies are not working, either in terms of an existing problem definition or a newly defined one, the terms of the debate are set by the parameters of the background ideas. By contrast, the act of ideational entrepreneurship involves recasting these terms of debate, as well as defining new problems and solutions.

While framing ideas in a persuasive way is certainly dependent on skill and an ability to communicate effectively, which will reflect personal characteristics, this section has shown the importance of institutional factors in conditioning the opportunities for such an entrepreneur to emerge. Indeed, the above sections have also demonstrated the importance of contextual factors in processes of ideational change, such as slow-moving social changes, path-dependent institutional structures and institutionally embedded norms. The discussion has therefore come a full circle: while problems in neo-institutionalism provided the starting point for the ideational

literature, similar problems in the ideational literature have led to this chapter's discussion of ideational change. In attempting to outline a type of ideational change that does not rely on the model of a paradigm shift, it has been necessary to integrate these contextual factors within an ideational approach. This chimes with much of the ideational literature, which notes the interplay between institutions and ideas, and calls for their joint investigation (Béland, 2005, 2009, 2016a; Béland and Waddan, 2015; Campbell, 2004; Lieberman, 2002; Padamsee, 2009; Peters et al., 2005).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has elaborated a framework of ideational change. While changes in ideas at the level of policy solutions and problem definitions are relatively well accounted for in the public policy literature, this chapter has focused on theorising background ideational change. Key variables in explaining change are the presence of an ideational window of opportunity, the presence of an ideational entrepreneur and ideas persuasive enough to lead to change. However, it is crucial to note that this focus on ideas does not imply that change can simply be constructed by actors who choose to do so. On the contrary, the discussion of timing highlighted that episodes of background ideational change are rare, dependent on a sufficient 'gap' emerging between the ideas embedded in an institution and social reality. Moreover, the emergence of this gap needs to align with a process of political change in order that an ideational entrepreneur with sufficient power can emerge to seize the window of opportunity. This focus on power has also pointed to the importance of institutional constraints in structuring the possibilities for change: ideational entrepreneurs require sufficient political resources to establish their ideas. However, the focus on ideas highlights that interpretations matter: conditions do not automatically lead to policy change, they require actors to notice them, construct coalitions of support and actively push for change. Crucial to this is the way that they frame their ideas, as coalition magnets which enable them to appeal to a broad group of supporters and as weapons to attack the status quo. The success of this process will depend on the way in which ideas are framed, but also to their persuasiveness to the wider political community, both of which relate to the existing ideational context.

Chapter 4: Work-Family Policy Reform in Germany, 1998-2009

4.1 Introduction

As Chapter 2 showed, the changes in German work-family policies over this period can be viewed in Korpi's (2000) terms as a shift from a general family support model to a dual-earner support model. This chapter provides an account of how work-family policies were expanded in Germany between 1998 and 2008; Figure 4.1 sets out the key reforms of this period. It sets out to address the first two research questions:

> RQ1) How did new ideas about work-family policy come onto the political agenda?
>
> RQ2) How did these new ideas influence the policymaking process of work-family policy reform?

As discussed in Section 1.5, this is undertaken through documentary analysis of a range of primary source material and interviews with participants in the policy-making process.

Figure 4.1: Timeline of selected work-family policy reforms and events in Germany, 1998-2009

1998	Federal elections and formation of the first SPD-Green coalition. Gerhard Schröder becomes Chancellor. Christine Bergmann appointed Family Minister.
2000	Reform of parental leave (Erziehungsurlaub) making it more flexible, introducing a right to part-time employment and a 'bonus' offer of a shorter, better remunerated leave (Erziehungsgeld).
2002	Federal elections and formation of the second SPD-Green coalition. Schröder remains Chancellor. Renate Schmidt appointed Family Minister.
2004	Passing of Tagesbetreuungsausbaugesetz (TAG) to expand the provision of childcare to children aged 3 and under.
2005	Federal elections and formation of Grand Coalition of the CDU/CSU and the SPD. Angela Merkel becomes Chancellor. Ursula von der Leyen appointed Family Minister.
2006	Replacement of two year, flat-rate Erziehungsgeld with a 12 month earnings-related benefit, set initially at 67 per cent of net earnings, and a further two use-it-or-lose-it 'partner months' (Elterngeld).
2008	Passing of Kinderförderungsgesetz (KiFöG) to further expand the provision of childcare to children under 3 and introduce a legal right to childcare from a child's first birthday from 2013.

The chapter is divided into three sections. Section 4.2 examines the period of the first SPD-Green government (1998-2002) and highlights that while legislative change in this period was limited, within the SPD new ideas about work-family policy were coming onto the agenda.

Section 4.3 focuses on the second SPD-Green government (2002-2005) and traces how these new ideas were promoted by the Family Ministry with the aim of building consensus for a new approach. It also discusses the policymaking process that led to the first federal expansion of childcare for under-threes in 2004. Section 4.4 picks up the story after the 2005 election with the formation of the Grand Coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD. It charts how despite a change in government and in family minister, the ideas promoted by the SPD continued to guide the policy agenda. Further, it highlights how these ideas influenced the policymaking processes in the passing of the reform of parental leave benefit in 2006 and further childcare reform in 2008, including the right to a place for all children from their first birthday. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main findings.

4.2 Agenda-Setting in the SPD

4.2.1 Choice and 'women's issues': Continuity in the first SPD-Green government (1998-2002)

As Chapter 2 discussed, the SPD was traditionally ambivalent towards the institution of the family. Indeed, the SPD had strongly opposed the founding of the Family Ministry[45] in 1953, and consistently argued for its disbandment, until coming to power in 1969 (Gerlach, 2010). This ambivalence was on the one hand a political stance, based on the belief within the party that the family was an inherently conservative political subject, which was 'owned' by the CDU/CSU (Gerlach, 2010). On the other social democrats believed that focusing on the family obscured the more important issues of poverty within families and also entrenched women's unequal position (DE_5; DE_6; DE_12). From this point of view, the SPD promoted few explicit 'family policies', but policies for women and policies for disadvantaged children (Gerlach, 2010). As such, policy attention to families was filtered through these lenses, which can be seen in numerous SPD manifestos, in which family policy was primarily related to material support and women's equality was discussed in a separate section (e.g. SPD, 1990, 1998). Attention to issues of work-family reconciliation therefore came from the perspective of women's equality and, before 2000 was usually expressed as providing women with 'freedom

[45] The Family Ministry is shorthand for the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (*Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend)*. It was founded in 1953 as the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs before becoming the Federal Ministry for Family and Youth Affairs in 1957. In 1969 it became the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family and Health and in 1986 the Federal Ministry for Youth, Family, Women and Health. In 1991 the ministry was split into the Federal Ministry for Family and Senior Citizens and the Federal Ministry for Women and Youth. The current incarnation was created in 1994.

of choice', which enabled the party to offer women a route out of male-breadwinner model gender roles, without explicitly challenging the model.

Within the party, the women's organisation, the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Sozialdemokratischer Frauen (ASF), had since 1977 argued that policy should be designed to require men to partake in equal caregiving, in order that the labour market disadvantage of disrupted work-patterns is shared (DE_10; DE_12). For the ASF, work-family policies were policy solutions to the problem of gender equality. But the ASF lacked influence in the federal leadership of the party, and while from the mid-1980s the party demonstrated a growing interest in work-family reconciliation, it was more cautiously articulated than the feminist positions of the ASF. For example, the SPD's response to the introduction in 1986 of parental leave concentrated on its position that the benefit should be linked to employment, rather than the feminist critique that the low paid leave entrenched gender roles (Morgan and Zippel, 2003). In 1991 the party supported the CDU plan to extend the parental leave entitlement to three years, stressing that providing a long period of leave was important for the healthy development of children (Blome, 2016b). Regarding the parental leave benefit, the SPD position remained in favour of a higher flat-rate, with the principle that all children should be valued equally, rather than the ASF preference for an earnings-related benefit (Gerlach, 2010; DE_11). However, unlike the CDU, whose position clearly favoured maternal care for the first three years of a child's life, the SPD called for the expansion of childcare for under threes, in order to provide families with more choice of how to combine care and employment (SPD, 1990, 1998).

Thus the problem definition for the SPD in the 1990s related to families' lack of choice; while concerns about gender equality underpinned this interest in work-family policy, the party did not advocate for a dual-earner model, favouring the politically neutral argument of the need to provide more choice (Blome, 2016b; Bothfeld, 2005).[46] This approach also characterised the first SPD-Green government (1998-2002) and the Family Ministry under Christine Bergmann. Indeed, as Chapter 2 noted, the developments in work-family policy during this period are best conceptualised as a continuation of Germany's previous approach (Blome, 2016b; Blum, 2012; Fleckenstein, 2011; Gerlach, 2010; Ostner, 2010).

[46] It is notable that the CDU also used 'freedom of choice' as a justification for its policy of extending parental leave to three years and the payment period to two years (Blome, 2016b).

There are two main reasons for the lack of change during this period. First, Bergmann[47] herself represented a continuation of the traditional SPD approach to family policy that focused on women and children, rather than the family. Bergmann's priorities were therefore to improve the position of women and children through laws that codified children's rights and protected women from domestic violence and through a gender equality law which would mandate women's representation in private companies (Gerlach, 2010). Her other priority was to increase the material support for families, which had been required by a series of judgements by the Federal Constitutional Court (Blum, 2012). Second, the largely male party leadership demonstrated consistent disinterest, and sometimes hostility, towards policies that were largely viewed as 'women's issues' and were considered politically unimportant compared to the traditional subjects of the SPD: the economy and labour market policy (DE_3; DE_7; DE_13). The clearest public articulation of this attitude was Gerhard Schröder, the SPD's candidate for chancellor in the 1998 federal election, describing Bergmann, as "responsible for women and all the other stuff" (Die Welt, 2013).[48] These two factors were interrelated: Bergmann's awareness of the status of family policy among her colleagues shaped her priorities, while the lack of interest among the leadership was at least partly due to family policy being seen as solely related to 'women's issues'.

The result was that work-family policy reform was not high on the party's agenda during its first term. In an interview, a political advisor described the way work-family reconciliation was addressed by the SPD in the 1998 as "symbolic" in that it projected an image of the SPD as a modern party, but there was little policy substance behind these statements (DE_4; DE_5). The 1998 manifesto, for example, had expressed an aim to "expand the choices of parents and create the conditions for partnership-based child-raising" but with few concrete policy proposals (SPD, 1998: 45). Despite a manifesto commitment to provide federal funds to the Länder to support childcare expansion, no such funding was provided during the legislative

[47] Christine Bergmann grew up in East German and worked in pharmacy research until the fall of the Berlin Wall when she entered party politics. In 1989 she joined the reconstituted Social Democratic Party in the GDR and, after it was absorbed by the West German SDP in 1990, became a significant figure in Berlin politics. Between 1991 and 1998 she served as a Berlin senator with responsibility for work, professional training and women and was also Mayor of Berlin (one of two positions that served as deputies to the Governing Mayor). During the unsuccessful 1994 federal election, she served as the shadow minister for education and research and after the election shadowed the minister for family, seniors, women and youth.

[48] Schröder used the word "Gedöns" which is more pejorative than the English word 'stuff' and carries the connotation that something is superfluous. He insists that he was not meaning to be dismissive of the policy area but rather was referring to the fact that the full title of the family ministry was the Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth (Die Welt, 2013). The phrase provoked much criticism at the time and numerous SPD interviewees said that it has unfairly tarnished Schröder's reputation in this area, as he was less dismissive of work-family policies than many other SPD leaders (DE_6; DE_13).

period. An SPD politician described this as being due to a lack of interest among men in the party leadership, with the lack of responsibility at the federal level used as a reason not to discuss childcare in cabinet meetings (DE_3). Further the Finance Minister's sharp cuts to government spending, as well as the mandated increases in child benefits and child tax allowances, reduced the chance of federal investment in childcare (Blum, 2012).

If these factors prevented the development of childcare policy, for parental leave the need to conform to the European Parental Leave Directive (Council of the European Union, 1996) provided a policy window of opportunity. The 1996 Directive mandated an individual right to parental leave, while under the existing German law employees did not qualify if their partner were not in employment[49]. This reflects the modified general family support model that the 1986 law entailed and that the CDU-led government favoured, in that it was designed to encourage one parent (the mother), rather than both, to withdraw from the labour market to raise young children. Indeed the Kohl government failed to meet the requirements and the deadline for transposition passed without any legislative action.[50] The SPD had proposed changes in 1996 that would increase the flat-rate payment of the benefit, introduce a right to part-time work, provide a 'budget option' of a higher benefit over a shorter period of time and permit parents to take leave simultaneously (Deutscher Bundestag, 1996). This reflected a continuation of the SPD's approach to work-family policy of increasing women's choice in the hope that it would lead to more women choosing employment, but refraining from promoting an alternative family model. While these proposals were unsuccessful in 1996 they formed the basis of Bergmann's proposed reforms once the SPD were in power. However, the government's priorities of cost-cutting and reducing non-wage costs of employment both delayed and weakened the eventual reforms.[51] The initial proposal that Bergmann brought to cabinet was rejected by the finance ministry as too expensive in November 1999 and reports at the time highlighted divisions between Bergmann and Schröder over her 'anti-growth' plans

[49] In practice the changes were relatively insignificant given that the number of families with a single income from employment who would be able to afford to replace their income with the low flat-rate benefit would have been very small (see Falkner, Hartlapp, Leiber, & Treib, 2002).

[50] Indeed the European Commission had formally notified the German government in June 1998 of its failure to incorporate the Directive into national law (Bulletin EU 07/08, 1998).

[51] Despite the detailed proposal having existed since 1996, and Bergmann having announced in January 1999 that the bill would be passed within a year, it was not until July 2000 that the reforms were agreed and they came into force in January 2001, twelve months later than Bergmann had stated (Blum, 2012). Furthermore, the reforms were more modest than those proposed in 1996. For example, in the 2000 law the universal right to part-time work for parents on parental leave had been limited to those working for companies with more than 15 employees. Furthermore, the attempts to offer a number of 'budget options', in which parents could exchange a shorter period of leave for a higher benefit payment were more limited in the 2000 law, and the generosity of the payment was lower than proposed in 1996 (Blum, 2012; Gerlach, 2010).

for reform (Die Welt, 1999). Furthermore, the whole reform was nearly vetoed after arguments between Bergmann and the economy minister, Werner Müller, who felt that the costs being imposed on businesses were too high (Bothfeld, 2005).[52] Indeed, employers' associations had made their opposition to the reforms clear, particularly to the right to part-time employment during leave and the budget options (Deutscher Bundestag, 2000).[53] The reform that was eventually passed in July 2000 reflected these conflicts in that the range and generosity of 'budget options' was lower than initially envisaged to save costs, while the part-time regulations were made more acceptable to businesses.[54]

The 2000 reforms demonstrate that the family policy approach of the first SPD-Green government remained one of continuity with past SPD approaches of seeing work-family policies as a solution to women's lack of choice of alternatives to traditional gender roles. The result of this was a reform that provided greater flexibility for parents but did little fundamentally to challenge the general family support model of the 1986 law. Indeed, it is notable that the SPD's approach did not include any attempt to incentivise men to take more leave, despite this being a theme of Bergmann's speeches in the Bundestag when introducing the bill (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2000a), nor was the replacement of the flat-rate benefit with an earnings-related payment ever seriously considered during these reforms. Disinterest from the SPD leadership and a reluctance to commit resources to what was considered a relatively unimportant policy area meant that the process of reform was closed to new ideas, and the ideas that were in the reform that came into force in 2001 were relatively old, having been contained in the 1996 proposal.

4.2.2 New ideas in the SPD: Forum Familie and the problem of work-family reconciliation

Despite victory in the 1998 federal elections, there was concern among the leadership of the SPD that the party lacked an electorally attractive policy platform and that the election victory owed more to the unpopularity of the Kohl government, than to any public enthusiasm for the SPD's policy programme (DE_5; DE_6). In particular, within the SPD's policy planning unit, a strategic unit based at the party's headquarters in Berlin, there was a belief that the policy

[52] This argument focused on the entitlement to part-time work, which Müller wanted to only apply to businesses with more than 50 employees, as demanded by employers' associations, while Bergmann did not want to exempt any business. Eventually a compromise at 15 employees was reached (see Bothfeld, 2005).
[53] As Blum (2012: 135) notes, "[t]he business associations apparently did not yet show any increased interest in promoting rapid re-commodification".
[54] In particular an individual right to work 30 hours per week replaced a family account of 60 hours per week, which businesses had argued was complex, while businesses with fewer than 15 employees were exempted from the obligation to provide part-time employment.

programme of the SPD had been stagnant since 1990, was not adapted to the challenges of contemporary, reunified Germany[55] and was over-reliant on the traditional SPD themes of the economy and employment (DE_5; DE_6). The planning unit therefore created a project to examine the election results. Its aim was to understand among which groups and on which issues the SPD had built its victory, in order to develop policy which could prepare for future elections. The analysis showed that the SPD had done particularly well among people in their twenties and thirties, and that the issue most important to this group was work-family reconciliation.[56]

The electoral analysis was presented to the party leadership by Malte Ristau, head of the policy planning unit. He argued that the SPD needed to rethink how it approached family policy if it was to turn this policy area into an electoral advantage for the SPD (Mackroth and Ristau, 2002). The aim was not simply to adopt policies that would appeal to particular demographics, but to take on the CDU's perceived 'ownership' of the family as a policy area (DE_5; DE_6). It was thought that if the SPD could redefine their approach to the family in a way that fit with young people's lives, this could provide a lasting and decisive electoral advantage for the party (DE_6). Gerhard Schröder in particular was interested in this, according to one witness:

> Schröder recognised that he needed a subject outside the conventional SPD subjects, which had always been labour market policy and economic policy. He needed a subject that appealed to many people and that was new and different, that demonstrated that the SPD was a modern party with a modern approach to policy. (DE_5)

This desire to be seen as a modern party and to build on the 1998 electoral victory provided the opportunity for new ideas about policy for families to enter the leadership of the SPD. It prompted the creation of a working group, known as 'Forum Familie' within the party leadership which had the explicit aim of developing an alternative to the party's traditional approach to the family. In a sign of how seriously some in the planning unit took this project, both Ristau and Petra Mackroth, who had also worked in the party leadership, moved over to

[55] A number of interviewees described the 1990 federal election defeat as 'a trauma' that caused stasis in the party in the 1990s (DE_5; DE_6). In the SPD, the years preceding German reunification had been characterised by debate over party strategy prompted by the collapse in the coalition with the FDP in 1982 and the electoral competition provided by the Green Party (Busch and Manow, 2001). In November 1989, after five years of debate, the party completed work on a new 'basic programme', intended to be the successor to the 1959 'Bad Godesburg' programme, which had combined the party's social democracy with the ordo-liberal approach that had characterised the West German model in the postwar years (Braunthal, 1993; Busch and Manow, 2001). However, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the sudden pressure for reunification between East and West Germany completely changed the political context. While the SPD was significantly ahead of the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition in polls during the winter of 1989/1990 and spring of 1990, by the end of the campaign that was dominated by questions of reunification and national identity, the SPD had slumped to their worst defeat since 1957 and the new programme looked increasingly irrelevant to modern Germany (Finkel and Schrott, 1995; Kitschelt, 1991).

[56] Attitudinal data presented in Section 6.4 corroborates this.

the working group when it was formed. Renate Schmidt, a high-profile, veteran politician from Bavaria was chosen to chair the group.

Forum Familie consisted of members of the SPD federal leadership, members of the Bundestag, regional and local party members as well as family organisations. Its work involved holding meetings with experts from academia, business and research trips abroad. In particular it engaged with the sociologist Hans Bertram, a professor of Macrosociology at the Humboldt University in Berlin who had been a prominent expert in family research since the 1980s. Bertram's research stressed the resilience of traditional family forms. While he highlighted socio-economic, demographic and normative changes which were affecting how families organised themselves and family-members' life courses, he argued against the theories of Ulrich Beck (e.g. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 1995) and Anthony Giddens (e.g. 1992), which claimed that these process were fundamentally undermining and destabilising the family (Bertram, 1997). Instead, Bertram highlighted research showing that the vast majority of young women and men in Germany saw families as central to their life plans and wanted to combine careers with raising children. Bertram argued that the crisis of the family was not one of individualism but of changing attitudes towards family life, which were no longer aligned with the male-breadwinner model. This was only a 'threat' to the family because the institutional structures of support were not aligned with how people increasingly wanted to organise their lives. Whereas these structures used to reinforce the family and align with people's preferences, they were now preventing families from achieving their desired life course. Bertram highlighted the difficulties that young women faced in combining their wishes for a career with their plans for children, but also that men were also finding it difficult to combine employment demands with their desire to be more active fathers than their own fathers had been. As a result of this gap between young people's plans for their lives and the institutional forms of family support, some couples were foregoing the opportunity to have children, because it was too incompatible with having successful careers, while other women were, against their will, sacrificing their careers in order to take care of children (Bertram, 1997). These theories chimed well with the findings of the planning unit that young women and men were particularly concerned with the reconciliation of work and family life and formed the basis of the work of the working group.

The group produced a series of publications (Forum Familie der SPD, 2000, 2002; R Schmidt, 2002) which called for a new approach to family policy, and set out a new problem definition: that young couples in Germany were finding it too difficult to combine employment

and fulfil their wish to have children, and in this context many were choosing, against their wishes, to forego having children. As Schmidt stated in a newspaper interview in July 2000:

> We need in terms of the family a rhetorical change and we must obviously not only change the way we talk about them but also the way we think about them. Young women are today better qualified and more self-confident than ever before. They want to work: good. They might also wish for children: wonderful. However, we can observe that they are having fewer and fewer children: not so good … [A childless future] is a completely dreadful prospect. And therefore, we need a new family policy: one which puts the child in focus. One which says: we create the conditions, we create the societal climate, in which people want to have children. (Schmidt quoted in Die Zeit, 2000)

This was a significant shift from the way that the SPD had defined the problems in the 1998 manifesto, which referred to family policy through the lens of poverty and gender equality. While it had stated that the party wanted to make Germany a "child- and family-friendly society once again", this was discussed in terms of a welfare issue: the problem was that having children created a poverty risk for families (SPD, 1998: 45). The new approach turned this formulation on its head: it was not the costs of children that caused poverty, but the fact that the presence of children in a family often required the mother to give up full-time employment and thus reduced families' incomes (Schmidt, 2003). The problem was therefore not solely one of the costs of children but of insufficient opportunities for work-family reconciliation. The approach to work-family reconciliation that emerged from the working group was broader in two aspects than the SPD's previous approach. First, while the SPD had highlighted the issue as a problem for individual women, the new formulation positioned the problem of work-family reconciliation as one with severe societal consequences; the title of Schmidt's 2002 book reflected this: "S.O.S. Family: Without children we seem old" (R Schmidt, 2002b). Second the approach argued for the active promotion of a different family model that aligned with the wishes of young people (Forum Familie der SPD, 2000; R Schmidt, 2002a). Following Bertram's theory that the family remained fundamental to people's life plans, the new approach stressed the institution of the family much more strongly than the SPD had previously done. Whereas the family had been viewed as a conservative institution that curtailed women's freedom, the new approach presented a view of the family as an institution of the utmost importance to society and in need of a new kind of support (Forum Familie der SPD, 2000). This framing therefore aligned the new agenda with German background ideas in a way that the previous approach could not.

Despite Schröder's openness to the work of the group, the SPD leadership as a whole remained sceptical about the benefits of focusing on a policy area which on the one hand was seen as 'belonging' to the CDU and on the other was considered relatively minor compared to

'serious' policy areas (DE_3; DE_5). Schmidt presented her case to SPD party leaders in late 2000. According to one advisor, the reaction was "not spectacular … the leadership was very hesitant and very sceptical"; this was the same hurdle that Bergmann had encountered, there was simply very little interest in what was considered an unimportant policy area (DE_9). The issue at stake was not over the direction of policy change: SPD leaders agreed that enabling women to work, increasing childcare and improving work-family balance would be positive developments, but there were significant differences in the level of importance that these themes were afforded, especially considering the significant resources that policy change would require (DE_3; DE_5; DE_6). However, Schröder, who was doubly important as chancellor and also as SPD chair, was persuaded by the evidence that a new approach to the family could become part of the renewal of the SPD policy platform that he felt was needed (DE_5; DE_9).

Schmidt presented a motion at the SPD party conference in November 2001 calling for a change in policy approach. This motion, which was accepted by the conference, set out the results of the group's work and called for a shift in the SPD's policy. It emphasised that young women wanted both families and careers, and that it was a problem for the country if they are forced to choose between the two:

> On the one hand, in the future, our country will be less and less able to afford to forego the know-how of well-educated women. On the other hand, in an altered world of work, the importance of social competences, which are created and taught in families, is growing… Political action must be measured by whether it is child and family friendly. Policies that adhere to this standard will result in a gain in wealth and humanity and promote modernization. (SPD, 2001: 302)

For the first time, the low birth rate was raised as an issue, and it was related explicitly to demographic ageing of the German population, which had been the subject of media debate and concern since the 1990s (Klinkhammer, 2014). The ageing population was widely seen as placing increasing pressure on the financing of Germany's social insurance based welfare state, which was already under strain from the consequences of increased international competitiveness on Germany's high wage economy, which appeared to be trapping the country in a cycle of 'welfare without work' (Busch and Manow, 2001; Esping-Andersen, 1996). Here the argument had an economic element, which was complementary to the broader societal issue of families not being able to make the choices that they want: "Living and working conditions of working parents need to improve. Otherwise, there is a danger that more and more young women and men will not fulfil their wishes for children, or that those who start a family will not be able to develop their professional skills. Both would be difficult to cope with in the future" (SPD, 2001: 305). As such, the motion placed the family as an important institution at

the centre of society, a novelty for SPD policy, but one which chimed with German background ideas, and therefore placed the onus on addressing the problem of work-family reconciliation on society as a whole. The motion proclaimed the new approach was "a policy for the centre of society" (SPD, 2001: 315).

The 2001 party conference also demonstrated the level of support that Schmidt had from Chancellor Schröder. Family policy was traditionally an unimportant part of these conferences, but, as a politician recalled, Schröder publicly made his support clear:

> Normally when the main speech is at an end all the leaders disappear to go to the toilet or get something to drink or to eat or to talk to journalists, and most of the whole podium is empty. But Gerhard Schröder sat there resolute during the whole debate and followed it all. By doing that he demonstrated that it was really important. (DE_6)

In April 2002, in the run up to the federal elections in September, Schröder set out the new position by making an official statement on family policy in the Bundestag, becoming the first chancellor ever to do so (Gerlach, 2010). In it, he emphasised the new problem definition, that the lack of work-family reconciliation was a threat to Germany's future and stressed the importance of the family as an institution: "Families are the stable centre of our society. Of all social networks, the family is by far the most important thing for people" (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2002a).

Thus between 1998 and 2002 new ideas about family policy had become accepted within the SPD leadership and policy programme. The new ideas did not come onto the agenda in the form of policy solutions, but rather established a new problem definition, setting out their importance for society. This began with a distinction between family policy and gender equality policy which had long been blurred in the SPD tradition. The family was redefined within social democratic thought as playing a crucial societal role and therefore family policy, instead of being largely aimed at disadvantaged families, became "policy for the centre of society" (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2002a; SPD, 2001). Drawing on this, and on Hans Bertram's diagnosis of the problems facing families, a lack of balance of work and family life was conceived as preventing couples from having the lives that they want, in particular in terms of having children, which was both bad for them, but also bad for society. The SPD were successful in making work-family balance an electoral issue in the 2002 campaign, in particular over the high-profile promise of an annual €1 billion investment in "the future of education and childcare" (SPD, 2002a: 39).

In making this an electoral issue, the SPD was aided by the fact that Edmund Stoiber, from the socially conservative CSU, was chosen as the chancellor candidate of the CDU/CSU. However, the CDU had also been undergoing a process of policy change which had begun around the same time as Schmidt's working group and was prompted by a similar examination of the 1998 election. In analysing the electoral defeat, Angela Merkel, then secretary-general of the party, had come to a similar conclusion as Ristau: that young people, and women in particular, were turning to the SPD (DE_16; DE_18). An attempt to modernise the party's policy offer in a number of areas had been initiated, with Merkel responsible for redrafting family policy to be more 'woman friendly' (Fleckenstein, 2011). This had resulted in a resolution at the 1999 party conference, redefining the CDU approach to the family (CDU, 1999). However, the change was less clear cut that that in the SPD. While a commitment to childcare for under-threes represented a shift towards a dual earner support model, the manifesto also contained policies such as a family allowance, which provided financial support for mothers to spend long periods away from the labour market and as such is more representative of the general family support model (CDU and CSU, 2002). Subsequent analyses of the disastrous defeat in 2002 stressed the perceived competence of the SPD in the traditionally CDU-dominated area of the family and prompted further attempts to modernise the party's position on families (Clemens, 2007). In the 2002 election however, the SPD was thus able to highlight a clear distinction between the two parties, which proved helpful in the election (DE_9). The SPD-Green government narrowly retained their majority in the Bundestag and set about forming the new government in which Schmidt was appointed family minister.

4.3 The Second SPD-Green coalition (2002-2005)

4.3.1 Setting the agenda in Germany, 2002-2005

The SPD manifesto in 2002 described childcare as "our most urgent task" (SPD, 2002b: 47), while the coalition agreement contained a plan to legislate to ensure provision of enough childcare places to meet "a needs-based care quota for children under 3 of at least 20%" (SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2002: 29). However, as the experience of the first SPD-Green government showed, such priorities did not automatically turn into legislation, and other issues could supersede them. From Schmidt's perspective therefore, there was still considerable work to be done in order to turn the newly accepted agenda into policy legislation. In this, Schmidt faced considerable hurdles. The Family Ministry did not have a large budget, and the government as a whole was fiscally stretched, still grappling with a large budget deficit left by the Kohl government in 1998 and a sluggish economy. Further, it was a relatively powerless

ministry and, aside from Schröder, there was still little interest in this policy agenda among other cabinet members (DE_6).

Facing this combination of a lack of power and disinterest from colleagues, Schmidt continued with the strategy that had been successful up until this point: of framing the problem of work-family reconciliation as crucial for society. One demonstration of this continuity in approach was that Schmidt appointed Malte Ristau and Petra Mackroth to key roles in the Family Ministry[57], both of whom were important figures both in the SPD leadership's strategic planning unit that set up Forum Familie, and in the working group itself. The period 2002-2005 can therefore be seen as a second phase of agenda setting, but the aim was not just to appeal to SPD leaders, as it had previously been, but to the country more broadly. According to interviews with civil servants, the strategy aimed to foster support from a variety of social actors for the new approach and to develop external pressure for the expansion of childcare for under-threes (DE_4; DE_8).

In order to do this, the framing of the problem of a lack of work-family reconciliation developed during this period, focused more explicitly on its economic costs, which built on the more sociological approach of the Forum Familie, and aimed to justify federal expenditure on work-family policy. This section discusses this framing and in particular how it related to the multiple background ideas that dominated German family policy. It argues that on the one hand, the framing of the problem definition fit well with the idea of the societal importance of the family: as such, the framing drew on this notion of the family as "the centre of society" for legitimacy (Forum Familie der SPD, 2000; SPD, 2001). Yet at the same time another key background idea was explicitly challenged: that of the normative preference for male-breadwinner model families. Indeed the normative prescription of the male-breadwinner model family and traditional gender roles were explicitly attacked by Schmidt as holding Germany back. Thus the 'naming' of the problem of work-family reconciliation involved 'blaming' the background idea itself and the institutions within which it was crystallised. This framing drew the previously taken-for-granted background idea into the political foreground, politicising it and opening it up to debate.

A focus of the framing during this period involved relating work-family policy to Germany's low birth rate by building on Bertram's theories that young people, facing work-family reconciliation problems, were opting to have fewer children. In 2002 Germany's fertility

[57] Ristau was appointed the head of the Family, Welfare and Citizen Engagement department, while Mackroth became head of the Ministerial Office and the Steering Group.

rate was 1.3 children per woman, among the lowest in Europe and far lower than countries such as France (1.9), the Netherlands (1.7) or Sweden (1.7) (OECD, 2020b). Germany's low birth rate and high levels of "involuntary childlessness" (SPD, 2001: 302) were highlighted as symptoms of the problem of work-family reconciliation. In particular, the difference between the number of children young people said they wanted, and the actual birth rate was highlighted (R Schmidt, 2002a; SPD, 2001).

The notion of designing policy to raise the birth rate had been a taboo subject, particularly on the part of the SPD, given the association with both Nazi and GDR pro-natalist policies (see Seeleib-Kaiser and Toivonen, 2011), and in the early versions of the SPD's framing, there was a clear hesitancy about this part of the argument. In the SPD resolution in 2001, for example, the problem was specified as one of "young women and men not realising their wishes for children" (SPD, 2001: 305) and the implications of the low birth rate were only vaguely specified as detrimental to the future labour supply (SPD, 2001: 304). However, in 2003 Schmidt broke this taboo at the SPD party conference by explicitly noting Germany's low birth rate in comparison to other countries and claiming that "Germany needs more children if we want to maintain our prosperity" (Schmidt, 2003: 409). The crux of her argument was that the low birth rate would lead to a shrinking labour force, which would have dire implications for the productivity of the economy: "We have not yet imagined what it means for the innovative capacity of our economy, for research and technology" (Schmidt, 2003: 407). Also, the low birth rate threatened the German welfare state, which would be increasingly under pressure from an ageing population: "It must be made clear to everyone that it is in our common interest that people decide to have children. We cannot assume that we will be cared for in old age by our stock portfolios." (Schmidt quoted in Die Zeit, 2004).

These developments in the framing of the problem were bolstered by a series of economic analyses produced by the Family Ministry. From 2003 the Ministry therefore commissioned a series of reports and economic analyses (BMFSFJ, IW, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ, Prognos AG, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ and Prognos AG, 2003; Prognos AG, 2004; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). One civil servant highlighted that these reports were part of a deliberate attempt to build an agenda: "These were really strategic plans. There was a timetable which set out when each report would be published, who it would be aimed at and what it would say" (DE_8; DE_14). One such study was produced by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW) which modelled the effects on public finances and social insurance funds of the expansion of childcare facilities and found potential gains of between €1 billion and €6 billion in tax receipts and between €1 billion

and €9 billion in social insurance contributions, as well as further income through consumption taxes due to increased household incomes (Spieß et al., 2003). The economists Bert Rürup and Sandra Gruescu were commissioned by the Ministry to examine the relationship between family policy and economic growth. Their report argued that it made economic sense to invest in work-family reconciliation for three reasons: because a shrinking population, and concomitant shrinking of the labour force, have negative effects on economic growth; because investing in children's skills has positive externalities for society in the future; and because poverty in families has negative externalities for society in the future in terms of limiting the opportunities of children (Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). Rürup and Gruescu argued for 'Sustainable Family Policy' with the twin aim of increasing women's employment and improving the conditions for having more children. In particular, they stressed the need to reduce the 'opportunity costs' that working parents faced when opting to have children, with the explicit intention of encouraging more couples to do so (Rürup and Gruescu, 2003: 50). These reports, among others, were used to reinforce the framing of work-family reconciliation as key to social and economic goals, and also helped to add 'hard' evidence to what had previously been seen as a 'soft' policy area (Jüttner et al., 2011; Leitner et al., 2008; Rüling, 2010). In particular, they helped to build consensus in the business community (see below) that change in family policy was necessary.

A third focus of the framing was to develop concrete policy solutions to the now well-established problem definition. An important step in this was the commissioning of the Seventh Family Report.[58] Experts from a range of fields were drawn together for this project, including labour market economists, family specialists, early education experts and demographers. Led by Hans Bertram, the sociologist whose work had formed the basis for the new problem definition, the committee was asked to examine the future of the family in the face of social and demographic changes. Unlike previous reports, which tended to be compilations of historical and contemporary data according to a particular theme, Bertram was asked to ensure that the report not only set out the problems now but looked forward at the next 10 to 15 years and address the question of "what can we concretely do?" (DE_2). Further, there was an explicit instruction to include international comparisons, examining other countries' experience of family development and family policy (DE_2). An important aspect in the commissioning of this report was that there would be frequent updates for the Ministry from Bertram and

[58] Since 1968 the Family Ministry has commissioned a report on the status of the family in each legislative period. Each report has a different topic, which is decided on by the Ministry. Each report is also accompanied by a statement of the Federal government (Gerlach, 2010).

colleagues. Indeed, one civil servant described it as a kind of "discussion circle" involving Schmidt and other senior figures at the ministry, which allowed the ideas to feed into the political process (DE_9). The work of the commission comprised 18 sittings, of which Schmidt attended four, and the consideration of 74 submissions of external expertise. Furthermore, the commission engaged publicly through workshops and events with family and children's organisations, representatives of churches, the major employer organisations and the unions (BMFSFJ, 2005c).

The eventual report, which was delivered to the government in August 2005[59], built on and extended the arguments made by Schmidt before 2002 and those made by Rürup and Gruescu in 2003. In particular, the report placed Germany's existing family policy under scrutiny. It made use of extensive cross-national comparisons, which highlighted how little childcare for under-threes was available in Germany compared to other European countries. The report further demonstrated that while Germany's outcomes in terms of birth rates and women's employment lagged behind much of Europe, the level of expenditure from the German state was relatively high. This bolstered the arguments of Schmidt that existing policies were simply not working and needed to be redesigned in a 'sustainable' fashion. The suggested approach was three-pronged, and focused on providing families with time, infrastructure and money (see also Bertram et al., 2005b). Drawing on policies from countries with high birth rates and women's employment rates, such as Denmark, France and Sweden, the report made a number of proposals including significantly expanded all-day childcare and an earnings-related parental leave, which would also be designed to encourage fathers to take on more caring responsibilities. The 391-page report would become an important document guiding the new direction of policy; indeed, all of the family policy proposals that would be enacted in the area of childcare and leave policy were contained within it (BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006).

Another part of the Ministry's strategy was to build a coalition of support from important societal actors; as had been the case in the 2000 reforms of parental leave, business interests had significant influence in the cabinet and therefore seeking their acquiescence for reform was important to the Family Ministry (DE_6; DE_13). In July 2003 the 'Alliance for the Family' was launched which sought to build support among business and union leaders and other important public figures such as representatives of the churches and family organisations, in

[59] By a coincidence of timing, the publication of the report occurred in the middle of the 2005 federal election campaign. Because of the process of forming a new government, the government response to the report was not published until April 2006 (BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006).

order to raise the public profile of work-family balance policies and to increase pressure for reform. A key ally for Schmidt in this was Liz Mohn, who was on the board of the Bertelsmann multinational media company, one of the largest and most influential companies in Germany, and was vice-chair of the Bertelsmann Foundation, one of Germany's preeminent research organisations, which jointly coordinated the campaign (Schmidt and Mohn, 2004). The main target of the Ministry were businesses. Three reports were commissioned by the Ministry from the economic consultancy Prognos AG, which examined the benefits of family-friendly working practices for businesses, trades and regions respectively. Each report detailed the financial benefits that could accrue from implementing voluntary family-friendly measures (BMFSFJ, Prognos AG, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ and Prognos AG, 2003; Prognos AG, 2004).

In publicising these reports, Schmidt found a strong ally in Ludwig Georg Braun, the head of the Chamber of Commerce (DIHK), an influential organisation of which all businesses are members. Braun was an enthusiastic supporter of family-friendly policies, had implemented them in his own pharmaceuticals company, and had campaigned in his local municipality to support better provision of childcare. Schmidt made numerous public appearances alongside Braun, who estimated that his company was saving around €350,000 per year through family-friendly working time policies and called for greater federal investment in childcare (Ristau, 2005: 19). As well as Braun, Schmidt personally met with business leaders from the Federation of German Industry (BDI) and the Federation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) as well as the DIHK, the first family minister to do so. Schmidt used these personal connections to appeal to business leaders' professional interests but also to highlight the impact of a lack of work-family reconciliation on their own families, particularly those who had adult daughters and could see their own family-members struggling with the problems of balancing career and family ambitions (DE_4; DE_6; DE_9). According to a civil servant:

> What persuaded them was that Schmidt had said "take a look, in Germany very few children will be born…and what are the consequences? As people, we won't have grandchildren anymore and as employers in a few years you won't have any more skilled labour…No more children in Germany! That really hit them in the stomach. (DE_9)

The result of this engagement was that the major business and employer associations became promoters of reform. For example, in 2003, Braun, responding to the DIW study publicly stated: "The expansion of childcare is a necessary investment in the future, and also in the business position of Germany … Only a society that today invests in flexible and quality care for children will be able to assert its economic performance tomorrow" (Braun quoted in DIHK, 2003). Further, the influence of business leaders enabled the spread of these ideas through the business

community: in the business press[60] articles appeared regularly which stressed both the benefits of family-friendly practices for firms and called for improved policies at the federal level (e.g. Ebner, 2003; Schmidt and Wagner, 2004).

While much of the framing of the lack of work-family reconciliation as a problem was aimed at persuading a range of political actors, including business organisations, of the benefits of new work-family policies, another part of the Ministry's strategy was aimed at fostering a broad public debate to demonstrate public support for the new agenda and to put pressure on the government to act. Schmidt's role was key in keeping the agenda in the public eye. She remained a high-profile politician during this period and would regularly appear in newspapers and on television, where she would stress the problem in terms of its constraining young people's life choices, but also in terms of the economic and social costs of work-family reconciliation (e.g. Baur, 2003; Die Zeit, 2000; also see Ristau, 2005). In particular, Schmidt's citing of the birth rate tapped into an existing media debate about demographic change (Klinkhammer, 2014). The controversial elements of a politician discussing birth rates also did no harm to the level of public exposure, something that civil servants in the Ministry were well aware of (DE_9). Each of the reports commissioned by the Ministry were publicised with a press conference featuring Schmidt and the authors, while set piece events alongside business leaders such as Braun and Mohn were also a feature of this strategy.

Another part of the strategy to build external pressure for reform was undertaken at the municipal level, where constitutional responsibility for childcare lay. This was done through the creation of Local Alliances for Families[61] with the DIHK in January 2004, which brought together local chambers of commerce with families, businesses, municipal officials and politicians, family organisations, unions, churches and service providers with the aim of improving work-family balance at a local level (see Schmidt and Mohn, 2004: 179–183). The engagement and funding of local chambers of commerce was important in this process: by 2008 95 per cent of local chambers of commerce were participating in their local alliances (BMFSFJ, 2008, p. 54). While the activities of these groups varied, a key function was to coordinate demands for childcare, thereby placing pressure on municipalities to increase provision (DE_1; DE_2). This was not only a strategy to demonstrate the widespread support for the issue, but given their constitutional responsibility for childcare, the willingness of municipalities to increase childcare would be crucial to successful legislation at the federal level. Further the

[60] e.g. Handelsblatt, manager magazin and WirtschaftsWoche.
[61] Lokale Bündnisse der Familie.

Ministry wanted to ensure that any law at the federal level would be effective and ensuring there was a bottom-up mechanism of pressure on municipalities was important in this. Interviews with civil servants noted that federal funding for the expansion of kindergartens in the 1990s had, in certain areas, not led to increases in provision, with municipalities making the excuse that there was no demand (DE_3; DE_13). As such, the local alliances can be seen as an effective way to undermine potential veto players. Schmidt travelled across the country, publicising the creation of these local alliances, and, by November 2004, the 100th local alliance had been created (see Klammer and Letablier, 2007).[62]

This section has described how Schmidt and the Family Ministry followed a strategy of framing the lack of work-family reconciliation as a problem for German society, with a particular focus on the economic implications of a low birth rate and relatively low female employment rates. Part of this strategy was done through commissioning research and developing arguments that were subsequently publicised both by Schmidt and her allies. Academics like Hans Bertram and Bert Rürup had high public profiles, made numerous media appearances and wrote for a range of audiences (DE_2; DE_9). New arguments that had not previously been used became part of the public presentation of 'Sustainable Family Policy', such as the economic importance of improving Germany's low birth rate, as well as economic projections of the benefits of investing in better work-family balance. It is notable that this process continued to focus primarily on the problem definition, with the arguments for reform stressing improving the symptoms of the problem of work-family policy reconciliation, such as a raising the birth rate and or the rates of female employment, rather than on the benefits of any specific policy solution; indeed, reports often stressed the necessity of a new approach to the whole of family policy, not merely the introduction of more childcare (e.g. Bertram et al., 2005a; BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). In this process the new problem definition served as an effective coalition magnet (see Section 3.4.6). Key figures, such as from employers' associations, became strong supporters of the new agenda, while the passage of the childcare bill in 2004 faced little political opposition (see below, Section 4.3.2). In part this was because the Family Ministry was able to frame its approach as one that fit well within the German tradition of family policy, in that it framed improving work-family reconciliation as a way of strengthening families and their societal role. However, the approach also marked a politicisation of the previously dominant background idea of the preferability of

[62] As of 2020 there were approximately 620 across Germany (see https://lokale-buendnisse-fuer-familie.de/im-einsatz-fuer-familien-vor-ort.html)

male-breadwinner model families which became the subject of political debate for the first time, although this conflict would not erupt into the policy debate until 2006 (see below, Section 4.4.2), by which time the SPD and Schmidt were out of power.

4.3.2 Policymaking: the expansion of childcare, 2002-2004, and the curtailed reform of parental leave, 2004-2005

The 2002 SPD manifesto had described the expansion of childcare as the "most urgent task", yet it was vague in how any expansion would be organised or paid for (SPD, 2002b). The coalition discussions between the SPD and the Green Party initially planned an annual expenditure of between €1.5 billion and €2.5 billion to be paid for out of savings from reforming the system of income splitting in the taxation system[63] (Der Spiegel, 2002). This idea was dropped however, after legal concerns relating to the necessity to treat all families equally (Blum, 2012). In a context of an ongoing recession and a tight fiscal situation, the issue of funding remained problematic. However, an opportunity for Schmidt to attach the financing of childcare policy to a higher priority issue presented itself through the 'Hartz' labour market reforms, which were adopted as SPD policy in 2002. The Hartz reforms were a series of employment and social security reforms, which would be enacted between 2003 and 2005, as part of the Agenda 2010. These reforms aimed to shift German labour market policy towards 'active' promotion of employment and away from 'passive' provision of benefits, which were seen to promote low productivity and long-term unemployment (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2003; SPD, 2002a: 26–28). The most controversial reform was known as Hartz IV which merged means-tested unemployment assistance benefit and social assistance to create a new flat-rate benefit which would be paid to those unemployed for longer than one year (see Fleckenstein, 2008). This represented a significant reduction in the level of benefit payment but was justified in terms of providing incentives for long-term unemployed people to find employment. However, an unintended consequence of this was that it would significantly disadvantage single parents of young children, who, due to the lack of childcare, were unable to take up new employment. This enabled Schmidt to make childcare an essential part of Agenda 2010 and secure the Labour Minister Wolfgang Clement's agreement that funding for childcare could be provided through savings made from the Hartz IV reforms (DE_4; DE_6; DE_13), which is how it was set out in the coalition agreement (SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2002).

[63] The aim was to replace a system which benefitted married couples with one that benefitted families with children. This reform was never enacted (see Henninger et al., 2008).

Aside from the question of finance, there were other policy debates during the policymaking process. As mentioned, the Länder and municipalities' constitutional responsibility for childcare meant that they represented significant potential veto players in the process of reform. Furthermore, the government did not have a majority in the Bundesrat, which was dominated by the opposition, which again represented a potential block on the coalition's plans. This situation manifested itself in the gradual watering down of the plans set out in the coalition agreement, which had planned for a legal requirement for each Land to reach 20 per cent coverage of children aged between one and three by the end of the legislative period in 2006 (SPD and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 2002: 29). In the face of strong opposition from regional and municipal governments, Schmidt was forced to abandon this timeframe in April 2003 and the idea of a legal quota in January 2004 (Blum, 2012). In its place, the SPD wanted to create a set of criteria that municipalities would be legally required to meet in terms of providing places for certain groups, such as children of working parents, children of single parents and particularly disadvantaged children. Eventually the government was forced to modify this idea as well, not because of staunch opposition but because the existing level of provision in most of the west German Länder was so low, that achieving this target would be prohibitively expensive (Blum, 2012). Furthermore the government accepted the arguments of the municipalities that different areas would require different levels of childcare according to local circumstances (Bundesrat, 2004: 3). The eventually agreed law specified a target of 230,000 places in the west German regions, which would achieve a national average of 17 per cent coverage, by 2010. It specified a 'duty' to provide 'needs-based' places to certain groups, with a target of doing so by 2010 (Bundesrat, 2004). As agreed between Clement and Schmidt, the municipalities were expected to spend an estimated €1.5 billion on expansion and running costs from a total annual savings of €2.5 billion from Hartz IV (Bundesrat, 2004: 45–48).

Most of the opposition to the bill was related to the details of the proposal, rather than the principle of expanded childcare. The public campaign that Schmidt had been waging for the previous two years had created consensus over the need for this reform. In her introduction of the bill into the Bundesrat, Schmidt listed her many supporters, including representatives of employers, unions, churches, municipal and regional government, welfare providers and child support organisations (Bundesrat Plenarprotokoll, 2004). Indeed, there was little opposition to principle of the law within the Bundestag, with the CDU and the FDP confirming their support for expansion of childcare for under-threes (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2004a, 2004b). A variety of actors, including nominally conservative organisations such as religious groups,

supported the expansion as a necessary step towards work-family reconciliation (e.g. ZdK, 2004). Nevertheless, the process of passing the childcare bill was complex and, according to one politician, at times seemed "insurmountable" (DE_6). The funding proposal was criticised by municipalities and the regions as "dubious", including those run by the SPD, given that the savings from Hartz IV may not occur in the areas which needed most childcare investment. This was powerful opposition, which had already forced the government to drop the attempt to impose a nationwide coverage target. They demanded direct federal funding, but this was impossible due to the restrictive budgetary situation (Blum, 2012). A deadlock developed which was problematic for Schmidt and the government: having made childcare into such a public issue, they could not fail at the first significant hurdle. This situation was only resolved due to the intervention of Chancellor Schröder who, alongside Schmidt, met with the SPD leaders of municipalities and used his authority to persuade them to support the bill (DE_4; DE_6). As one politician said: "Without Gerhard Schröder, childcare for the under-threes would never have been pushed through. Never. If he had not been there and had not been in favour, never" (DE_6). Opposition in the Bundesrat over whether the government was overstepping its federal competency was sidestepped by eventually splitting the bill in half, and pushing through the half that dealt directly with childcare and was considered not to require Bundesrat approval.[64] Rejecting the views of the Bundesrat was justified as appropriate by Schmidt due to the extremely slow progress that western regions were making towards meeting childcare needs.[65] The bill eventually passed into law in December 2004 and came into force, as planned, on January 1, 2005.

The passing of the childcare bill was a sign that Germany's family policy had shifted towards a dual-earner support model. That there was little political opposition to the expansion in principle demonstrates how successful the SPD attempts to shift the agenda of family policy had been. Nevertheless, the process also revealed the weakness of the federal government; the Länder and municipalities succeeded in removing much of the legal obligation from the bill and were only persuaded by Schröder's intervention to support it at all.

While the aim, if not the details, of childcare expansion was relatively uncontroversial, the same cannot be said for Schmidt's ambition to reform the parental leave benefit into

[64] Initially, the expansion of childcare places had been bundled together with a reform of the law governing child and youth services. Because this involved altering constitutional competencies, it required Bundesrat approval to be passed, which was not true for the childcare expansion. Splitting the bill in two was recommended by the Bundestag Committee on Family, Seniors, Women and Youth (Deutscher Bundestag, 2004).

[65] Schmidt stated that the pace of expansion was such that it would take 160 years to reach the French level of childcare coverage and 304 years to reach the Danish level (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2004c).

Elterngeld, a shorter, salary-related scheme, with reserved, non-transferable months for fathers. The primary aim for such a scheme would be to address the 'opportunity costs' that were associated with having children, first articulated in the report by Rürup and Gruescu (2003). It would do this by reducing the amount of time that women spend out of the labour market after childbirth, thus reducing the long-term loss of earnings and career sacrifices associated with long periods of leave. Further, the replacement of the flat-rate parental leave benefit with a salary-related payment and the inclusion of two 'partner months' both aimed to encourage more men to take leave, which was seen as a way of helping to shift the balance of responsibility for childrearing within families to enable women to become more independent and to fulfil their wishes for a career (Bertram et al., 2005a, 2005b; BMFSFJ, 2005; Gruescu and Rürup, 2005; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). The proposed scheme was modelled on the Swedish parental leave, which was used by Schmidt to highlight the problems with the existing German institutions: "In Germany we spend per head on family support almost exactly as much as the Swedes. But in Sweden the birth rate is higher, more women work, child poverty is lower and more fathers take parental leave" (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2004).

Such a scheme had not been in the SPD manifesto in 2002, nor in the coalition agreement with the Greens. However in 2004, SPD leaders had become concerned by the lack of popularity of the Agenda 2010 and Hartz reforms and Schmidt was asked to present a detailed proposal for reform to the cabinet. The response to the proposal, according to one witness was "fifty-fifty" (DE_6). There were concerns over the cost of the reform, which would amount to an extra €1 billion per year, on top of the annual €3 billion spent on the existing flat-rate leave scheme. According to a civil servant, "even Schröder was wavering, not because he was against the policy, but because he thought it couldn't be done" (DE_4) due to the financial constraints on the government and the opposition that the proposal would provoke, particularly in the CDU-dominated Bundesrat. Further, many SPD leaders were hesitant about an earnings-replacement benefit, as this would result in children from families with higher incomes receiving more from the state than children from low income families; similar concerns split the Greens on the proposal, where it was seen as a "middle-class policy" (DE_6; DE_7; DE_11). Schmidt argued strongly against this charge. She stressed that the overall aim was to reduce the financial opportunity costs that families faced when opting to have children (see Die Zeit, 2004 for a similar argument). Elterngeld should be seen like other social insurance benefits, such as unemployment or sickness benefits, in that it aims to compensate parents for lost income. It should be seen, 'for parents and not for children' (DE_6; DE_7). Moreover, the plan was to

include both maximum and minimum monthly payment, which would limit the inequality inherent in an earnings-related benefit.

To bolster her argument in the SPD, an intervention was arranged from the Swedish prime minister, Göran Persson, who was a figure of some influence: according to an advisor, "Sweden had a very good reputation at that time within the SPD, it was an example to German social democrats" (DE_4). Persson wrote an article in a popular social democratic political journal in which he espoused the social democratic principles behind the Swedish parental leave policy, upon which Schmidt's proposals were based (Persson, 2005). These interventions stressed the benefits of the father months, in terms of helping to change gender roles, also a feature of the Seventh Family Report (BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006). Eventually, in September 2004 the Cabinet agreed to Schmidt's proposed policy, although this remained controversial with some in the leadership, particularly party chair Franz Müntefering[66], due to the issue of the earnings-related benefit, and there had been no agreement on funding (DE_8; DE_9). Given this, and the opposition it would provoke in the conservative opposition parties, it was very unlikely that the SPD-Green coalition would have been able to enact Elterngeld before the scheduled elections in 2006; the fact that the elections came a year earlier than planned[67], scuppered any chance of it. However detailed proposals for Elterngeld were included in the SPD's 2005 manifesto (SPD, 2005).

4.4 The Grand Coalition (2005-2009)

4.4.1 Agenda continuity despite the return of the CDU

In the election of September 2005, the two main parties were again distinct in their work-family policy promises. The SPD's manifesto continued the focus on work-family balance and the expansion of policies for the benefit of families and society: "We want Germany to become more family-friendly. We want young people to be able to fulfil their desire to have children…Our society needs strong families with more children, for solidarity and also for more growth and prosperity" (SPD, 2005). The main policy proposals were the introduction of a legal right to a childcare place, for all children from the age of two once the expansion of places had been completed in 2010, as well as working towards the removal of all charges for childcare for under-threes. Elterngeld was included, although notably this was framed in gender equality terms, rather than in the 'opportunity cost' argument which had previously dominated.

[66] Münterfering had succeeded Schröder as party chair in March 2004.
[67] Having lost a regional election in North Rhine-Westphalia in April 2005, Schröder engineered an early federal election by deliberately losing a vote of confidence in the Bundestag, leading to the dissolution of the parliament.

According to an interview with a political advisor, this was due to nervousness among SPD leaders about the wage-replacement aspect of the new scheme and wanted to highlight the aspect of the policy that would appeal to core voters (DE_2).

The CDU once again presented a mixed set of policies. The proposal for a long family benefit had been dropped and the manifesto supported the "development of childcare for a better reconciliation of family and working life" but primarily focused on increasing financial support for families with children through introducing a children's tax allowance and adding a 'child bonus' to reduce contributions to pension insurance (CDU & CSU, 2005). Despite a strong polling lead going into the campaign, the CDU/CSU eventually only managed a marginal victory in the 2005 election, becoming the leading party by only four seats.

With neither main party able to form a governing coalition with their preferred partner parties, a grand coalition was the eventual result. During the coalition negotiations, which were led by Müntefering, the SPD traded away control of the Family Ministry (DE_6; DE_9): once again, family policy was not as high a priority for the SPD as its traditional areas of responsibility such as employment and welfare. The new CDU chancellor, Angela Merkel, appointed Ursula von der Leyen as Family Minister. Von der Leyen was a 'rising star' of the CDU and had been minister responsible for social affairs, women, family, and health in Lower Saxony (e.g. Handelsblatt, 2005; taz, 2003). Von der Leyen and Schmidt co-chaired the coalition negotiations for family policy. To the surprise of many present, von der Leyen was a strong supporter of Schmidt's agenda and of the policies contained in the SPD manifesto (DE_6, DE_15; DE_18). According to interviews with a number of civil servants, von der Leyen had a copy of Schmidt's co-authored book, 'Family Brings Profit' (2004), and announced that she supported everything in the book and she wanted to "continue but do more" (DE_4, DE_13; DE_16). Nevertheless, despite this support, there was little interest within the wider coalition negotiations for these policies: the SPD under Münterfering had dropped its interest in Elterngeld (DE_4; DE_6). Once again, it took an intervention from outgoing Chancellor Schröder to raise the issue, which was strongly backed by von der Leyen. Merkel, who, like Schröder, recognised the electoral appeal of family policies, supported her Family Minister, and both Elterngeld, including the two partner months[68], and the introduction of a right to a childcare place for two-year-olds made it into the coalition agreement, but the latter would only be enacted in 2008 as a punitive backstop if more than 10 per cent of municipalities

[68] Supporters of Elterngeld within the SPD were keen to make the policy detail within the coalition agreement as specific as possible, and were especially worried that the CDU would drop the partner months concept (DE_6).

could not guarantee that they would reach a needs-based supply of places by 2010 (DE_4; CDU, CSU, & SPD, 2005).

Yet once in position, it was not inevitable that von der Leyen would continue with the same agenda, indeed, most observers were taken by surprise by her commitment to it (DE_4; DE_9; DE_15), although her past provided some hints of her beliefs. As state minister responsible for families in Lower-Saxony, she had placed emphasis on all-day schools from a work-family reconciliation perspective (taz, 2003; Vowinkel and Rübel, 2005). In July 2005 she became the only senior CDU figure to come out publicly in favour of Schmidt's Elterngeld proposal: "I have a certain sympathy for [Elterngeld] but we in the Union have initially chosen another path" (quoted in Handelsblatt, 2005). While the reform of policy being undertaken within the CDU was certainly responsible for Merkel nominating von der Leyen, the actual policies that she would promote were more to do with her own beliefs and motivations than to any programmatic evolution of the CDU. Indeed, a civil servant remarked: "The continuation [of the policies] had very little to do with the rest of the CDU, it was simply fortunate that von der Leyen wanted to do the same as Schmidt had" (DE_9). This will be further illustrated by von der Leyen's personal role in pushing forward the agenda in the face of significant opposition within her own party (see below, Section 4.4.2).

As Family Minister, von der Leyen faced a comparable situation to Schmidt, although she had some distinct advantages. Like Schmidt, she was operating within a party that was on the whole not supportive of her agenda. Indeed, this was more the case for von der Leyen, who faced active opposition within the CDU and particularly from the CSU, than for Schmidt whose main challenge was overcoming disinterest among her colleagues. Like Schmidt, von der Leyen had the backing of the most powerful figure in her party, Merkel, whose support for the agenda was based on an analysis of the electoral benefits of such an approach. However, unlike Schmidt, von der Leyen could count on the at least tacit support of the other main party, the SPD, who would not act as a veto player in this area. Furthermore, with the government holding a majority in both the Bundestag and the Bundesrat, and with a less constrained fiscal situation, she faced considerably fewer veto players and a less hostile political environment. Politically therefore, von der Leyen faced a situation in which the main opposition to change would come from within her own party.

Nevertheless von der Leyen adopted both the ideas and strategy of Schmidt. This is symbolised by her decision to retain Ristau and Mackroth as senior civil servants within the ministry, an unusual approach to what are usually political appointments, especially given their

association with the SPD leadership in the 1990s. It is further symbolised by the fact that in 2006, Hans Bertram was asked to relaunch the Seventh Family Report, which was completed in 2005 but was officially welcomed by von der Leyen in much the same way that Schmidt would have (DE_2; DE_9). The new minister was a high-profile public figure, even more so than Schmidt had been, and used this position to continue to advocate for 'sustainable family policy' in the public arena and to foster the broad coalition of support that had backed Schmidt before 2005. She continued to court businesses and to expand the Local Alliances for Families. New programmes were launched, such as 'Success factor family' which, jointly with representatives of the social partners from the BDA, DIHK, ZDH and the DGB sought to "make family-friendliness a trademark of the Germany economy" (BMFSFJ, 2008; Mohn and von der Leyen, 2007: 15).

Furthermore, under von der Leyen, there was a greater focus on bringing church organisations into the advocacy coalition (DE_5; DE_9). As Section 4.4.2 will demonstrate, because of this continuation of Schmidt's strategy, von der Leyen faced very little external opposition to her plans for policy expansion. It was the opposition from senior colleagues in the CDU and the CSU that would prove the most difficult hurdles to overcome, which von der Leyen was able to do with the support of Merkel and the SPD. Indeed, von der Leyen deliberately built on the public acceptance of the need for better work-life reconciliation that Schmidt had fostered to conduct many of the intra-party debates in public and use public support for her approach to pressurise her colleagues to support reform. This was a strategy that had been introduced in the ministry by Schmidt and was backed up through extensive public polling (DE_5; DE_9). However, Schmidt had only undertaken a relatively uncontroversial reform of childcare expansion, for which there was general political consensus that such a law was needed. While she had laid the groundwork for further reform, especially with the framing of the male-breadwinner model as the problem, it would be von der Leyen's more controversial reforms which would bring these issues fully into the foreground and spark fierce debate over the extent to which Germany should promote different family models. This process revealed the extent of support for a family policy that enabled a dual-earner family model and the two reforms that were successfully undertaken between 2006 and 2008 institutionalised these new ideas into German family policy.

4.4.2 Policymaking: The Grand Coalition reforms of parental leave and childcare, 2006-8

The coalition agreement in November 2005 contained a proposal for Elterngeld, similar to that proposed by Schmidt earlier that year: a 12-month benefit paid at 67 per cent of previous salary,

with two months reserved for each partner, on a use-it-or-lose-it basis. However, despite agreeing to the coalition agreement, in December conservative leaders of the CDU/CSU began to challenge the proposal, with a particular focus on the partner months. In particular, critics such as the CDU Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia, Jürgen Rüttgers argued that the partner months represented an 'obligation' on fathers, and that families that adhered to a more traditional model of childrearing would be punished by the loss of two months of leave. Much of this argumentation stressed that the changes were an infringement of the state on families' choice of how to organise employment and care responsibilities; indeed Rüttgers stated it was unconstitutional for policy to "tell people how they have to live and have to organise their family" (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2005). The head of the CSU group in the Bundestag, Peter Ramsauer, described the partner months as a 'nappy-changing apprenticeship' and demanded their removal from the reforms (Berliner Zeitung, 2006). However, despite these high-profile statements, it soon became clear that they were relatively isolated and the reforms, including the partner months, were broadly supported. It was particularly notable that women in the CDU and even the CSU were in favour of the partner months.[69] For example, Maria Eichhorn, the CSU spokesperson on the family, argued that "we need emancipated men" and was one of a number of prominent women in the CSU to sign a letter to party leader Edmund Stoiber calling on him to support the partner months (Geis, 2006). Ingrid Fischbach, a prominent member of CDU/CSU women's group in the Bundestag, called for "honesty" from her colleagues about the fact that research commissioned by the Family Ministry showed the majority of men wanted the opportunity to play a greater role in their child's first year and working women wanted to combine employment with childcare (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006c). Von der Leyen forcefully defended the partner months, criticising their opponents and linking fathers to the issue of the birth rate:

> What is alarming is the partial lack of esteem for child-raising work, when it is perceived as an imposition that men take care of their own child for two months. More men than women exclude a child in their life planning. Something has to change here. (quoted in Vowinkel and Rübel, 2005)

At the end of April 2006 the CSU stated that the partner months could not proceed (Blum, 2012). However, given that these months were contained in the coalition agreement, and had

[69] A political confidant of von der Leyen was quoted in the press noting that "the greatest resistance is among CDU/CSU men between their mid-forties and mid-fifties with children between the ages of 10 and 15…they see their own life model being questioned and, often more importantly, that of their wives." The anonymous source noted further that older male politicians tended to be more sympathetic towards reform as they were influenced by their daughters' experiences (Geis, 2006).

the support of Merkel, the SPD, employers and unions, many on the liberal wing of the CDU and the Frauen Union, the CDU's women's organisation and even some church groups it was likely a solution would be found. The compromise, agreed at a cabinet committee in May 2006, was that the months would be additional to a 12-month period, rather than part of it, so that the maximum a family could receive would be 14 months. This allowed the partner months to be framed as a 'bonus' rather than an imposition, and was hailed by CSU leaders as a great victory (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006d), but in terms of incentivising fathers the effects were very similar.

During these negotiations, the SPD were able to ensure that recipients of social benefits would receive the minimum Elterngeld payment, meaning that Elterngeld became a universal payment, not purely linked to employment (Blum, 2012). The SPD believed this was important for distributional reasons but was highlighted by CSU leaders in the Bundestag as a victory for their defence of traditional gender roles, in that, unlike Schmidt's initial proposal, families with a single-earner would still benefit from parental leave, even if the breadwinner took no time off (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006d). However, overall Elterngeld clearly aimed at making work-family reconciliation easier for dual-earner couples and incentivised fathers to take on a greater caring role. Moreover, the Bundestag debates on Elterngeld were notable for the fact that politicians from all parties justified their support for the bill in the terms of the problem definition created by Forum Familie and the Family Ministry, first under Schmidt and then von der Leyen. That it was the duty of family policy to ease work-family reconciliation, in order to enable more children to be born and more mothers to work was repeated by representatives of all the major parties (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006b). Further, the politicisation of the idea that the male-breadwinner model family should be privileged resulted in a debate in which even the most conservative parties realised that their beliefs were out of step with the wishes of the population, and as such, the defence of male-breadwinner families was couched in the language of choice and implications that Elterngeld was forcing families to change their preferences. This argument was rejected, even by women within conservative parties. Indeed, the contrary consensus, that dual-earner/dual-carer families should be incentivised was expressed by representatives of all parties (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006b), reflecting how background ideas had shifted.

The next step for von der Leyen's agenda was to legislate to enact the legal entitlement to childcare from a child's second birthday. However, she believed that the 2004 law had not led to sufficiently fast progress in childcare expansion and, following her plan to 'continue and

do more', wanted to initiate a further round of expansion. Politically this would be difficult given the conflicts within the CDU/CSU and the fact that further federal support of expansion had not been set out in the coalition agreement. Going further than the blueprint set out by Schmidt in the previous government, von der Leyen used her profile in the media to raise the need for further childcare expansion by taking a large political risk. Without the knowledge of anyone outside the Family Ministry (DE_4; DE_16), von der Leyen announced her intention to increase the coverage of childcare places to cover 35 per cent of under-threes by 2013 in an interview with the Süddeutsche Zeitung in February 2007. This would involve the creation of a further 500,000 childcare places by 2013 and would cost an extra €3 billion per year (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2007c). In the days that followed this announcement, von der Leyen coordinated a series of public appearances by key supporters of childcare expansion such as Hans Bertram, leaders of religious organisations such the chair of the Evangelical Council of Germany (EKD) Bishop Wolfgang Huber as well as representatives of businesses, unions and, importantly given the arguments over the TAG, municipal and regional governments. The result was, according to one civil servant, "a week-long spectacle in which every day a new person would appear and add their voice to the calls for more childcare. And at the end of the week von der Leyen held a press conference and announced huge agreement" (DE_9).

Once again, this provoked significant opposition from within the CDU, the CSU and its allies in the Catholic Church. The main theme of criticism was again that von der Leyen was denying families freedom of choice. For instance, the vice chair of the CDU leadership accused von der Leyen of seeing the GDR as an example of good practice and of wanting to turn the traditional family upside-down. Similar criticisms came from a number of CDU politicians, while the CSU leader Ramsauer warned that many in the party no longer wanted this type of family policy and that von der Leyen was exposing herself to the accusation of "social democratisation" (Blum, 2012: 163). The freedom of choice argument was most controversially put by the Catholic Bishop of Augsburg, Walter Mixa, who stated that von der Leyen was turning mothers into "child-bearing machines" (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2007b). This type of commentary was not unwelcome in the Ministry and was seen as a good way of keeping the topic in the public spotlight (DE_4; DE_17; DE_18). Interviews with politicians and civil servants involved in the reform also highlighted that such statements served to further highlight that these conservative views were no longer widely held. Indeed, according to one politician: "It did help, because for the majority of the population it was absurd that the opportunity to have childcare might force anyone to go back to work. Unfortunately, it is a fact that if a topic

needs a certain amount of dynamic, controversial debate is helpful" (DE_17). The terms of the debate demonstrated that background ideas had shifted sufficiently that it was the defenders of the male-breadwinner model that now found it difficult to make legitimate arguments, whereas the expansion of childcare for under-threes had widespread support. Nevertheless, the conservatives in the CDU/CSU held a substantial level of power in the coalition government and would force some significant compromises in the intra-governmental discussions.

The calculation in the Family Ministry was that the SPD Finance Minister Peer Steinbrück would not fundamentally oppose the policy and this proved to be correct (DE_4; DE_9). Indeed, when CDU/CSU leaders demanded in a coalition meeting that von der Leyen make the case for the need for further childcare, the leader of the SPD group in the Bundestag declared: "That is a position of the Union, which is clearly different from the Family Minister. We stand on the side of Mrs. von der Leyen" (Peter Struck quoted in Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2007d). Furthermore, concerned that the SPD was losing control of what had been a successful policy area, SPD leaders presented their own plan for childcare expansion, and also called for a right to a place for all one-year-olds, a year younger than set out in the coalition agreement (SPD, 2007). For their part CSU leaders argued that in order to enable freedom of choice, there should be some financial support for parents who raise their children at home and warned that they could not support new regulations in childcare without such a commitment to a care allowance (Betreuungsgeld) (Der Spiegel, 2007b). Both the SPD and von der Leyen were strongly against this proposal, as it contradicted the principles of Sustainable Family Policy (Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2007a). Nevertheless, despite having rejected the freedom of choice argument in the light of the low levels of available childcare (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2007), in order to prevent further infighting within the CDU/CSU and in the interests of resolving the conflict, Chancellor Merkel made it clear she would favour Betreuungsgeld, and the other parties accepted it as a necessary compromise (Der Spiegel, 2007a).

The only other serious conflict over the bill was about the financing. Von der Leyen had agreed in April 2007 with the regions and municipalities that the federal government would pay a third of the necessary costs of expansion. Yet how this federal portion would be paid for was unclear, with Steinbrück insisting it come from savings elsewhere and both von der Leyen and the SPD proposing different sources for the federal share of the funding, which the other rejected (Blum, 2012). An opportunity for a solution emerged however, when it came to light that there was a surplus in the budget due to higher than expected tax receipts the previous year. Under German budgetary law this had to be spent and Steinbrück consented to using it to create

a special fund for childcare (Der Spiegel, 2007b). This piece of good fortune enabled the financing question to be solved without the need to resort to conflict and compromise. Eventually, in autumn 2007, the Bundestag agreed to the new policy. The federal government would pay investment costs up to a total of €2.5bn between 2008 and 2013 and would increase its contribution to running costs each year from €100m in 2009 to an ongoing commitment to €770m per year from 2013 (Bundesregierung, 2008). The right to childcare would be enacted in 2013 when Betreuungsgeld would also come into effect.[70] This process was perhaps the most remarkable of all the reforms discussed in this chapter and highlights the policy entrepreneurship of von der Leyen, which built on the ideational entrepreneurship that had been undertaken by the Family Ministry since 2002. It is highly doubtful that without her initiative in making a public case for more childcare that any further expansion of childcare would have taken place at this time. In doing so, von der Leyen took a serious political risk and alienated large sections of her own party, and according to a number of politicians, her reputation in her party has never fully recovered (DE_6; DE_15; DE_16; DE_18). Von der Leyen's "bravery" and "toughness" for this action was referred to by a number of senior civil servants and political opponents (DE_5; DE_9). However, it also demonstrates that the new ideas brought onto the political agenda by Schmidt and subsequently von der Leyen had firmly taken hold; the problem of work-family reconciliation was one that was widely accepted as a serious one for Germany's future and this had served to change background ideas about families and gender roles and to fundamentally transform work-family policy.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the processes behind the expansion of work-family policies in Germany between 1998 and 2008. It has shown that over this time gradual and deliberate attempts to change ideas within the SPD eventually led to rapid and significant reforms in the years 2006 and 2008, ironically under a CDU-led government. In doing so, the country switched paths from a general family support model towards a dual-earner support model.

The chapter outlined how this happened. It demonstrated that a political window of opportunity for reform opened due to the election of 1998, in which young people had voted largely for the SPD, but their main concern, work-family reconciliation, was not being sufficiently addressed by SPD policy. This window was seized by Renate Schmidt and the

[70] Due to SPD reluctance, the 2008 bill was very vague about what Betreuungsgeld would consist of. It would be legislated for and enacted in July 2013. However, two years later it was ruled an unconstitutional extension of federal authority by the Constitutional Court and was struck down.

Forum Familie, who spent three years constructing a new approach to work-family policy for the SPD. In particular, they argued that the problems of work-family reconciliation were not solely individual problems but were fundamental to the future prosperity of society and the economy. The way this was done changed over time, beginning with a sociological concern that young couples were not being able to live the lives that they wanted, which tended to include careers for both partners and children. The use of the birth rate as a key indicator for this enabled her to tap into to an ongoing media debate, and broaden the appeal to some more socially conservative elements of German politics. After the commissioning of economic analyses from 2003 onwards, this was reinforced with 'harder' evidence of the economic benefits for society of improving work-family reconciliation. This framing of the problem of the lack of work-family reconciliation simultaneously drew on German background ideas of the importance of families for the functioning of society, while placing the blame for the problem on the normative prescription of male-breadwinner model. This framing drew this background idea into the political foreground, where it was challenged and debated openly in a way that had not been previously evident (for example in the 2000 reforms to parental leave).

As Family Minister, Schmidt used her media platform to make the case for the new ideas, and spent time engaging with important actors, particularly employers, of the need for reform. The broad framing of the problem, along with Schmidt's advocacy, enabled the new ideas to function as a coalition magnet successful enough to enable the passing of the first federal bill expanding childcare for the under-threes in 2004.

However, the SPD faced a combination of a poor economic situation and powerful veto players in the Länder and municipalities and the Bundesrat. As such, the 2004 childcare law was considerably weaker in terms of obligations than initially envisaged and there was little prospect of Schmidt's ministry being able to successfully continue the agenda of reform. After the 2005 federal election, the Family Ministry changed hands, yet the new CDU minister Ursula von der Leyen continued Schmidt's approach, stating her intention to "continue but do more" (DE_4, DE_13; DE_16). While the CDU had also been 'modernising' their family policy, this chapter notes that the extent to which the agenda was continued was due to the personal commitment of von der Leyen, who pushed reform further than many observers predicted. That she was able to make greater progress towards change than Schmidt can also be attributed to more favourable political and fiscal circumstances and also a 'Nixon goes to China dynamic' that is a long-standing feature of German family policy (von Wahl, 2008). However, it also

demonstrates the role of contingency and good fortune, given that the 2008 expansion of childcare was funded from unexpectedly high tax receipts from the previous year.

However, political power played an important role too: both Schmidt and von der Leyen were supported by their party leader, who backed them at key junctures respectively. The process of reform offered a number of instances in which the intervention of Schröder or Merkel was crucial in enabling change. Schröder was vital in ensuring that Schmidt was able to get her ideas onto the SPD agenda at the conference in 2001. His support ensured that Schmidt was able to enact childcare reform in 2004 and to get Elterngeld into the SPD manifesto in 2005. Furthermore, his intervention during the coalition negotiations in 2005 was vital in keeping Elterngeld on the political agenda, after the SPD had lost interest in it. Merkel was also crucial in supporting von der Leyen, especially with her intra-party struggles in the CDU and with the CSU. While consistently backing von der Leyen, Merkel was also important in brokering compromises which led to the reform of Elterngeld in 2006 and the new childcare law in 2008. That both of these powerful supporters of their Family Ministers were primarily interested in this policy area for its electoral potential confirms some of the findings of comparative literature (Blome, 2016b; Fleckenstein, 2011; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013)

It is instructive to compare these features to those evident in the process leading up to the 2000 reform of parental leave, which did not shift Germany away from a general family support model. First, while there was a political window of opportunity arising from the European Directive in 1996, this did not provide anything more than a reason to tweak the existing law to make the minimal changes required. Second, Christine Bergmann did not act as an effective advocate for reform in the same way that Schmidt and von der Leyen would. In part this was due to her ideas: she held a traditional SPD approach to family policy which saw it as a subset of equalities or welfare policy; while she was in favour of better work-family reconciliation it was by no means a policy priority for her. She was also not a particularly high-profile politician, nor did she possess the kind of forceful personality that was an asset for Schmidt and von der Leyen. She was unable to win the support of Schröder or other leaders, nor could she build a wider coalition for support for her proposals which were subsequently watered down through opposition from organised business. As this comparison shows, these elements – a window of opportunity, a strong ideational entrepreneur able to reframe ideas and persuade opponents, the support of political powerful actors and favourable political circumstances – are all key aspects in understanding the shift in German family policy between 2002 and 2008.

Chapter 5: Work-Family Policy Reform in England, 1997-2008

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 argued that the changes in work-family policy in England during the period 1997-2008 can best be characterised as 'path departure', in which there was a shift away from the previous approach of almost no state involvement in ECEC and minimal maternity leave provision. However, while this recognises that significant change took place during this time, it also highlights that this change involved "partial renewal of institutional arrangements and limited redirection of core principles" (Ebbinghaus, 2009: 17). This chapter provides an account of how work-family policies were expanded in England between 1997 and 2008; Figure 5.1 sets out the key reforms of this period. It sets out to address the first two research questions:

> RQ1) How did new ideas about work-family policy come onto the political agenda?
>
> RQ2) How did these new ideas influence the policymaking process of work-family policy reform?

Figure 5.1: Timeline of selected work-family policy reforms and events in England, 1997-2008

1997	Election of Labour government
1998	Publication of first Childcare Strategy
1999	Introduction of unpaid parental leave; extension of maternity leave to 18 weeks; all four-year-olds provided with free part-time early education
2000	Publication of plans to improve leave policies
2001	Election of Labour to second term
2003	Introduction of paternity leave; extension of maternity leave to 12 months; extension of maternity pay to six months; all three-year-olds provided with free part-time early education
2004	Publication of second Childcare Strategy
2005	Election of Labour to third term
2007	Extension of maternity pay to nine months
[2011	Introduction of transferable maternity leave][71]

The chapter is formed of three sections. Section 5.2 focuses on how ideas for reform of work-family policy came onto the agenda of the Labour party. Unlike in Germany, this process

[71] While transferable leave only came into force in 2011, it formed part of the 2004 childcare strategy and was legislated for in 2006. Shortly before the general election in 2010 the government implemented the powers granted in 2006 to introduce it the following year.

happened before the party won power in 1997. Section 5.3 discusses Labour's first term in government and examines the processes by which ECEC and leave policy were reformed between 1997 and 2001. This section divides the discussion of ECEC and leave policy, as these were developed by different actors according to different priorities. Section 5.4 examines Labour's work-family policymaking from 2001 onwards. In this period Labour's work-family policymaking became more 'joined-up', so the examination of the process is combined in this section. A conclusion summarises the key findings.

5.2 Agenda-Setting in the Labour Party

Labour's election in 1997 was the precursor to significant expansion of early education, childcare and leave policies. This section examines how and in what form ideas about work-family policy reform came onto the agenda of the party in the years leading up to 1997. Chapter 2 noted the differing fortunes of early education, childcare and leave policy during the preceding decades. This section demonstrates that these differences were important in shaping how and in what form each policy area had arrived on Labour's agenda by the time they were in government. Early education policy was already accepted in principle by the party and therefore Labour spent the early 1990s liaising with stakeholders over the design of policy. By contrast, childcare and leave were not well established as policy concerns for the party and the years leading up to 1997 were dominated by attempts from campaigners to get the attention of decision-makers. In the 1990s childcare was successfully reframed as an issue that could fit within Labour's economic approach, which helped it onto Labour's agenda, but a similar process in leave policy was less successful, and Labour entered government without the intention of significantly reforming statutory leave provision.

A consequence of these differing routes on the agenda was that each policy area was at a different stage of development by 1997: in terms of early education policy Labour had a clear plan for policy development; childcare was integral to Labour's employment-oriented economic agenda but there had been little attention on how to improve provision; while leave policy reform was not yet on the agenda at all. This can be seen in the 1997 manifesto which makes specific policy commitments in early education to "use the money saved by scrapping nursery vouchers to guarantee places for four year-olds…[and] set targets for universal provision for three year-olds whose parents want it", but in terms of childcare made a vague pledge to "plan provision to match the requirements of the modern labour market and help parents, especially women, to balance family and working life"; leave policy was barely mentioned (Labour Party, 1997b). The following paragraphs discuss these processes, starting

with early education policy, before situating the development of childcare and leave policy agendas in the context of campaigns for improved work-family policies outside the party, and the process of 'modernisation' that Labour undertook between 1987 and 1997.

In 1985 Labour adopted a policy of ensuring the availability of nursery provision for all three-and four-year olds as part of the education system (Labour Party, 1985), a commitment which survived the series of policy reviews that followed electoral defeats in 1987 and 1992. This commitment was reinforced by repeated calls for a national system of pre-school education from a number of prestigious sources, each of which stressed the importance of early education for young children's development and for their 'school readiness' (Audit Commission, 1996; Ball, 1994; DES, 1990; National Commission on Education, 1993). In this context, the Early Childhood Education Forum (ECEF) was formed in 1993 as a network of children's charities, academics, practitioners, and representatives of early years providers, including private day nurseries[72], playgroups[73], childminders[74] and out of school clubs[75] as well as local government[76] (Pugh, 1996). The ECEF aimed, according to one member, to communicate a united campaigning position on "the need to invest [in early education], the need for a strategic policy" (UK_20). Unlike childcare or leave policy (see below), the principle of pre-school education was accepted by the Conservative government. Therefore campaigners from the ECEF focused on proving that government investment was needed and on what a system of early education should look like; reports produced by members of the ECEF drew on evidence of the benefits for child development from early education (e.g. Vernon and Smith, 1994).[77] In 1994 the chair of the group, Gillian Pugh, set out vision of the future, which comprised centre-based integrated nursery education and childcare, provided according to a national curriculum by qualified teachers. Government would fund the part-time education in full and subsidise the costs of care through an income-related system (Pugh, 1994).

However, while integrated education and care was the ultimate aspiration, much of the discussion within the ECEF focused on how to develop a patchy system of nurseries, nursery schools, daycare centres and playgroups into a nationally coherent early education system (Pugh and McQuail, 1995). Of particular concern was the question of which settings should

[72] e.g. the Childcare Association and the National Private Day Nurseries Association.
[73] e.g. the Pre-School Playgroups Association which became the Pre-School Learning Alliance in 1995.
[74] e.g. the National Childminding Association
[75] e.g. the National Out of School Alliance, which became the Kid's Club Network in 1990 and subsequently 4Children in 2004.
[76] The Association of County Councils (ACC) and the Association of Metropolitan Authorities (AMA).
[77] In particular, research drew from findings from the US, especially the Perry Pre-School research (Schweinhart et al., 1993).

provide state-funded early education and the ECEF took an early decision that, provided a national standard was adhered to, early education should be able to be provided in any setting, including private providers.[78] On the one hand, this decision was taken due to the competing influences within the ECEF, and the aim, as a member of the group described it, to "get everyone to sing from the same hymn sheet" (UK_19). On the other, the decision was a practical compromise, necessitated by the very low levels of public provision and the dominance of private providers: "if we'd waited for the state to provide anything then we would still be waiting now" (UK_19).

The ECEF had little success persuading government ministers of the benefits of investing in early education until the mid-1990s and was very critical of the nursery voucher scheme, especially of the lack of investment in new places; Pugh (1996: 29) described it as "a diversion that fails to confront the need for a national policy." By contrast the group was influential in Labour's policy development, and Margaret Hodge,[79] whose role it was to develop Labour's policy on early education, frequently attended ECEF meetings and sought advice from the group's leading figures (UK_19; UK_20; UK_22). Indeed, Labour's policy positions reflected those taken by the ECEF including its rejection of the voucher scheme, its 'vision' of integrated centre-based childcare and early education and the emphasis on the role private and voluntary providers could play (Labour Party, 1996a); its emphasis on the importance of part-time early education as a universal service (UK_19; UK_20); and more specifically the ECEF's proposal for 'early years forums' which would provide local level coordination of provision, involving state, private and voluntary providers also became Labour policy (DfEE, 1997: 16; see Pugh, 2001). By 1997 therefore, Labour not only had an intention to introduce universal part-time early education for four-year-olds, but a plan for how to achieve this aim.

The road onto Labour's agenda for childcare was less straightforward; unlike early education there was not a consensus for government intervention and the attitude from Labour leaders was ambivalent (UK_2; UK_7; UK_19). The process of agenda-setting in the Labour Party must be set in the context of attempts to 'modernise' the party's image, organisational structures and policy positions in response to electoral defeats in the 1980s and 1990s. While defeat in the 1979 general election and the party's subsequent leftward shift opened an

[78] This went further than the NCB's previous approach which had been that state funding should be available to "all non-profit-making types of service, providing they meet nationally agreed standards" (Holtermann, 1992: 17) and reflected the fact that representatives of private and voluntary providers were members of ECEF.
[79] Hodge had been leader of Islington Council from 1982 to 1992, where she had expanded the area's provision for under-fives, partly through integrated centres. She was Labour's spokesperson for the under-fives between 1994 and 1997.

opportunity for women to articulate their demands,[80] this brief period came to an end after another defeat in 1983 and the subsequent election of Neil Kinnock as leader. Kinnock aimed to comprehensively 'modernise' the party's image and pursued a three-fold strategy of professionalising the party's communications, through the creation of a 'Shadow Communications Agency', centralising party structures to give more power to the leadership and reducing the power of trade unions within the party (Bashevkin, 2000). In this period the party's approach to feminism is described by Perrigo (1996: 117) as one of "containment", as feminist activism was associated with the left of the party, whose influence the leadership was attempting to marginalise (Bashevkin, 2000). Yet these modernisation processes provided opportunities for women within the party to achieve positions of influence.

An influential pamphlet produced by Labour's Shadow Communications Agency in the aftermath of another electoral defeat in 1987 argued that the party's image was far too male, associated with defending the interests of unionised, industrial workers which was preventing it from appealing to women, despite many of them sharing the party's values. The pamphlet, co-authored by Patricia Hewitt[81], noted that the 'gender voting gap', which had historically favoured the Conservatives, had closed in 1987 and that women tended to share the party's values and increasingly represented the party's 'natural constituency' (Mattinson and Hewitt, 1989: 11). This report was influential among Labour's leadership and the late 1980s and early 1990s saw a series of reforms, which aimed at increasing women's representation at all levels of the party (Short, 1996).[82] One result of this was the increasing prominence of women in Labour's Shadow Cabinets, including Harriet Harman[83], who held a range of roles in the late 1980s and early 1990s, most significantly becoming Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury,

[80] The 1983 Labour manifesto contained considerably more ambitious policies relating to women, including work-family policies, than either the manifestos of the previous or subsequent general elections (Labour Party, 1979, 1983, 1987).

[81] Hewitt was a prominent feminist activist and campaigner who had been general secretary of the National Council of Civil Liberties (NCCL) from 1974 until 1983. From 1983 she was Kinnock's press officer. She was the deputy director of the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), which was set up in 1988 as a centre-left think tank, between 1989 and 1994 and in 1992 she was appointed deputy chair of the Commission on Social Justice (CSJ). She became a Labour MP in 1997.

[82] For example, three places in the Shadow Cabinet were reserved for women from 1989, while the following year the party mandated that 40 percent of party office holders must be women. In 1991 Labour committed to creating a cabinet-level Minister for Women, and in 1993, after another electoral defeat in which the gender voting gap had reopened, all-women shortlists were introduced for half of all vacant parliamentary seats (Bashevkin, 2000; Perrigo, 1996; Short, 1996).

[83] Harman was a solicitor who worked as the legal officer at the NCCL from 1978-1982. In 1982 she was elected a Labour MP and became a high-profile feminist campaigner within the party. She held a series of junior shadow positions in opposition before being elected to the Shadow Cabinet in 1992. She was the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury between 1992 and 1994 and subsequently worked as the Shadow Minister of Employment, Health and Social Security.

effectively the Shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown's deputy, in 1992. However, at the same time as the party was opening up to increased numbers of women in senior positions, it was also centralising power ever tighter towards the leader and a small group of key allies. This process began with Kinnock and was part of the attempt to weaken the influence of the left in the party, whose influence was seen more in party membership rather than the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP) or the Shadow Cabinet. However, the centralising tendency reached its apex in the 1990s under Tony Blair where influence over policy was limited to very few senior politicians and advisors (Annesley and Gains, 2010; Bashevkin, 2000). So while reforms to the party opened up opportunities for women's agency in senior roles, it simultaneously placed limits on the power that such roles could wield: and the most powerful positions in the party were still all taken by men.

The policy reforms associated with the same process of 'modernisation' also provided new opportunities for work-family policies. Labour's Policy Review, initiated in 1987, aimed to realign party policy with the views of the electorate and followed a 'Labour Listens' campaign which attempted to gauge the views of potential Labour voters. The Policy Review began a fundamental revision of Labour's approach to economic and social policy which involved the acceptance of a number of the key tenets of Thatcher's Conservative governments including a rejection of state planning in favour of the principles of the market economy and prioritising macroeconomic policy on controlling inflation rather than achieving full employment. In this process a number of policies seen as out of step with the electorate were jettisoned, including renationalisation of privatised industries, higher public spending based on progressive taxation, undoing the 1980s restrictions placed on trade unions, as well as unilateralism in foreign policy (Labour Party, 1989, 1990, 1991). Despite the 1987 pamphlet highlighting that issues relating to work-family reconciliation were important to women, and that childcare was an issue of particular resonance, such issues did not form a major part of the review process, beyond Labour's already stated commitment to early years' education (see Labour Party, 1985). The 1992 manifesto only made modest commitments to increasing investment in childcare, although it did propose introducing a 14 week maternity leave on full-pay, which would have been a significant improvement on existing provision (Labour Party, 1992). However, another defeat in 1992 prompted an intensification of the 'modernisation' process under John Smith until his death in 1994 and subsequently under Tony Blair. This led to new approaches to social policy which would provide opportunities for women in the party,

now in positions of greater influence, to highlight the relevance of work-family policies to Labour's agenda.

In particular, after 1992 an employment-centred approach to social policy became dominant in Labour party thinking. Persistently high unemployment rates, high rates of economic inactivity and growing rates of long-term unemployment were highlighted by the report of the Commission on Social Justice (CSJ), which was set up by Smith to further develop party policy (1994). Not only was unemployment a key driver of poverty and inequality with cost implications for the welfare budget, it was seen as wasting the main economic resource of the country (Commission on Social Justice, 1994). Of particular concern was long-term unemployment and a growing divide between 'work-rich' and 'work-poor' households: "By 1992, six out of ten employed men had partners who were also in employment; but nearly eight out of ten unemployed men had partners who were also out of work" (Commission on Social Justice, 1994: 38; see also Balls and Gregg, 1993). This was seen as creating cycles of deprivation and areas characterised by 'social exclusion'. While many of the policy proposals of the CSJ did not survive the transition from Smith to Blair (see Haddon, 2012), this focus on long-term unemployment and social exclusion as fundamental problems did. Indeed, Blair placed heavy emphasis on the notion of social exclusion as being related to 'worklessness' and 'welfare dependency'; he argued that the role of the state was not to provide support but opportunity, 'a hand up, not a hand out', and stressed that rights to such opportunities were dependent on responsibility, in this case to look for work (e.g. Blair, 1994, 1995b, 1996b, 1999). Brown, Shadow Chancellor under both Smith and Blair, a key architect of the shift in economic approach of the Policy Review, identified the causes of unemployment in labour market supply and believed the primary role of the state was to target this side of the equation through improving the quality of labour market supply through investment in training and skills, and raising the quantity by increasing the incentives for unemployed people to find work (see Balls and Gregg, 1993). 'Welfare to work' and 'making work pay' thus became significant policy aims of New Labour (Labour Party, 1996b).

The fact that Brown was the key architect of welfare-to-work policy gave Harman some influence in her role as his deputy. Harman used the opportunity that his focus on supply side investment and welfare to work presented. This focus on investment was increasingly important in all areas of policy, as Harman writes in her memoirs:

> [O]ur weekly Treasury team meetings would always begin with Gordon intoning that Labour was not just about taxing and spending but about investment. To get our message across, we had to invoke the supply-side investment strategy as the frame for every point we made (Harman, 2017: 147).

Harman used this opportunity to frame childcare in these terms. She argued that greater provision of childcare was a perfect example of just such an investment as it would remove a barrier to women's employment, particularly for lone parents. She wrote policy documents estimating the number of women who could be moved into work (Harman, 2017: 150), and argued that childcare should be "be regarded as an essential component of the economic infrastructure, just as roads, railways and telecommunications now are. If the workforce cannot get to work because there are no roads or railways, the economy is at a disadvantage. Similarly, if half the workforce cannot get to work because of lack of childcare, the economy will suffer" (Harman, 1993: 111). This reframing was not a new strategy; indeed, Harman and Hewitt had written an article urging feminists to align their arguments with Labour's economic strategy as early as 1981 (Hewitt and Harman, 1981) and it also mirrored the trend of 'deradicalization' that had taken place in national campaigns for childcare (Lovenduski and Randall, 1993; Randall, 2000). Interviews with civil servants, political advisors and politicians confirmed Harman's role in this (UK_7; UK_13; UK_22). In particular, the reframing of childcare as an economic issue was highlighted by interest group representatives as marking a significant difference in Labour's engagement: "It was a real foresight: that this shouldn't just be seen as a feminist issue that would potentially be side-lined in government strategy, but that it should be put at the core (UK_4)." Another concurred: "[childcare] had been quite a marginal issue, and what really changed was the way it was spoken … what they managed to do was to persuade people, particularly Gordon Brown, that it was an economic issue. So, you had Brown talking about childcare as if it mattered as productivity and that was a really major step." (UK_6). The necessity of improving childcare provision thus arrived on Labour's agenda in the early 1990s related to the problem of unemployment and of lone parent's unemployment in particular.

While childcare could be attached to Brown's employment-focused agenda, leave policy proved more difficult, due to New Labour's priority of not alienating employers (UK_2; UK_3; UK_6). While campaigners had made progress in persuading large employers of the benefits of improving provision for their own employees, on the whole business preferred to maintain the existing voluntarist approach (UK_15). As with the issue of childcare, the main tactic from campaigners for statutory reform was to reframe the issue of leave policy away from one of

fairness and women's rights, and towards one of economic necessity, and Harman played a coordinating role, hosting regular meetings with campaigning groups in her Westminster offices (UK_4; UK_7; UK_8). For example, the CSJ made the economic case for improved statutory provision (1994: 153–8), as did Hewitt in 1993: "the economy as a whole loses from the underutilisation of women's abilities. Getting strategies for equal opportunities right is, therefore, a matter of economic as well as social necessity" (1993: 104) As well as the economic case for reform, Harman and other women in the party continued to make the argument that there would be significant electoral benefits to policies that improved women's lives (Mattinson, 2010). Both of these arguments appealed to Labour decision-makers, but they were outweighed by the reluctance to antagonise the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), which placed limits on the commitments that Labour would make before 1997. In interviews, campaigners, civil servants and political advisors all noted that by 1997 while there was a desire in Labour to 'do something for women', there was no clear strategy for leave policies (UK_2; UK_7; UK_9; UK_11). This can be seen in the lack of attention to leave policies in the 1997 manifesto, beyond fulfilling the obligation to implement the European Parental Leave Directive as a result of the commitment to sign up to the Maastricht Social Charter (Labour Party, 1997b). Further, the differences in approach to childcare and leave policy is evidenced in the absence of any mention of the latter in Labour's 1996 Strategy for Women and in the report of the Listening to Women project (Labour Party, 1996c, 1997a).[84]

5.3 Work-Family Policymaking in Labour's First Term (1997-2001): Three separate agendas

Labour therefore came to power with policies on early education, childcare and leave at different levels of preparedness and with different priorities. This section sets out how policy was subsequently made in each of the policy areas: it demonstrates that the form in which ideas about each policy area came onto the political agenda shaped policy development. Most notably, Labour entered office with no overarching agenda for work-family reconciliation, meaning that the three policy domains were developed separately according to different priorities. Indeed, the historical and ideational division between the three policy areas described above was mirrored in each area being the responsibility of a different government department in 1997, with the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE) responsible for early

[84] This was coordinated by the Shadow Minister for Women, Tessa Jowell, and consisted of 14 meetings throughout England, Scotland and Wales attended by Jowell as well as some other Labour MPs and candidates in which women were asked about their lives.

education, the Department of Health (DH) responsible for childcare and the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) responsible for leave policy. While childcare was transferred to DfEE in 1997, it remained in a separate unit to early education until 2002. This institutional separation continued the historical trends highlighted in Section 2.3.2 and meant that after 1997 each policy area was developed by different actors with different ideas.

5.3.1 ECEC policy: two agendas divided by problem definitions, institutions and ideas

Having come onto Labour's agenda as separate policy solutions to different problems, early education and childcare policy were developed after 1997 by different actors according to different priorities. As such, despite policy documents stressing the importance of integrated early education and care (DfEE, 1997: 16; DfEE and DSS, 1998), and noting that "there is no sensible distinction between good early education and care" (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 9), little integration in policymaking was evident. Interviews with advisors, civil servants and politicians involved in the respective processes confirmed this (UK_7; UK_13; UK_16; UK_19; UK_22). Indeed, the basic structure of policy in the two areas demonstrates the lack of integration: early education was a universal, state-funded (if not exclusively state provided) guarantee of 12.5 hours per week of free provision for all four-year-olds available for 33 weeks per year. By contrast, childcare policy aimed to expand the availability, affordability and quality of childcare provision. The main strategy was to foster an expansion of provision in the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector through demand-side funding[85], which repaid eligible parents a proportion of childcare fees; eligibility being both means-tested and dependent on employment.

This lack of integration in the two policy areas relates to the different ways in which they came onto Labour's agenda, which was reinforced by the longstanding institutional division in responsibility for the two policy areas (Lewis, 2013a). While the DfEE was nominally responsible for both policy areas after childcare responsibility had been transferred from the DH in 1997, early education policy belonged to the 'education' part of the DfEE while childcare policy was in the 'employment' side. Within the DfEE there was little interaction between the two areas; as one civil servant remembers: "In 1997 there wasn't a trade-off, it was two separate agendas… you had to go to Permanent Secretary level before the management came together. So you had very different bits of the civil service operating along very different objectives"

[85] Demand-side funding refers to a system of funding in which government funds are used to help finance private consumption. By contrast, supply-side funding involves government funding going directly to suppliers (see Gambaro and Stewart, 2014 for a discussion of the relative merits of these systems).

(UK_16). Further, childcare was a cross-departmental issue, involving the Department of Social Security (DSS), the Minister for Women and the Treasury.

As stated above, Labour's plans for early education were already formulated by 1997 and were related to improving educational achievement and part of a more general investment in education, which was a priority for the new government (DfEE, 1997, 1998; Labour Party, 1997b). The aim of early education expansion was that "all children should begin school with a head start in literacy, numeracy and behaviour, ready to learn and make the most of primary education" (DfEE, 1997: 16). The design of policy instruments reflected the compromises between different interests already made in the ECEF. Local authorities would receive grants from central government and would have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient provision to meet the guarantee for part-time places for all four-year-olds by 1998 (and all three-year-olds by 2004). This would be done through Early Years Development Partnerships (EYDPs)[86], local groups made up of local education authorities, state and PVI providers which would coordinate how each area would meet the guarantee, with any registered provider able to receive the funding (DfEE, 1997). Yet the involvement of the PVI sector went further than initially envisaged in the ECEF. In fact, the government did not intend to expand state provision at all; something made clear by Estelle Morris, the minister responsible for early years education in 1997: "The role of local authorities is not to provide places within the maintained sector but to work with others in the private and voluntary sectors to secure sufficient places" (Hansard, 1997d). Indeed, there was practically no expansion in the state sector throughout Labour's time in office; the large expansion in early education that took place to accommodate three-year-olds by 2004 was almost entirely undertaken in the PVI sector (Blanden et al., 2016; Stewart, 2013).

This decision was partly the result of the existing policy context. PVI providers represented a large proportion of existing provision, therefore not only did any rapid expansion of provision require their involvement, but also their representatives had a strong voice within the ECEF (UK_19; UK_20), which was influential in policy development (see also West and Noden, 2019: 153). Indeed, Morris confirmed this rationale in Parliament: "Quite honestly, because of the low base from which we are starting in many parts of the country … we need what the voluntary and private sectors can offer. We cannot do it without their provision" (Hansard, 1997d). Margaret Hodge, one of Morris's successors, would also make this point

[86] EYDPs were abolished in 2004 and replaced with direct local authority responsibility (Vevers, 2004).

(Hodge, 2001). However, the reliance on PVI providers also reflected New Labour's broader approach to the state and public services, which emphasised consumer choice and the importance of 'partnership working' between government and non-state providers (e.g. Office of Public Services Reform, 2002). The involvement of PVI providers was justified through references to the importance of encouraging different forms of provision that could meet diverse needs and provide parents with choice (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 27; 41). Indeed, the legacy of diversity of provision was highlighted by successive ministers as a positive result of the historical development of nursery provision in the UK (e.g. Ashton, 2003; Hodge, 2001). Thus early education policy was shaped in large part by the advice of the early years experts in the ECEF and envisaged as an expansion of the education system. However, due to the policy legacy of a lack of government attention and New Labour's valorising of 'choice', 'working in partnership' and diversity of provision, policy development took a form which went against emerging evidence of significant disparities in quality between different kinds of provision, with state provided nursery schools and classes associated with higher quality than private day nurseries or playgroups (Sylva et al., 1999). While path dependence alone can explain why existing PVI providers were included in the plan for free places, Labour's ideas about consumer choice and reluctance to increasing state provision are needed to explain the decision to restrict expansion to the PVI sector.

By contrast, childcare policy had not been fully developed before 1997. Indeed, interviews with interest groups, politicians and advisors all confirmed that beyond a plan to produce a strategy to increase provision, Labour had few concrete policies (UK_2; UK_3; UK_11; UK_13; UK_21; UK_22); in particular, one politician commented, "I don't think we really thought about money before the election, it was all geared to the manifesto" (UK_22). The National Childcare Strategy, which set out the overall strategy for childcare in 1998, was a cross-departmental project led by the DfEE but also involving Harriet Harman in her dual role as Secretary of State for Social Security and Minister for Women (DfEE and DSS, 1998; Hansard, 1998a). The drafting of the Strategy led to tensions between competing visions of the purpose of childcare, according to civil servants and policy advisors (UK_11; UK_17). David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, was seen by a number of advisors and politicians to hold a traditional view of gender roles and to believe that young children were best cared for at home (UK_11; UK_16; UK_22).[87] Indeed, Blunkett was, from

[87] "He was into Bowlby" said one politician (UK_22), referring to John Bowlby's influential 'attachment theory' (see Chapter 2). Blunkett's social conservatism can also be seen in the inclusion of teaching about marriage in schools as part of sex education: "pupils should be taught about the importance of marriage, family life, love and

the perspective of other departments, seen as a block on progress on issues relating to women's employment (UK_2; UK_7). As such, he had little interest in Labour's childcare agenda; Harman writes in her memoirs that neither Blunkett nor the top civil servants in the DfEE "thought childcare was any of our business" and describes "an awkward meeting with him, during which he asserted that childcare was not a 'women's issue, it was a children's issue'" (Harman, 2017: 198–9).[88] By contrast, Harman saw childcare as part of her Minister for Women and Equalities portfolio (UK_2). After the election, she continued to frame childcare as vital for employment, describing it as "as much part of our economic infrastructure as the roads that take women to work" (Hansard, 1997c) and repeatedly noted that "Britain's economy depends on women's work, as does the welfare of their families" (Hansard, 1998b, 1998c). Her memoirs highlight her strategy: "I felt that, at a time when the economy and cutting unemployment were the priorities, we'd make greater progress if it was presented in this way and not simply as an issue of child welfare" (Harman, 2017: 199).

These different perspectives manifested themselves in arguments over policy. The Strategy aimed to improve the availability, affordability and quality of childcare (DfEE and DSS, 1998). Yet the weighting given to these priorities differed according to each perspective. For those who saw childcare as a solution to the problem of unemployment, accessibility and affordability of childcare were of primary concern; quality was an issue that could be "tagged on later", in the words of one civil servant (UK_16). For those that saw childcare in terms of education, quality was the overriding priority. This perspective wanted a significant investment in the childcare workforce, to raise standards and equalise qualifications between PVI and state settings (UK_16; UK_19). Further, a key policy aim was a system of integrated education and care, similar to that envisaged by Pugh, the chair of the ECEF, best exemplified by Early Excellence Centres, which Labour had highlighted as examples of good provision before the election (Labour Party, 1996a; Pugh, 1994). The crux of the argument came down to how to fund the new system. Civil servants from the DfEE and campaigners from ECEF argued that this was best achieved through supply-side funding, that is, direct subsidies from government to providers (UK_16; UK_20). By contrast, interviews with members of the childcare lobby revealed that, unlike the ECEF's work on early education provision, interest groups

stable relationships in bringing up children. Marriage and the family are the key building blocks of community and society" (DfEE, 2000) .

[88] An indication of Blunkett's view of childcare as relatively unimportant can be found in his memoirs, where he notes that he was surprised at the amount of money Brown had allocated to childcare and that it was an issue that was of wider interest to the government: "it took me a little time to realise that I was not going to be sorting this particular policy out alone" (Blunkett, 2006: 28).

campaigning for increased childcare provision did not have a unified vision of a particular model (UK_18; UK_21). This was due to the fact that childcare campaigners were focused on making the case for the principle of government involvement, rather than a particular model of that involvement, whereas early education had long been accepted in principle; in other words, the 'ideational hurdles' for childcare campaigners were higher, which prompted a different approach to their framing. This was noted by one member of the ECEF comparing the approaches in the mid-1990s:

> We went to endless seminars in which we were bombarded with powerpoint presentations where they had done incredibly complex economic analyses but it was an entirely different set of arguments … it had to be a different set of arguments because they had to prove that it was worth the country investing in something it hadn't previously invested in. Whereas with education – well, there was still a lot of extra investment, but at least people knew what it looked like. (UK_19)

The ultimate decision to increase provision through growing the market and to adopt demand-side funding came through the influence of the Treasury, which was decisive in ensuring that the 'childcare for employment' perspective was the dominant theme in the Strategy. Indeed despite positioning itself as aiming to meet both educational and employment goals, the Strategy document focused heavily on the employment agenda (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 7). That the Treasury took the lead in formulating childcare policy, which was confirmed in interviews with civil servants, advisors and politicians (UK_13; UK_16; UK_18; UK_19; UK_22), can be explained by a number of factors. First, childcare was not considered an issue of major importance by the DfEE[89], which concentrated its early years attention on the roll out of early education (UK_2; UK_16). This lack of attention limited the influence that campaigners from the 'childcare as education' perspective, such as the ECEF, could have on the process, given they were mainly linked to government through the DfEE.[90] Second, while the DfEE had little interest in childcare, the view from the Treasury was that it was a key plank of Labour's employment-focused agenda. Indeed, Brown made numerous public statements about the importance he placed on childcare: "I have always believed that the proper provision of childcare is not just a good social policy, but integral to a good economic policy. It is not a side show; it is central to the way in which we conduct our economic affairs" (Hansard, 1997b). The

[89] This low profile was physically manifested in the location of the responsible unit, as described by one advisor from the Prime Minister's office, who was involved in coordinating the different departments: "Childcare was in a tiny section of the what was then the Department for Education in an outer building and therefore you had a real sense that it was a low priority … it was not a place to go if you were a high flier" (UK_13).

[90] It is perhaps significant to note that Margaret Hodge, who was key in the formulation of early education policy was not given a ministerial post in 1997, meaning that she was not formally involved in the drafting of the Strategy. She was informally involved through Harman however (Harman, 2017).

Treasury's power relative to other departments is well known and Brown was keen to expand its influence over a wide range of social policy (e.g. Deakin and Parry, 2000). In this context, it is unsurprising that the Treasury's priorities dominated childcare policymaking.

As with early education policy, the decisions taken were based on the dominant problem definition that childcare was attached to. The key priority from the perspective of 'childcare as employment' was to increase the quantity of childcare provision and to make it more accessible by reducing costs for parents. As one member of the childcare lobby put it: "It became an issue of numbers. How many childcare places? How many people are going without? There was a shortage of provision and high costs of provision. So it was all about how do you increase provision and reduce costs" (UK_21). The decision of how to do this was related on the one hand to the policy context: the existence of a market of childcare provision, overwhelmingly provided by the PVI sector (UK_19; UK_20; UK_21). As in early education, the priority of expanding places meant that this was always seen as the basis upon which to build. As one member of the childcare lobby put it: "The lobby supported childcare in any form…there was not a sense that private nurseries or childminders working on their own were a bad thing…there was just a sense that more were needed" (UK_21).

On the other it depended on New Labour's ideas about the importance of consumer choice and preference for "diverse" forms of provision in public services (see Clarke et al., 2007).[91] The chosen policy instruments were therefore intended to build on and grow the market of existing provision. The Strategy set out the government's role as that of an "enabler and facilitator" rather than provider of childcare and would "set national aims and objectives, identify priorities and, where appropriate, set targets to stimulate swift progress" (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 38). This involved providing funds to "pump-prime the provision of new childcare places in areas where there is market failure" (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 38). EYDPs were given the task of auditing local demand and supply and developing plans to match the two, supported by this funding. However, it was the intention that provision would be financially self-sufficient, and funds were not intended to contribute to running costs. The second policy instrument was demand-side funding, with government funding provided directly to eligible parents through tax credits, Brown's flagship welfare-to-work policy. Placing money in

[91] For example, the Office of Public Services Reform, set up in 2001 to drive forward Blair's project of reforming public services set out the principle: "Since every person has differing requirements, their rights will not be met simply by providing a 'one size fits all' service. The public expects diversity of provision as well as national standards" (Office of Public Services Reform, 2002: 13).

consumers' hands was seen as a way of empowering choice and expanding demand, by increasing the proportion of parents able to afford childcare, and therefore of encouraging the market to expand supply. Crucially, this policy also allowed childcare support to be linked to firmly to employment while also ensuring that government support was means-tested.[92] Each of these aims were fundamental to the 'childcare as employment' perspective.

While this perspective certainly dominated policymaking, the concerns of those favouring a more education-oriented approach were not totally ignored; for example, the Strategy committed to a pilot scheme of Early Excellence Centres, which would "demonstrate what can be achieved through integrated services" (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 18). However, the scale of this commitment was small compared to the main policy instruments. Further, the lack of attention to the level of qualifications of childcare staff was highlighted in interviews as a particular point of disagreement between the two perspectives (UK_16; UK_20). One advisor commented: "The first Childcare Strategy was all about female labour market participation. An example of that, which horrified me at the time, was that Harriet Harman thought that part of the New Deal for Young People[93] would be getting them to work in childcare settings: so you take the poorest parents and you put them with the poorest children…it was babysitting" (UK_16).[94] Nevertheless, in the context of the first ever government childcare strategy, even those who favoured a more integrated approach were not dissatisfied with the new government's commitment to expanding childcare provision. Indeed, a member of the ECEF notes that "We really saw it as an extension of the welfare state…it was deeply ambitious. I remember Margaret [Hodge] saying this was a three parliamentary term agenda, to build something like this was not a quick fix, it was a deep, fundamental agenda of reform and change" (UK_20). As such, the question of quantity or quality was a question of which to focus on first, and many, although not all, members of ECEF agreed that prioritising the quantity of provision was a sensible first step:

[92] From 1999 a childcare tax credit was included as part of the Working Families Tax Credit. It would pay up to 70 percent of childcare costs up to a maximum of £70 per week for one child and £105 per week for two children. Childcare tax credits were incorporated into the calculation of the WFTC so the full amount was available to those with a net household income from employment of less than £90 and was withdrawn at the rate of 55p per every extra pound of subsequent income (HMT, 1998b).

[93] The New Deal for Young People was launched in 1997. It was an attempt to provide employment incentives for people aged between 18 and 25 who had been unemployed for six months or longer by offering training opportunities and subsidised employment (see HMT, 1997a).

[94] This policy was in the Strategy: "We are already supporting recruitment and training by … providing up to 50,000 opportunities to train to work with children for suitable people through the New Deals…" (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 20).

> We had the quality versus quantity debate…The argument at the time was 'let's get the provision in place and then we'll work on the quality'. Let's get the provision there and in the longer-term crank it up… It did split the group. Some argued let's go slower, others including Margaret Hodge, argued 'let's get the stuff in place. Let's go for it.' (UK_20)

5.3.2 Leave policy expansion: 'Do something for women', increasing labour market supply and placating employers

While Labour entered power in 1997 with little commitment to extending leave policies beyond a promise to introduce a right "to limited unpaid parental leave" (Labour Party, 1997b), it seemed to campaigners that change was on the horizon: "Once the political change came about, as far as I was concerned it was like 'put your foot on the accelerator, we're ready to go now … There was a massive 'we've got a chance now to influence things' kind of feel to the organisation" (UK_8). Yet the early moves were tentative. Responsibility for labour market regulation lay with the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), which had a reputation as 'businesses' department' (UK_11) and its initial approach was similar to the previous government's voluntarist approach: that if there was a business interest in offering more leave, businesses would do it anyway and the DTI "remained to be convinced that legislation was needed", according to a letter from a junior minister to Maternity Alliance (McCartney, 1997). The 'Fairness at Work' green paper, which contained a chapter on "Family-Friendly Policies" highlighted this voluntarist approach: "As far as possible employers and employees should be encouraged to make whatever arrangements best suit their own circumstances" (DTI, 1998: 5.16), although it also stated that: "To ensure that all parents are better able to balance work and family life, voluntary measures need to be underpinned by a statutory framework" (DTI, 1998: 5.5). This first examination by the new government of leave rights resulted in the fulfilment of the European Parental Leave Directive through the introduction of unpaid parental leave and also undertook some reforms to maternity leave that reduced the eligibility criteria and aligned the provision of the minimum level of statutory maternity leave and maternity benefits at 18 weeks.

Campaigning groups were underwhelmed by these developments, critical of the fact that maternity leave remained unpaid after 18 weeks and also of the lack of pay for parental leave, with many groups noting that this would have a dampening effect on take-up (e.g. EOC, 1998; NACAB, 1998; TUC, 1998). However, according to a political advisor from the DTI, there was never a serious proposition for paid parental leave at this time: "Obviously we knew that if it was unpaid men would never take it…but I don't remember big rows about it" (UK_9). Within the DTI the focus in the first few years of the Labour government was elsewhere, especially

union recognition legislation and the minimum wage (UK_9; UK_12); according to the same advisor: "It was about the big stuff…some of the maternity and other issues were not in people's minds, they were not the crucial issue of the moment" (UK_9). Unlike early education and childcare, leave policy was not seen as an important area for urgent reform.

However, while the DTI showed little interest, across government more broadly there was a growing interest in helping women balance employment with family responsibilities.[95] This interest stemmed from two factors. First, there was pressure from women MPs to recognise the importance of women voters in Labour's election victory and to future success (UK_2). In 1999 the Women's Unit (WU) undertook a series of 'Listening to Women Roadshows' across the UK (Hansard, 1999b), which revealed widespread frustrations around work-family reconciliation, with the meagre level of maternity leave a notable issue (Women's Unit, 1999; Worcester et al., 1999). At the same time, there was growing interest across government in the economic benefits of increasing women's attachment to the labour market. For example, a ministerial group on the family, chaired by the Home Secretary Jack Straw, published a consultation document on family policy in 1998 in which it stated an intention to "reconcile better the demands of work and home" (Home Office, 1998: 24) using the economic arguments that campaigners had been using in the 1990s to frame their demands:

> Good for the economy: family-friendly policies can help to boost the economy by:
>
> - increasing the number of people, including skilled people, in the labour market, and increasing the numbers returning to education and training
> - enhancing financial independence, especially in women, both immediately, as they benefit from a higher standard of living, and after retirement as a result of building up a better pension entitlement
> - increasing the sustainable level of employment, and improving productivity, leading to an increase in overall living standards. (Home Office, 1998: 27)

'Fairness at Work' made a similar argument, highlighting the relationship between improving compatibility between employment and family life to economic efficiency: "Competitiveness depends on the UK making the best use of the talents of as many people as possible. The larger the number of people – particularly skilled people – to which business can look, the better" (DTI, 1998, para. 5.1). Increasing labour market supply was particularly attractive to the Treasury during the late 1990s, as it coincided with growing concern about the tightening labour market, according to civil servants (UK_1; UK_9). However, the twin aims of 'doing something

[95] It is notable that while documents always referred to 'people' or 'parents', these policies were undoubtedly aimed at women, as will become clear in the reforms discussed below.

for women' and increasing the labour supply needed to be balanced against a third motivation: a reluctance to impose regulation on the labour market; a concern which had forestalled any policy development in this area before 1997. This stemmed from Labour's successful wooing of organised business in the mid-1990s and reticence to undermine this politically valuable relationship. As one civil servant from the WU stated "You don't overly regulate business. A Labour government in for the first time in 17 years needs to demonstrate its sensibleness. And part of its sensibleness was not to give the CBI ammunition to say: 'look what they expect us to do'" (UK_2). Further, Brown's growth plans were based on a flexible labour market which could attract international investment to the UK; labour market regulation was seen in this context as threatening the efficiency gains of labour market flexibility. An example of this is Blair's boast in 2001 that "the UK has among the least regulated product and labour markets of any major industrialised country. It will stay that way" (Blair, 2001).

By 2000 Labour leaders were under increasing pressure from women MPs to appeal to women voters before the next general election (e.g. Harman, 2000; Harman and Mattinson, 2000). Moreover, Brown had become sufficiently interested in the potential gains from work-family reconciliation to instruct the DTI to undertake a review of "maternity pay and parental leave", chaired by the Secretary of State, Stephen Byers (Hansard, 2000). The fact that the DTI had sole responsibility for the review and policy development indicated, according to civil servants from different departments (UK_2; UK_12), that the needs of business and the labour market would be of paramount importance. Indeed, the terms of reference were to "consider the steps needed to make sure that parents have choices to help them balance the needs of their work and their children so that they may contribute fully to the competitiveness and productivity of the modern economy" (DTI, 2000: 63). Fitting the 'do something for women' influence however, the policymaking process attempted to gauge the demand for improvements in maternity and parental leave and pay. The review involved a long process of consultation, first with individual employers and parents in small focus groups to discuss their concerns and subsequently with campaigning organisations and business representatives to agree on the detail of policy proposals (DTI, 2000).

The novelty of this approach was noted in an interview with a civil servant in the DTI, who described it as "unprecedented", particularly the first stage of talking to parents: "we made ministers go along and not say a word. So they weren't selling a policy, they were developing a policy" (UK_12). According to a political advisor in the DTI, this approach was taken because ministers did not have a specific plan for what the final policy would look like: "I'm not sure

we quite knew where it would end up." (UK_9). This was apparent to campaigners as well: "I didn't get the sense that there was an agenda or that a decision had already been made, it felt more open than that" (UK_8). Indeed, this process widened the scope for policy reform as it became clear that there was significant demand from working parents, and mothers in particular, for a range of policies beyond an extension of maternity leave. As a civil servant remarked, "we went into this and we thought we were just talking about maternity leave and actually we got this whole menu of policies" (UK_12), which included maternity leave, paternity leave and the potential for shared leave (DTI, 2000).

The second stage of consultation with campaigners and employers was a result of the desire to avoid public confrontation with the latter; the preference from the DTI was to agree policy proposals before the publication of a consultation (UK_1). This meant DTI officials mediating between campaigning organisations pushing for longer maternity leave, the introduction of paternity leave, payment for parental leave and a right to flexible working, and employer representatives attempting to limit what they saw as costly regulations, but who welcomed the opportunity to simplify complex rules around maternity leave and pay (UK_5; UK_8; UK_9). Again, this was an unusual way for policy to be formulated: officials were not proposing policies but, according to one campaigner, "they were sitting there asking us 'what do you want?' And so those were the discussions – in an ideal world what would we have" (UK_5). However, similar to the position that the childcare lobby found itself in in 1997, campaigners for leave reform were accustomed to dealing with unresponsive governments and were not prepared for such questions; their arguments for reform mainly focused on the urgent need to lengthen and improve the pay of maternity leave, rather than on a strategic vision of what an 'ideal world' would look like (UK_1; UK_6; UK_8). Moreover, also similar to the position that childcare lobby took, leave campaigners adopted what was described in interviews as a 'get what you can' approach, in which the urgent need for maternity leave improvements took priority (UK_4; UK_8).

The resulting green paper contained numerous proposals including extending unpaid maternity leave to 12 months, and the paid portion to six months, introducing a similar right to adoption leave and introducing two weeks paid paternity leave (DTI, 2000). Due to the extensive consultation that the DTI had undertaken, each of these proposals had been accepted by employers in exchange for simplification of the detail of maternity leave regulations (UK_9; UK_12). The most controversial aspects were related to leave for fathers. First, the level of paternity leave pay was a point of conflict, with campaigners such as the EOC arguing for 90%

of salary to make it comparable to the first six weeks of maternity leave, but this was rejected by the Treasury which, wary of the cost implications, preferred a flat-rate remuneration (UK_12). Campaigners again argued that low pay would affect take-up (UK_1; UK_6; UK_8), however for an advisor at the DTI that was beside the point; the reform was a deliberately incremental change, a "foot in the door" upon which change could be built in the future: "the idea was let's get this in institution in, get this principle in, and then raise it over time… we should make some advances and check what happens, partly to not make business terrified" (UK_9). Second was the notion, raised at some of the roundtables, that the extended portion of unpaid maternity leave should be transferable to fathers (DTI, 2000). This proposal was controversial and revealed some division in the group of campaigners, which had hitherto been united by an aim of increasing maternity leave provision.[96] While the EOC (2001) was in favour of providing fathers with more leave, unions were strongly against the proposal, arguing that individual rights should not be transferrable (e.g. UNISON, 2001), as were campaigners whose priority was the improvement of rights for women, as they saw it as a way of reducing mothers' rights (e.g. Maternity Alliance, 2001). Moreover, while employers' associations offered lukewarm support to the extension of maternity leave and the introduction of paternity leave, it opposed the proposal of transferable leave (CBI, 2001). This suggestion was dropped by the DTI.

The process that led to the expansion of leave policy announced in 2001 was driven by three key factors, each evident in the process. First the desire from Labour leaders to 'do something for women' meant that there was an interest in policies that were perceived as meeting women's demands. Both the Listening to Women project and the Ministerial Review revealed leave policies as a key area for such reform. Second, the government's focus on employment and labour market supply meant that policies, such as leave, that helped women maintain or initiate attachment to employment were attractive across government, particularly to the increasingly influential Treasury. However, policy change was limited by the strong reluctance to antagonise the CBI, which was in favour of limited improvements to leave in return for simplifications of the administrative processes but opposed extensions to fathers' rights beyond two weeks of paternity leave. These three factors led to a 'bottom-up'

[96] Campaigners and unions had also formed the Maternity Review group, chaired by Maternity Alliance (UK_4; UK_5; UK_8). This group continued to coordinate campaigning efforts and while, as mentioned above, there was little agreement about the strategic end-point of leave expansion, there was unanimity that maternity leave should be expanded and better-paid, and that fathers should get some paternity leave at the time of childbirth (UK_1; UK_5; UK_8).

policymaking process which attempted to balance the three priorities but was not characterised by any strategic vision from the DTI. This process inevitably led to an iterative form of policymaking which focused on balancing women's demands for maternity leave improvements with employers' opposition to significant reform. As a civil servant involved in the review described it: "the instruction was 'we think there is a problem, go out and find out what women think and what businesses can work with'" (UK_12). Further, the process provided little opportunity for the formation of a strategic vision of leave policy; instead, there was a focus from all sides on the urgent need for improvement in maternity leave and while there was some attention paid to fathers' leave, interviews with participants in the policymaking process confirmed that more substantial leave for fathers was not considered (UK_1; UK_2; UK_8; UK_9).

5.4 Policymaking After 2001: Bringing It All Together? More Ambition, More Integration but Constraints on Reform

In Labour's first term, early education, childcare and leave policy were developed separately according to the different problems they were attached to. As the previous section demonstrated, this was influenced by the policy context in each area and the interpretation of priorities according to the dominant problem definition. However, after 2001 policy documents demonstrate that the government now considered the three policy areas as interrelated, culminating in the second ten year childcare strategy in 2004, which expanded policy in all three areas (DTI, 2005; HMT, 2003a; HMT et al., 2004; HMT and DfES, 2005; HMT and DTI, 2003). This change reflected a broader shift across government towards a child-centred approach, which stemmed from the pledge in 1999 to eradicate child poverty by 2020 (Blair, 1999).[97] New ideas therefore came into work-family policy during this time, but despite considerably expanded investment in each of the three domains, policy in each area remained on the path set out in 1997-2000. This section sets out this process and demonstrates that the initial problem definitions set out in the earlier period, which had led to the particular shape of policy development in each domain, continued to exert influence. Further it argues that the key factors that drove the iterative processes of reform in Labour's first term, continued to prevent a more integrated approach to childcare, early education and leave.

[97] This ambition was driven by a concern for social justice, particularly because "the seeds of poverty and lack of opportunity are sown in childhood" (HMT, 1999, p. 3). Child poverty had long-term "scarring effects" (HMT, 1999, p. 26); policy documents stressed the cyclical effects of poverty and unemployment (HMT, 1999, 2001; DSS, 1999).

By the 2001 election there was mounting dissatisfaction within government at the progress being made on the childcare strategy. While the number of places had increased substantially, others had closed and sustainability of provision was a problem, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas (Daycare Trust, 2001a; Wilkinson, 2001). The Daycare Trust calculated that the increase in provision had only improved from one childcare place for every nine children in 1997 to one for every seven in 2001 (Daycare Trust, 1997, 1999, 2002; Work and Pensions Committee, 2003). Surveys showed that childcare fees were high and rising faster than inflation, meaning many parents struggled to afford childcare even with the support of the childcare tax credit (Daycare Trust, 2001b, 2003a).[98] These developments caused concern in government, particularly as many of the problems of availability and affordability were concentrated in deprived areas, which undermined the focus on employment in the 1998 Strategy. Indeed, childcare was central to the strategy for eradicating child poverty and its lack of availability had been highlighted in a review of progress towards this goal (Piachaud and Sutherland, 2000). Civil servants in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES)[99] and No.10 remember this as a time in which there was growing frustration at the rate of progress (UK_13; UK_16).

After the 2001 election therefore, an Inter-Departmental Review of Childcare was commissioned, with a particular focus on how to reach the government's 2010 targets of "70 per cent of lone parents in employment, and halving child poverty" (DfES et al., 2002: 4). The Review highlighted the lack of integration between early education and childcare policy, noting in particular that "[t]he opportunity to use childcare to further educational and wider objectives is being missed" (DfES et al., 2002: 13).[100] While employment outcomes remained fundamental, the Review also highlighted international evidence that demonstrated a "rationale for investment in good quality, integrated childcare for *disadvantaged* preschool children. For such provision there is a double dividend to Government where intervention supports both child outcome and employment objectives" (DfES et al., 2002: 37 emphasis in original). Despite this

[98] Furthermore, take-up of the tax credit was relatively low and the average support paid was considerably less than the limits. In August 2001 figures from the Inland Revenue showed that only 12 percent of WFTC recipients received a childcare tax credit, and the average amount received was £37.30 per week compared to the then limits of £94.50 for one child and £130 for two (Inland Revenue, 2001).

[99] After the 2001 election responsibility for employment was taken away from the DfEE and merged with the DSS to form the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The DfEE therefore became the DfES. Childcare and early education both remained part of the DfES, although only after a tussle with DWP over childcare policy (Cohen et al., 2004).

[100] This criticism had also been made by an OECD Thematic Review in 2000, which noted: "The current approach reflects compartmentalised thinking toward the early-years, seeing early education primarily as a preparation for school and later life, and childcare as a support to working parents" (OECD, 2000: 41).

new rationale, most of the policy conclusions of the Review were expanded or reorganised versions of the 1998 Strategy: the main aim of new funding was to pump-prime new provision and to increase start-up grants for childminder start-ups. The Review committed to a significant increase of funding for childcare, with most of the funding aiming at creating a new 250,000 places by 2006 (DfES et al., 2002: 26; HMT, 2002a: 60). However, with regard to provision in disadvantaged areas, there were some innovations: part of the increase in funding was to be spent on 'sustainability grants' in recognition of the particularly problems of market provision in these areas (DfES et al., 2002: 26). Further, the Review set out the establishment of Children's Centres in the 20 percent most deprived wards (DfES et al., 2002: 37) which would combine the Early Excellence, Neighbourhood Nursery and Sure Start schemes and provide integrated early education and childcare as well as a range of other health and social services.[101]

The 2002 Review was not viewed sympathetically by campaigners, who saw it as "treading water" and "only about numbers" (UK_18; UK_21). Since 2000, many campaigners, most notably the Daycare Trust and the Childcare Commission, chaired by Harman[102], had been calling for 'universal childcare' based on a network of integrated early education and childcare centres (Daycare Trust, 2002, 2003b; Daycare Trust and Maternity Alliance, 2004; The Childcare Commission, 2001); the proposals in the 2002 Review fell well short of such a vision. Within the Treasury, there was also frustration at the lack of ambition in the 2002 Review, and a dissatisfaction with the way that the DfES was running ECEC policy (UK_13; UK_21). The Review prompted a reorganisation of the institutional structure, with childcare, early education and Sure Start all being combined into a single unit within the DfES for the first time. However, it was notable that the unit was named the 'Sure Start unit' and it was the director of Sure Start that became its civil service lead, rather than the previous head of early education. Civil servants and advisors in interviews noted that this was symbolic of the growing influence of the Treasury; while nominally part of DfES, Sure Start had always been seen as a Treasury project within another department (UK_13; UK_20). This meant that while Hodge had become the Minister for Children in 2003, in fact her influence over ECEC policy was reduced relative to that of the Treasury, which was seen to be "totally driving the agenda" by this point, according to advisors in the Treasury and campaigners (UK_18; UK_21).

[101] See Section 2.4.2 for a description of these schemes.
[102] Harman had been removed from her positions as Secretary of State for Social Security and Minister for Women in July 1998.

Brown initiated another review, this time led by the Treasury, with the Chair of Trustees of the Daycare Trust, Lisa Harker, as an external consultant.[103] A Treasury advisor described there as being: "a sense that having made [childcare] a central issue, progress wasn't happening as fast as it should have done, and [there was] a realisation [that we needed to ask] 'what exactly is the strategy here?'" (UK_21). The resulting 'ten year strategy for childcare' outlined a much bolder vision than previous documents, drawing on "a principle of progressive universalism, with some support for all and most support for those who need it most" (HMT et al., 2004: 4). It was the first document that brought together early education, childcare and leave policy into a single strategy with a vision for care for children in their first year. Indeed, the ten year strategy is notable for its child-centred approach: "The Government's vision is to ensure that every child gets the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance work and family life" (HMT et al., 2004: 1).[104] This focus was the result of the influence within the Treasury of a growing body of evidence of the positive effects good quality childcare can have on child development, particularly in reducing inequalities between social classes.

The EPPE studies[105] were especially influential, as recalled by an advisor in the Treasury: "people from the EPPE study came in to start to show their findings to Treasury officials and suddenly the Treasury officials were starting to talk about child development. It was extraordinary! I'd never seen anything like it before" (UK_21). The research was interpreted within the Treasury as making the case for continuing with the main strategy of increasing the availability and affordability of childcare in disadvantaged areas as not only would childcare

[103] Harker's presence was interpreted differently by different people. According to one advisor, the purpose of bringing in an outside expert was to "ask difficult questions" because "they were worried about their own civil servants not being radical enough…it was partly a challenge function: to stretch people's ambitions" (UK_21). However, other campaigners have noted that, due to Harker's previous association with IPPR, she was less of a risk than other childcare experts and was unlikely embarrass the government (UK_22).

[104] At the same time that these ideas were gaining prominence in the Treasury, there was a government-wide shift towards child-centred policy, which was embodied in the 2003 publication of Every Child Matters (ECM) (HMT, 2003a). This review of all children's services followed a report into the abuse and murder of Victoria Climbié by her relatives in 2000, which criticised a range of services for poor coordination and a lack of priority given to child protection (Laming, 2003).The team working on ECM within DfES was led by Margaret Hodge who brought in experts in child development from ECEF such as Pugh (UK_19). ECEF's influence on the resulting focus on integrated children's services was clear to one of the members: "Every Child Matters in my view was entirely based on our early-years work" (UK_19). For a civil servant in the DfES, ECM "was really important in terms of making sure that all the policies fed into each other and formed a whole for children" (UK_16). An advisor at No.10 also noted that one of the functions of ECM was to get all members of the government to consider how policies worked for children, as well as for parents (UK_13). In 2003, as part of the departmental reorganisation prompted by ECM, Hodge was appointed the first Minister for Children.

[105] Since 1997, a series of evaluations of pre-school services had been set up in Britain most notably the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE), a longitudinal study of the development of 3,000 children across different pre-school settings (Sylva et al., 2004). Results from EPPE showed that integrated centres produced the best outcomes in terms of child development, and that these benefits were particularly found in children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Sylva et al., 2003).

improve employment outcomes and therefore income for parents, but it would also help children who grew up in poverty avoid transferring that disadvantage into their adult lives. Especially influential within the Treasury was 'the Feinstein graph' (UK_20; UK_21) (e.g. HMT, 2003a: 19; HMT et al., 2004: 9–10; HMT and DfES, 2005: 6). This graph showed how early socioeconomic status began to determine children's educational outcomes, so that by the age of ten 'low ability' children from higher socio-economic backgrounds were outperforming 'high ability' children from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Feinstein, 2003).

Within the Treasury, one advisor remembers the Feinstein graph as "a lightbulb moment … it was a graph that was put up on walls in Whitehall, it was really influential. Suddenly it meant that the focus was on early education because you could clearly see that if you waited and focused your efforts somewhere else later in life that you were missing the chance to influence change. So childcare started to be talked about in relation to children's development in a way that it hadn't before" (UK_21). The most notably changes to ECEC policy as a result of these developments were: the introduction of the free hours of early education to disadvantaged two-year-olds; an increase in the number of weeks of early education provision for three- and four-year-olds and a plan to increase the number of hours of provision to 15 per week; and an extension of the Children's Centres scheme to cover every community by 2010. However, there was no change to the overall structure of provision: the distinction between early education and childcare remained, as did the policy instruments of demand-side funding for childcare: support for costs through tax credits was increased while the introduction of childcare vouchers in 2005 increased the reach of support for costs further up the income scale.

Why did an ambitious review and the influence of new ideas not provoke a shift in approach, given the evidence that the focus on employment in childcare support meant that many of the most disadvantaged children were not benefiting from policy, while the market-based approach meant that provision remained expensive and inconsistently available, especially in disadvantaged areas (Daycare Trust, 2002; Daycare Trust and Maternity Alliance, 2004; Land, 2002, 2004; National Audit Office, 2004; Work and Pensions Committee, 2003)? Despite the ambitious aims of the Review and the bolder strategic vision outlined in the ten-year strategy, the fundamental question of how a system of more integrated early education and childcare should be designed and funded was never addressed during the review. According to an advisor at the Treasury, this was in part because the necessary changes were too daunting:

> The difficulties of achieving a strategy and how you resolve who pays for it, the state, the employer or the employee, was never really tackled properly … Every time we got close to looking at that it was a bit scary, so actually what we ended up with was building on what we already had and trying to improve it (UK_21).

One problem was that the level of investment required to reduce the reliance on parents' fees was too large to be considered realistic by the Treasury: "childcare is a very good example of a social policy when in our hearts we want to be like Scandinavia but in our heads we want to be like America. In other words, we don't believe that we should pay many more taxes to fund a childcare system, but we would like to have one" (UK_21). However, as the above quote demonstrates, the question of the role of the state was also something left uninterrogated by the review. This reluctance to contemplate fundamental reforms also led to a prioritising solving short-term problems, rather than establishing a longer-term strategic vision of an ECEC system. According to the Treasury advisor: "There was never a point where government actually decided 'let's really think about in two decades time where do we want to be as a country, and do we want to build a different kind of system', it was always about building on what was already there" (UK_21).

The focus on short-term gains was also prompted by the same factors that led to similar decisions in 1998. First, for the Treasury, childcare remained fundamentally an issue related to employment, which was reported in interviews by advisors in the Treasury and DfES, as well as participants in policy development from No. 10 (UK_13; UK_19; UK_20; UK_21). Moreover, the process was characterised by an adversarial relationship between the Treasury and the DfES (UK_16; UK_21); one advisor remembers heated meetings between civil servants from the two departments, with Treasury officials relishing dominating the agenda (UK_21). As in 1998, priorities were decided through the filter of this dominant interpretation and the most important was to increase the availability and affordability of childcare as quickly as possible. This was particularly the case given the recognition of the importance of access to childcare in meeting the government's child poverty and lone parent employment targets (e.g. HMT et al., 2004: 9–10; UK_16; UK_21). Fostering market provision was still seen as the best way of doing this, albeit with more direct state funding for disadvantaged areas, which meant that the demand-side funding model remained favoured. Moreover, given that tax credits were Brown's signature policy initiative, there was never any doubt that this would remain the preferred policy instrument for childcare funding, especially given the Treasury's dominant role in policy formulation in 2004 (UK_16).

Second, as in 1998, the lobby of PVI providers, by 2004 providing a greater proportion of childcare and early education places than in 1998, was able to exert influence on the process and ensure that the more expansive policy changes would not lead to a shift away from market provision. For example, representatives of PVI providers lobbied very hard to ensure that the provision of childcare in Children's Centres would not be dominated by local authorities (UK_13; UK_20). The 2004 strategy also planned to place a statutory duty on local authorities to ensure the provision of sufficient childcare to meet local demand, to complement their duty in early education. The PVI lobby made it clear that they saw this as potentially introducing unfair competition into the market and warned that PVI suppliers could go out of business under such conditions (Financial Times, 2005; HMT et al., 2005: 6). These arguments chimed with the government's existing preference for PVI provision, and the consultation for the 2006 Childcare Bill stated the intention that local authorities "continue to foster […] wealth and diversity of provision" (DfES, 2005: 6). After lobbying from PVI providers, the eventual Bill stated that the local authority may not provide childcare itself, unless it was satisfied that no other provider was willing to do so, or that it was appropriate for the local authority to do so (Clause 8(3)).

Third, while the influence of new ideas about child development pointed towards more integration between the aims of employment and education than had been seen in 1998, in fact it brought the priorities into a more direct trade off than in the earlier period, when they had essentially been kept as two separate agendas. In these conflicts, the Treasury's employment focus dominated policy development[106], which can be seen in a particular debate relating to the flexibility with which parents could use the free hours of early education. The Treasury's position was that the free hours should no longer have to be spread over five days as the inflexibility made it harder for parents to combine with employment or for more integrated education and care provision to develop. Civil servants in the DfES opposed this change, arguing the evidence demonstrated that more frequent but shorter periods of provision were more beneficial to children (UK_16; see also Eisenstadt, 2011).[107] Indeed, politicians and civil

[106] This was most evident in the criticism from members of ECEF that the 2004 document was called a 'childcare strategy' (UK_16): "we were incensed … because it just showed that [our arguments] actually hadn't impinged on the powers that be" (UK_19).

[107] An advisor to the Treasury, who had been involved in both 1998 and 2004 argued that the longstanding split between early education and childcare meant that this conflict was fundamental: "There were two lobbies, represented by different groups, who did want to come together around the same thing. But there are aspects of policy where it fractures. So a good example would be how many hours free early education [the state] pay[s] for. The childcare lobby would say 'pay for it all'. The early education lobby would say 'actually it's not ok for children to be in early education for long days'. The childcare lobby would say 'well that's ridiculous, employers don't give you short days' (UK_21).

servants from DfES were frustrated that the Treasury's interpretation of the EPPE research seemed to ignore the fact that it was *high quality* childcare that made the most difference to disadvantaged children (UK_16; UK_22). A civil servant from the DfES characterised this debate as one of "Treasury against the DfES", noting that "ultimately flexibility won out" (UK_16) with the new rules permitting the free hours to be spread over three sessions rather than five and a commitment to "consider further extending the flexibility available to parents to use this entitlement in a way that meets their families' and working needs" (HMT et al., 2004: 32).

Thus both the initial problem definitions and the institutional divide continued to influence early education and care policy and led to an incremental approach to reform. A very similar pattern was evident in leave policy. As mentioned, leave policy was brought into the Ten-Year Strategy as part of an overall vision for care of young children and like the overall strategy, there was more of a child-centred approach. Unlike the previous round of reform in 2000, the aim was not just related to women's employment but "to give children the best start in life and to give parents more choice about how to balance their work and family responsibilities" (DTI, 2005: 26; HMT et al., 2004: 1). Evidence about child development was important in the case for further expansion of leave policy, particularly the notion that children benefit from one-to-one care for their first year (DTI, 2005: 25; HMT et al., 2004: 29).

Leave for fathers had come onto the agenda within the DTI due to the influence of Patricia Hewitt, who became Secretary of State in 2001. As mentioned above, Hewitt was a veteran of women's movement campaigns for better rights for women. Indeed, campaigners saw her as "our minister" and someone who "really got it" (UK_4). Hewitt had long been of the opinion that leave policy could be used to help challenge traditional gender roles within the family (e.g. Hewitt, 1993; Hewitt and Leach, 1993). As Secretary of State, she worked closely with campaigners for fathers' leave (UK_8; UK_9). In particular, she commissioned EOC research demonstrating fathers' appetite for a greater caring role (Hatter et al., 2002; O'Brien and Shemilt, 2003). This helped bring fathers onto the agenda within the DTI, and marked a change from the previous approach, according to one campaigner for fathers' leave: "I remember our initial contacts with civil servants at the DTI and just being completely knocked back…There was a real belief that British men wouldn't take it…but our research showed there was demand" (UK_8). Indeed, this change can be seen by comparing the rationale for improving fathers' leave in 2000, which aimed to permit fathers to "play a more active role in supporting their

partner following the arrival of a new child" (DTI, 2000: 21), with that in 2004 to "enable fathers to play a greater role in the crucial first year of a child's life" (HMT et al., 2004: 30).

Enabling parents to have "real choice" was cited as a key motivation behind the reforms (DTI, 2005: 22; HMT et al., 2005: 21), with evidence showing that financial constraints meant that women were returning to work earlier than they would choose and that more fathers would like to take leave (DTI, 2005: 26, 49; HMT et al., 2004: 29–30). Indeed, the 2004 Strategy highlighted what 'real choice' meant: "if a mother or father would like to spend time at home with a new baby, their choice is not real if the income loss from time out of the labour market would lead to financial difficulties" (HMT et al., 2004: 15). Such a statement would seem to indicate a shift from the 2000 approach, in which the priority was to increase the length and pay of maternity leave. International evidence demonstrates that leave policies which prioritise 'real choice' for both parents tend to provide individual, non-transferable rights to mothers and fathers and an earnings-related benefit which would reduce the income loss from the higher earner (usually the father) from taking it (e.g. Adema et al., 2015). However, the policies that emerged in the 2006 Work and Families Bill followed the path set out in 2000 of focusing on mothers: it increased the duration of payment for maternity leave to nine months, and planned to introduce a scheme in which mothers could transfer the final six months of leave to fathers (three paid at the flat-rate maternity pay and three unpaid).[108] This latter scheme in particular was the subject of heavy criticism from campaigners who pointed out that, as with unpaid parental leave in 1999, its design would lead to very low take-up from fathers (UK_1; UK_5; UK_17). Given the references to "real choice", why did the reforms continue down the path established in 2000?

As with ECEC policy, the answer lies in a reluctance from the government to fundamentally question the initial approach, which would have challenged background ideas about of the role of the state, which had hitherto been unchallenged by Labour's reforms. In part this was a legacy of the problem definition that leave policy had been attached to in the earlier period of reform, which was of women leaving the labour market at childbirth and particularly the effects this had on labour market supply (see above). Further Labour's motivation to 'do something for women' was important as was the priority of not antagonising employers, who were persuaded to consent to the 2000 reforms due to administrative

[108] Despite the legislation being enacted in 2006, no date was set for the introduction of the provisions for transferable leave, and the powers were not used until shortly before the 2010 election and did not come into force until 2011, after Labour had left power and been replaced with a Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government.

simplification and also because some agreed with the aims of avoiding mothers leaving their jobs. None of these arguments could be transferred to leave for fathers: as fathers were not dropping out of the labour market, it was impossible to make the case that this was an issue related to employment or labour market supply; nor was there any perceived political benefit in moving to a more gender neutral system. To the contrary, such a move was seen by the Labour leadership as politically dangerous as it ran the risk of being accused of 'social engineering' or of acting like 'the nanny state'. Interviews with politicians, advisors and civil servants confirmed the government's caution around this accusation (UK_1; UK_2; UK_9; UK_11). Indeed, Hewitt has cited the lack of any broad based support for more leave for fathers as a key factor which undermined her attempts for more significant reform (Hewitt, 2014). Ultimately the incremental approach adopted in 2000, heavily based on increasing maternity leave, precluded a switch to a new approach four years later. Indeed, any attempts to do so ran up against an insurmountable barrier: Labour's fear of being accused of social engineering and of overstepping the background idea of a line between the state and the family.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that a combination of ideas and institutional factors explain the particular ways in which work-family policy in England was reformed during this period. In particular, each of the separate policy areas, early education, childcare and leave policy, were attached to different problem definitions in order to get onto Labour's agenda in the first place. These respective priorities in each policy area shaped the subsequent policymaking processes. This occurred in a different way in each policy area but in each case was influenced by Labour's 'modernisation process' underway under successive leaders since the mid-1980s. Early education was attached to a problem definition related to education and had already been accepted in principle by the mid-1980s. By contrast childcare came onto Labour's agenda as the result of women MPs gaining positions of influence within the party and reframing childcare as a policy solution that could fit with Labour's problem definition of unemployment and worklessness. Finally, leave policy was barely on Labour's agenda by 1997, although it had begun to be reframed by campaigners as relating to Labour's concerns about labour market supply and employment and was linked to Labour's electoral plans to 'do something for women', a process which would come to fruition by 2000.

This fragmentation between the three policy domains into solutions to different problems was exacerbated by their institutional division into different departments, or in ECEC's case, different units within the DfEE. This served to keep each domain separate, and Labour's first

term saw reforms that reflected the different problem definitions of each respective policy domain. Early education saw the universal guarantee of free part-time places, funded, if not provided, by the state. Childcare policy attempted to foster a market of provision to expand places quickly and used demand-side funding to assist low-income, employed parents with the cost of fees. Leave policy focused on keeping mothers in the labour market, and also on providing Labour with a pre-election announcement in 2001 that could help court women voters. The chapter highlighted that the policy context in each area was important in explaining why particular policy decisions were taken, and it was noted in all three policy areas that there was a sense among campaigners and advisors that making some progress was the most important priority and a more complete strategy could be developed in the future (see for example the DTI's approach to parental leave pay, or the Treasury's approach that quality was something that could be 'tagged on later' in childcare).

However, Section 5.4 demonstrated that there was significant path dependence created by these initial decisions. Labour's second term saw attempts to better integrate the three policy areas, with ECEC finally becoming administratively unified in 2002 and evidence about child development utilised to make the case for a vision of children's care from birth to school-age. However, while the policy aims were more ambitious, in fact the problem definitions set out in Labour's first term remained strong and influenced the interpretation of the key aims of reform in each area. Despite significant extra investment in ECEC from 2002 onwards, the overall model of universal early education and market-provided childcare remained. This was due to the Treasury, by this stage driving ECEC policy, remaining fundamentally attached to childcare as a part of welfare-to-work policy. However, it also related to an unwillingness to set out a long-term strategy or envisage what an ideal ECEC system might look like, which would involve grappling with the appropriate role of the state. Instead, childcare in particular was used to satisfy the employment agenda and the urgent need to meet targets on child poverty and lone parent employment. A similar reluctance to strategically consider the role fathers' leave might play in an ideal system of leave, meant that incremental reform also characterised leave policy reform. Labour leaders' reluctance to be accused of 'social engineering', prevented any serious prospect of more ambitious leave reform and kept the leave system on the 'maternalist' trajectory set in 2000 (Daly and Scheiwe, 2010). In both cases the background idea of the liberal state served to constrain what was considered feasible and legitimate by policymakers and therefore structured the choices that were made.

Chapter 6: Comparing Work-Family Policy Reform in England and Germany: Ideational Change, Framing, Timing and Agency

6.1 Introduction

The previous two chapters detailed the processes of policy change that took place in work-family policy in England and Germany. They demonstrated that in each country, reform came onto the agenda of Labour and the SPD when party leaders were persuaded that there were electoral benefits from expanding work-family policies, thus chiming with the comparative literature that highlights electoral competition as a key catalyst for reform (Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013). Further, they highlighted the constraints faced by policymakers in each country. In particular, policy legacies were emphasised in the English case as helping to explain why Labour opted for a market-based expansion of childcare and for leave policy reform that prioritised expanding the length and pay of maternity leave. In Germany, political factors help explain why the extent of work-family policy expansion achieved under the SPD-Green government was limited, and why the Grand Coalition that took power in 2005 was able to undertake more significant reforms. However, while these opportunities and constraints explain some of the features of the particular policy development in each country, they do not explain the fundamental difference highlighted in Chapter 2: that in Ebbinghaus's (2009) and Korpi's (2000) terms Germany undertook 'path switching' reform from work-family policies that followed a 'general family support model' to a 'dual-earner support model', while England underwent a 'path departure' which moved away from the strict 'market-oriented' approach of previous governments but ultimately retained many of the same features.

Indeed, from a comparative perspective, these explanations pose more questions than they solve. Given that electoral competition was a key reason for work-family policies to get onto the political agenda in both countries, why did the resulting reforms follow different trajectories? According to comparative attitudinal surveys (see Tables 1.1 and 6.2), the German population held more conservative views about gender roles and the importance of maternal care than the British population; it is hard therefore to see how electoral competition alone can explain the more extensive reforms in Germany. Further, that the English reforms were seemingly constrained by the influence of policy legacies provokes the question of why such legacies were less significant in Germany, where parental leave was totally overhauled in 2006. Indeed, according to theories of the impact of policy legacies (e.g. Pierson, 1996), one would expect that the existing parental leave institutions in Germany would be more difficult to

reform, compared to the low level of maternity leave and pay in England in 1997. Moreover, the political dynamics highlighted in the German case pose a further puzzle: Section 1.3 set out how the political and institutional conditions in England would seem more accommodating of significant reform than those in Germany, most notably the longer period in power for the centre-left party and the relative lack of institutional constraints on national governments. In this context, how can we account for the different trajectories of reform?

This chapter sets out to answer this question by comparing the role of ideas in the processes of reform in the two countries (RQ3; see Section 1.4) and thereby providing an explanation for the fact that Germany underwent more extensive change. It argues that the key difference can be found in the type and depth of ideational change. Chapters 4 and 5 demonstrate that in both countries, new ideas about work-family policy came onto the agenda when they were adopted by the main centre-left party. While this policy domain had previously been viewed as relatively unimportant, or as being related primarily to 'women's issues', during this period senior (male) leaders of these parties were persuaded that significant resources should be put into expanding work-family policies. However, while there was a similar change in foreground ideas in the two countries, in Germany there was also a change in the background ideas that had long dominated work-family policy. This meant that not only did a political consensus emerge in favour of work-family policy expansion, but that the ideas that shaped what was considered legitimate and necessary also shifted, leading to an expansion that would previously have seemed an illegitimate overreach of the state. By contrast in England, no such change took place, meaning that background ideas continued to impose a constraining force on the possibilities for change and no significant consensus emerged for a shift in approach. Section 6.2 sets out this difference, highlighting in particular that key political actors changed their ideas during this period in Germany, but did not in England.

The remainder of the chapter seeks to explain this difference in ideational change by drawing on the theoretical framework set out in Chapter 3, which highlighted the importance of framing, timing and agency in episodes of ideational change. Section 6.3 examines the different levels at which ideas were framed and their effects on the policymaking processes. It demonstrates that in England the new ideas were framed at the level of policy solutions while in Germany they were at the level of problem definition. The difference this made from an ideational point of view was significant, with the problem definition of work-family reconciliation serving in Germany as both a 'coalition magnet' which created political consensus for change, and as a 'weapon' against the status quo, which drew German

background ideas into the foreground of political debate and led to their change.[109] By contrast, the new policy solutions of work-family policy in England were not framed in ways that could do either of these things, meaning that ideational change did not occur.

Section 6.4 addresses timing, demonstrating that while an ideational window of opportunity opened in both countries, in England it did so considerably earlier than Germany. The effects of this incongruent timing meant that in England, by the time that a political window opened in the late 1990s, considerable institutional adaptation had occurred, reducing pressure for ideational change. By contrast, in Germany the ideational window opened at a similar time to the political window, leading to a confluence of ideational and political pressures for change. Finally, Section 6.5 examines the role of agency within this temporal context. It argues that Renate Schmidt played the role of an 'ideational entrepreneur' (see Section 3.4.6) in Germany, while in the English case, Harriet Harman acted as a 'policy entrepreneur'. This difference relates to the respective ideational and political contexts that they faced, which shaped their opportunities, as well as their individual approaches to work-family policy. Ultimately, this combination of framing, timing and agency shaped the depth of ideational change that occurred in the two countries, and therefore the extent of change.

6.2 Ideational Change

Comparison of the ways in which ideas affected the policymaking process in England and Germany reveal a fundamental difference in the extent to which ideas changed. Chapter 3 highlighted that ideas operate in the foreground and background of political debate. While foreground ideas change relatively frequently, as new problem definitions are recognised or as new policy solutions are developed, background ideational change is considerably rarer. Background ideational change involves changing assumptions that underpin foreground ideas in a particular policy area. This section demonstrates that during the early-2000s background ideational change came about in Germany. This resulted in political actors who had previously been disinterested or actively hostile to work-family policies coming to see reform as vital to the future prosperity of Germany and, in doing so, supporting policies that previously would have been seen as unnecessary and illegitimate. By contrast, no such deep ideational change occurred in England. Instead, while there were changes to the way in which work-family policies were considered, background ideas acted as a cognitive lock, serving to constrain the choices that policymakers faced.

[109] These terms were introduced in Section 3.4.6.

The clearest example of the change in ideas in Germany is to compare the ways in which different actors responded to the 2000 and 2006 reforms to parental leave. The main aim of the reforms in 2000 was to introduce more flexibility into the parental leave system, providing parents with the option of taking it simultaneously, of combining it with more part-time employment than had previously been permitted and of opting for a 'budget option' in which the leave benefit could be taken in 12 months rather than two years (Bundesregierung, 2000a). The reform was framed by SPD family minister Christine Bergmann as providing parents and especially fathers with more options for how to balance employment and care responsibilities (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2000b). However, by retaining the basic structure of a two-year leave benefit at a low flat-rate, it did not fundamentally challenge background ideas that continued to favour maternal care for children under three and thus the modified version of the male-breadwinner model which had underpinned the 1986 parental leave law (see Chapter 2). By contrast the reforms in 2006 overhauled parental leave benefit, reducing its length to one year and introducing an earnings-related benefit in order to attempt to counter the 'opportunity costs' of having children (Bundesregierung, 2006). Moreover, the reform explicitly incentivised the sharing of leave between mothers and fathers through the introduction of two use-it-or-lose-it partner months. As such, it reflected different background ideas: the normative preference for male-breadwinner model families had been replaced by one that favoured maternal employment and a sharing of caring responsibilities between mothers and fathers.

Both the main German political parties' approach to leave policy changed substantially between these two reforms. Section 4.1 discussed the difficulties that family minister Christine Bergmann faced in persuading her colleagues in the SPD leadership of the merits of parental leave reform in 2000. In particular it highlighted that, although there was agreement that improvements should be made to enable more flexibility, such policies were viewed as 'women's issues' and relatively unimportant (DE_3; DE_7; DE_13). This can be seen most clearly in Gerhard Schröder's dismissive use of the term 'Gedöns' to describe the Family Ministry (Die Welt, 2013). For SPD leaders the general attitude to work-family policies was one of indifference; they were happy to support increasing the options for young women, provided doing so was not in tension with more 'important' goals. Bergmann faced significant opposition within the SPD leadership to reforms that were labelled 'anti-growth' and the eventual law was weaker than that first envisaged (Blum, 2012; Bothfeld, 2005; Die Welt, 1999). A similar indifference can be seen towards the issue of childcare expansion, which interviews confirmed was generally favoured among the SPD leadership. The fiscal

implications as well as the potential constitutional conflicts over responsibility for reform meant that there was never any serious cabinet consideration of reform before 2002 (DE_3; DE_7). Among the SPD leadership therefore, work-family reconciliation was considered an issue for individual women, which could be addressed through providing flexibility in how leave could be taken. However, there was no intention of challenging the in-built preference for male-breadwinner model families.

However, Chapter 4 also described how this changed through the development of the new concept of 'Sustainable Family Policy' between 2002 and 2005 (Bertram et al., 2005a; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). This new approach to work-family policy, based on the new problem definition of work-family reconciliation as an issue requiring urgent societal attention, persuaded SPD leaders that previously unquestioned background ideas should be challenged. For example, in contrast to the indifference from SPD leaders which greeted Bergmann's relatively minor reforms, Renate Schmidt's overhaul of parental leave benefits was promoted as a key topic in the 2005 federal election campaign, with the state intervening to help change the distribution of care work within the family a part of the party's rhetoric (e.g. Die Zeit, 2004; Süddeutsche Zeitung, 2004). Thus the party had undergone a significant transformation, not only of its policy platform, but also in the way in which the problems and solutions of work-family policy were conceptualised: background ideas had shifted.

The CDU had undergone a similar shift in its approach to work-family policy and parental leave policy in this period. In 2000, while many of the speeches from CDU-CSU members in the Bundestag agreed with the principle of providing more choice for parents in dealing with work-family reconciliation, they also called for an extension of the parental leave benefit to three years and expressed concerns that the reforms were promoting non-familial childcare to the detriment of children and families, reflecting long-standing normative ideas about the benefits of maternal care (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2000a). Six years later it was Ursula von der Leyen, the CDU family minister, who implemented the 2006 reforms. Her arguments for reform included the promotion of a different family model, in which both parents were involved in childcare and which involved non-familial childcare for children older than 12 months (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006a). In contrast to 2000, speeches in the Bundestag during the 2006 reforms demonstrated political consensus around reform, aside from a minority of male CDU/CSU figures, who claimed that the parental leave reforms were removing choice and disadvantaging traditional families (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2006b). Yet, as noted in Section 4.4.2, although these dissenting voices were loud, the extent to which they were in the

minority, even within the socially conservative CSU, demonstrates the extent to which the background ideas had changed.

This dramatic change in position of both the SPD and the CDU underlines the extent to which it was not only the approach to work-family policies in the foreground that had shifted, but also background ideas about what was necessary and legitimate. By contrast, in England background ideas remained strong, exerting a constraining influence on reform through the mechanism of cognitive locks. The unprecedented expansion of the state into childcare and early education in Labour's first term (1997-2001) was undoubtedly a major shift in the history of work-family policy in England (see Chapter 2) but what changed was the way in which the policy areas were conceived in the political foreground, rather than fundamental revisions of background ideas. For example, historically the English approach to childcare was that it was a private responsibility best left to the market, with state assistance only available for those 'in need'. In the 1980s and early 1990s these background ideas had been stretched, with the state taking on a very limited role in regulating and stimulating the market and with an expansion of the definition of those who require state assistance with childcare to include low-income families through Family Credit (see Section 2.3.2). Labour's reforms continued along these paths, albeit on a significantly expanded scale: the state's role to foster the market became more explicit and the category of people 'in need' expanded to a much larger group of low-income working families. However, the background ideas of the limited state and assistance for those in need can be seen in the ways in which policy documents and ministers discussed the role of the state as providing a 'framework' for market development and of 'enabling choice' and 'parental responsibility' (DfEE and DSS, 1998: 38; DfES et al., 2002: 27; HMT et al., 2004: 2). Childcare became a high-profile issue in the late 1990s not because of a shift in background ideas, but because it became attached to new problem definitions and therefore moved up the political agenda.

Early education similarly experienced a dramatic shift in government attention from 1997, but also represented a continuation of existing background ideas. Chapter 2 noted that the educational rationale for state-provided nursery education had become part of the political consensus since the early 1970s, while the 1990 introduction of the nursery voucher demonstrated that ideas about state involvement in the education of pre-school children was already on the political agenda. Once again, Labour's reforms represent a shift in foreground ideas, in that early education was conceptualised as a priority for the state, but this did not imply a shift in background ideas.

Moreover, Labour's subsequent reforms to all three work-family policy areas demonstrate that background ideas remained stable over the period 1997-2008. Indeed, unlike in Germany where changing background ideas accompanied path switching reforms, in England background ideas served to constrain the possibilities of path-switching change at two key moments from the early 2000s, acting as a cognitive lock.

The first is the Treasury-led review into ECEC undertaken in 2003 and 2004, the results of which would become the 2004 Childcare Strategy (HMT et al., 2004). As discussed in Section 5.4, this review, set up in the wake of increasing frustration with the speed of progress in childcare expansion, appointed an independent chair from the Daycare Trust, which by this point had become critical of the approach to ECEC reform. According to one participant, it set out to examine the whole of ECEC provision: "quality, affordability and accessibility of childcare…nothing was off limits really" (UK_21). Despite this remit however, Section 5.4 noted that the review actually refrained from asking fundamental questions about how an ideal system of ECEC provision might be designed and funded. Such questions were, according to one interviewee, "a bit scary, so actually what we ended up with was building on what we already had and trying to improve it" (UK_21), as they involved potentially dramatic expansions of the role of the state. According to the Treasury advisor: "There was never a point where government actually decided 'let's really think about in two decades time where do we want to be as a country, and do we want to build a different kind of system', it was always about building on what was already there" (UK_21). In this context the constraints of background ideas about the state's limited responsibility in childcare remained strong: questioning the assumptions about the market and the limited role of the state was simply not considered.

Another example of this can be seen in the failed attempts by Patricia Hewitt, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, to shift leave policy away from its maternalist trajectory. In this instance, liberal ideas about the privacy of the family and the limited role of the state acted as a cognitive lock constraining Hewitt's attempts to improve leave policy for fathers and redesign the leave system in a more gender-neutral way (Hewitt, 2014). Any moves in this direction were stymied by a fear among Labour leaders of being accused of 'social engineering' (see Section 5.4). While rights for mothers were safe territory from this perspective, providing leave for fathers ran the risk of being accused of trying to change behaviour, which was anathema to Labour politicians, as noted by a number of interviewees:

> [T]here were always anxieties about whether this was forcing families to [make certain choices] and social engineering. They were quite sensitive to [these] accusations, particularly about policies that could be seen as intervening in the way that privately people choose to arrange the distribution of household labour. (UK_1)

> They were being very careful. There was a huge fear of the Daily Mail, so they'd have been going in very ideology-light in terms of changing behaviour…they were not in favour of anything that came across as social engineering. (UK_8)

Thus there was a strong aversion from Labour to overstepping the background ideas of the limited state and of the private realm of the family. This reluctance was well known among campaigners and was one of the reasons that leave had been framed by campaigners in terms of being beneficial to businesses during the 1990s (UK_1; UK_4; UK_8). As one interest group representative made clear: "From the point of view of gender equality in the whole, encouraging and making it possible for men's and women's roles in the family to shift was part of where we wanted to go. Of course, we didn't say that out loud, because it sounded like social engineering" (UK_1). For one politician, this meant that in order to press for better leave for fathers, the issue had to be one of choice, rather than changing behaviour:

> In all our focus groups mothers were saying 'it's ridiculous, I want to go back to work, my husband wants to stay at home, why can't I give him three months of my leave?'. So if we put it in terms of 'this is what quite a lot of people want, they should be able to choose it', that would be seen as very acceptable and very modern, very New Labour. If we put it in terms of 'we can only get equality in the workplace if men do their bit at home and we need to force British men to be more Scandinavian' or some more elegant variation of that, Number 10 would have had a fit along with several members of the Cabinet. It would never have flown. (UK_11)

Because it did not threaten background ideas, choice was therefore seen as a safe way to discuss leave for fathers. Yet while it was successful in getting leave for fathers onto the agenda, it could not achieve a fundamental shift in the orientation of leave policy: "what [choice] doesn't do is … use the power of government to get you to a new social norm of men taking, say, three months leave" (UK_11). Thus, the strength of the cognitive lock of the limited state and private realm of the family, expressed this time in Labour's political reluctance to be seen as challenging it, precluded more significant policy change. The contrast with the importance that von der Leyen placed in the partner months as a central element of the design of parental leave benefit in 2006 is stark, and interviewees in the Family Ministry confirmed that, unlike her English counterparts, she sought to make the issue as much of a public debate as possible, even though they can also be seen as overstepping the boundaries that previously dominant background ideas had placed around work-family policy (DE_4; DE_8; DE_18).

This section has highlighted that during the period 1997-2008, ideas changed at different levels in England and Germany. While both countries saw ideas about work-family policies in the political foreground change, as the policy solutions and problems they were associated with moved onto the political agenda, in Germany background ideas also changed, resulting in all the major political actors changing their position on work-family policy. By contrast in England background ideas remained stable and exerted a cognitive lock on policymakers, preventing the possibilities for more fundamental reform. The remainder of this chapter investigates why this was the case, focusing in turn on the framing of ideas in the political foreground, on timing and windows of opportunity and finally on the political agency of key actors.

6.3 Framing: Policy Solutions, Problem Definitions, Coalition Magnets and Weapons

Section 3.4.6 highlighted the key role that framing plays in ideational change. It argued in particular that the ideational level at which ideas are framed has implications for their impact: while new policy solutions may well lead to policy change, framing at the level of problem definitions provides ideas with more power. This section demonstrates that the way that new work-family policy ideas were framed in the political foreground were significant in explaining their differential impact in England and Germany and the extent to which they led to ideational change.

As discussed in Chapter 5, new ideas about work-family policy in England came onto Labour's agenda at the level of policy solutions, each attached to different problem definitions: childcare expansion was initially justified with reference to Labour's priorities of reducing unemployment and 'workless' households (e.g. DfEE and DSS, 1998; Hansard, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1998b). Early education was initially related to a different problem which focused on the long-term benefits of education and human capital development, with the problem definition stressing the importance for the UK's economy to adapt to the demands of the knowledge economy of the future and also the importance of pre-school learning for children's development (e.g. DfEE, 1997, 1998; DfEE and DSS, 1998). Leave policy was initially attached to concerns about the labour supply and more specifically the disadvantage for firms of women exiting the labour market after childbirth; policy aimed to provide women with the 'choice' to remain in employment (e.g. DTI, 1998, 2000; Hansard, 2000).

By contrast in Germany ECEC and leave policy were united by a common problem definition, which shaped reform throughout the period, despite the change in government. The problem definition specified that young families, and women in particular, faced too many

difficulties in reconciling work and family responsibilities and therefore were unable to fulfil their wishes to have both families and careers (Bertram et al., 2005a; BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006; Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2003; Forum Familie der SPD, 2000, 2002; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003; R Schmidt, 2002a). While the potential consequences of this problem definition were discussed in a number of different ways, focusing at various times on the economic, demographic and social implications for Germany as a whole (e.g. Bertram et al., 2005a; BMFSFJ, IW, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003; Schmidt, 2003; Vowinkel and Rübel, 2005), the overarching problem definition remained consistent throughout the period of reform and is clearly stated in the major reforms of the period, in which the policy solutions of childcare and parental leave are justified in relation to it (Bundesregierung 2004, 2006, 2008).

What is the significance of these differences? The following sections draw on the framework set out in Chapter 3 to argue the framing of new ideas at the level of problem definitions in Germany enabled them to be used as 'coalition magnets' to forge broad political consensus for reform, and also as 'weapons' against the status quo and existing background ideas. As highlighted in Section 6.2 the fact that political actors significantly changed their views on work-family policy and that background ideas shifted can be explained by this use of ideas. By contrast, in England, the different policy solutions did not form a coherent overarching idea, so that they could neither mobilise diverse support for change nor fundamentally challenge existing background ideas. The result was fragmented policymaking and at times tension between the different aspects of work-family policy. The following sections discuss the role of ideas as coalition magnets and weapons against the status quo in more detail.

6.3.1 Ideas as 'coalition magnets'

Chapter 3 set out that one of the key ways in which ideas can impact politics is through acting as a coalition magnet, drawing together a disparate and previously disunited group of actors and persuading them to support a particular course of action. It highlighted that polysemy, that is, the ability to appear differently to different actors is a key feature of such ideas. As such, the persuasive capacity of coalition magnets is not simply in their ability to be cognitively or normatively appealing, but in their ability to be framed in diverse ways, in order to construct a broad coalition of support. It was theorised that as problem definitions are more abstract than policy solutions, it is this level of ideas which are most likely to act as coalition magnets. The comparison of the German and English cases supports this: in the former, the problem definition

of work-family reconciliation acted as a polysemic coalition magnet, while in the latter, the separate policy solutions did not generate the same political consensus.

Chapter 4 outlined the polysemic framing of the problem definition of work-family reconciliation in Germany. While retaining the core problem definition of work-family reconciliation, the consequences of this problem were varied, and different consequences were emphasised at different times for different audiences. Within the SPD, the framing aimed to appeal to party leaders through stressing the detrimental effects the problem of work-family reconciliation had on women's employment (e.g. Baur, 2003; Die Zeit, 2000; Schmidt, 2003; SPD, 2001), which fitted with the party's diagnosis of the structural problems in the German labour market (Busch and Manow, 2001). Moreover, while the aim was to frame family policy as "policy for the centre of society" (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2002b; SPD, 2001) rather than 'women's policy' (Die Zeit, 2000), Schmidt's speeches made clear that the problem affected women most of all (e.g. Schmidt, 2003). This framing was successful as the new problem definition was adopted by the SPD in late 2001, having won the support of Schröder in particular due to the emphasis on the economic implications of the problem, while retaining the support of the ASF and women in the party due to the focus on women.

After 2002, the economic arguments were further developed through a series of reports commissioned by the Family Ministry (BMFSFJ, IW, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ, Prognos AG, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ and Prognos AG, 2003; Prognos AG, 2004; Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). These helped foster a consensus that enabling women better to engage with the labour market was crucial for Germany's economic competitiveness, and not to do so was a waste of resources, particularly given women's high levels of education. These arguments were also aimed at organised business, with publications highlighting the individual benefits that improving work-family reconciliation could have for companies, as well as stressing the structural labour market benefits of increasing women's employment (BMFSFJ, Prognos AG, et al., 2004; BMFSFJ and Prognos AG, 2003; Prognos AG, 2004). Further, the problem was cast as one of adapting to modern social norms; one politician noted in an interview than an effective strategy in persuading business leaders was to point out that the current problems would only intensify: "over time if we want to have qualified young men and young women, and if we want to keep them in the job, we should enable them to have some time with their children, otherwise they will leave" (DE_16).

This broad framing was successful in that organised business, which had opposed many of the reforms to parental leave undertaken in 2000, became enthusiastic promoters of reform

(BDA, 2006, 2008; BDI, 2008; BMFSFJ, IW, et al., 2004; DIHK, 2003, 2006; ZDH, 2007). A notable aspect of this broad framing was to stress the implications of the lack of work-family reconciliation on young people and young women in particular. Both Schmidt and von der Leyen spoke of their own struggles with combining motherhood and employment, while according to interviews with civil servants and politicians (DE_2; DE_4; DE_8), some conservatives and businesses leaders were at least partially persuaded by the experience of their own daughters (e.g. Geis, 2006).

From 2003, when the issue of Germany's low birth rate was first raised as a significant problem by Schmidt at an SPD party conference, it became an additional aspect of the framing of the consequences of the problem. The effects of this framing are difficult to evaluate and interviewees disagreed about its significance. Some politicians and advisors (DE_2; DE_6) saw it as a relatively unimportant theme that was primarily a way of getting the media interested in family policy, given that demographic change and Germany's low birth rate were features of media discourse in the early 2000s (Klinkhammer, 2014). However, the Ministry set a long-term target of raising the birth rate to 1.7 children per woman during this period, demonstrating that the birth rate was not simply a rhetorical device (DE_4; DE_9). Other interviews with politicians and civil servants stressed that the birth rate was used to appeal to more conservative elements German society, who would not usually support these policies (DE_3; DE_6). This was critically viewed by a number of advisors to the Ministry during this period, a number of whom felt uncomfortable with the issue and saw it as harking back to Germany's "shameful past" (DE_3; DE_11). Others argued that focusing on the birth rate would lead to questions about *who* should have more children (DE_14), as it was widely noted that it was higher educated women who were having the fewest children (e.g. Rürup and Gruescu, 2003). There is certainly some truth to the claim that this framing of the birth rate did appeal to a form of nationalism related to xenophobia, which was concerned about the birth rate not primarily because of the fiscal implications for Germany's social insurance system, which was the dominant feature of the media debate (Klinkhammer, 2014), but because of anxiety over immigration and that insufficient German children were being born to preserve German culture.

For the conservative CSU, the birth rate was an important argument in persuading the party to acquiesce to policies which were opposed to their ideal of the traditional male-breadwinner family. In an interview, a leading CSU politician put it bluntly: "related to Germany, and Europe's future … Africa's population is exploding but Europe's is shrinking. We needed to change" (DE_15). Whether this appeal to xenophobia was intentional is open to

question, Schmidt was keen to stress that "this is not a feeble demographic policy of grim memory, but rather a policy that makes it possible for the wishes and dreams that young people have for their lives to finally become reality. A low birth rate and unwanted childlessness are not fate; something can be done about it. That is why we have to reconcile the wishes and reality of young people" (Schmidt, 2003: 410). Nevertheless, it is clear that by discussing the birth rate, Schmidt was able to make the case that individual families' struggles with work-family reconciliation had tangible effects on Germany as a whole. It thus tapped into background ideas about the importance of the family to German society, while also making the case that there was a serious problem preventing families from fulfilling their traditional role: to reproduce. This symbolic framing helped legitimise the new agenda, even in the eyes of conservative actors who did not favour maternal employment or public childcare.

The success of the coalition magnet can be seen in the level of consensus that emerged in favour of reform, which, aside from the outrage from some conservative figures, was clear in debates in the Bundestag over reforms to childcare in 2004 and 2008 and parental leave in 2006 (Bundestag Plenarprotokoll, 2004d, 2006b, 2008). A key aspect of this success was that the new ideas around which the coalition coalesced operated at the level of problem definitions. This can be seen in the fact that different actors saw sufficient benefit in the overall agenda, that they were prepared to compromise on certain policy solutions that they might otherwise have opposed. For example, as discussed in Chapter 4, concerns within the SPD about distributive effects of converting the parental leave benefit to an earnings-related scheme were overcome through the Swedish example and the overall effects the reform would have on gender equality. Similarly, business leaders who had opposed proposals to increase flexibility in parental leave in 2000 were prepared in 2006 to support the more substantial reforms. According to a leading politician, employers did not like the idea of partner months: "We didn't have too much support from employers but also we didn't have too much resistance. They were on our side because of the childcare topic … and because companies were beginning to experience a lack of skilled labour" (DE_16). Indeed, as discussed above, employers became active promoters of reform and strong supporters of the agenda of both Schmidt and von der Leyen (BDA, 2006; BDI, 2008; BMFSFJ, IW, et al., 2004; DIHK, 2003; Mohn and von der Leyen, 2007; Schmidt and Mohn, 2004; ZDH, 2007). Similarly, the broad coalition magnet was effective in winning support from within the CDU/CSU. Despite the high profile claims from some in the CSU in particular that the partner months and right to a childcare place were 'forcing' families to abandon traditional family roles, in fact support for von der Leyen in the

parental leave reforms was relatively high, especially among women in the party who favoured providing families with more options (Geis, 2006). Indeed, despite the fact that the CSU effectively had a veto on policy development after 2005, von der Leyen had to make only minor concessions to CSU concerns in the reforms of parental leave in 2006 and childcare in 2008.

By contrast in England, the ideas that led to work-family policy reform did not act as coalition magnets. Indeed, as detailed in Chapter 5, there was no comparable framing of an overarching work-family reconciliation problem and therefore no sense of a single agenda. The lack of an overarching problem definition meant that each policy area was developed according to the logic of the different problem definitions to which they were attached. This can be seen in the tensions in 1998 between those who believed the childcare strategy should focus on education and those who favoured an employment-focused approach. Indeed, in both ECEC and leave policy there was a lack of a clear idea about what an ideal system would look like. As well as leading to a fragmented approach to policymaking, this lack of an overarching problem definition also meant that while framing still aimed to attract support from a variety of constituencies for policy reform, it lacked an overall argument for a direction of change, and each step of reform needed to be individually justified. This meant that a coalition for an overall package of work-family policy reforms did not develop.

While the successful framing of the problem of work-family reconciliation as a coalition magnet can explain why political actors changed their position on work-family reform, as highlighted in Section 6.2, it can also explain a similar shift that occurred among the major employers' associations. As discussed in Chapter 4, in Germany employers had objected to the reforms to parental leave in 2000, particularly to some of the measures that increased flexibility for parents, arguing that these would increase non-wage labour costs (Deutscher Bundestag, 2000). Employers did not yet demonstrate a substantial interest in mothers' labour market behaviour. However, by 2006 the major employers' associations had all come out in support of work-family policy reform, on the basis that Germany's economic future depended on a better integration of women into the labour market. This support from employers is documented by their public statements of support, as well as numerous public appearances promoting the reforms alongside family ministers Renate Schmidt and von der Leyen (BDA, 2006; BDI, 2008; BMFSFJ, IW, et al., 2004; DIHK, 2003; Mohn and von der Leyen, 2007; Schmidt and Mohn, 2004; ZDH, 2007).

What is notable about this shift in German employers' position is that it was not the result of changing projections of labour market conditions. Indeed, a number of reports from German

and European research institutes throughout the 1990s had highlighted that, if demographic trends continued and women's labour market participation did not increase substantially, the German labour force would shrink in the 2000s (e.g. Blau et al., 1997; DIW, 1996; Hofmann, 1994). Rather, this change of position towards reform was the result of employers' changing interpretations of their interests: instead of seeing leave policy reform as entailing the imposition of extra employment costs, employers saw reform as an essential part of modernising the German economy. Thus employers, as well as the leaders of political parties, came to see work-family reconciliation as a crucial policy domain, which shifted their position on the desirability of reform, transforming previous opponents of government intervention into strong supporters.

The change in approach from employers in particular stands in sharp contrast to the process of reform in England, where employers took a consistent position throughout the period of acquiescing to reforms that would keep mothers attached to the labour market but opposing substantial reform that might change men's working behaviour (BCC, 2005; CBI, 2001, 2005; Elliott, 2000; Small Business Council, 2005). While the CBI had been in favour of childcare expansion since concerns about labour market shortages had prompted an interest in the late 1980s (CBI, 1989), its support was never as emphatic as that of German employers and most of its interventions during Labour's reforms involved campaigning on behalf of private providers (e.g. BBC News, 2006). In particular, each round of leave reform was greeted by employers with complaints about 'red tape' regulation and the argument that legislation should ensure minimum standards on top of which voluntaristic arrangements could be made that were mutually beneficial to employer and employee (BBC News, 2005; CBI, 2001, 2005, 2006; Elliott, 2000). While the CBI consented to the introduction of parental leave in 1999 and paternity and adoption leave in 2003, in exchange for administrative simplifications, in 2005 it withdrew its support for further reforms, arguing that the changes imposed too many costs on businesses (BBC News, 2005). Unlike their German counterparts, employers did not change their position during the period of reform and continued to view work-family policy as primarily an area that imposed costs, rather than one that conferred longer-term benefits for the economy more broadly.

Indeed, Patricia Hewitt's attempts to introduce more gender-neutral leave were undermined by the lack of an argument for reform that could convince employers of the benefits of providing fathers with leave: while employers could accept the argument that providing mothers with more leave could help retain their skills in the labour market, there was no

equivalent argument to be made for fathers' leave. Moreover, as discussed in section 6.1, existing background ideas of the limited state and the private realm of the family prevented leave for fathers being framed in other ways. The result of this was that Hewitt's attempts at reform were unable to draw much support beyond fathers' groups and some women's organisations[110], including within the Labour leadership. The lack of a problem definition that could act as a coalition magnet therefore precluded the development of a consensus for a package of reforms, allowing business organisations to undermine attempts to fundamentally reform the leave system in England. By contrast, in Germany, leave for fathers was justified with reference to the overall problem definition of work-family reconciliation: in order to help women balance work and family responsibilities, the government had a role to play in encouraging men to take on more family responsibilities. Interviews with employers' associations and politicians confirmed that employers were not enthusiastic about the partner months, but were willing to accept them as they were part of the overall agenda that they supported (DE_17; DE_20).

6.3.2 Ideas as weapons

The above section demonstrates that from a comparative perspective, the level at which ideas came onto the political agenda had significant implications for their ability to act as a coalition magnet and therefore for how much political support developed for reform. This section argues that the ideational level at which reform was framed also had an impact on the extent to which ideas could be used as weapons to break the cognitive locking of existing background ideas. It is important to recall here from Chapter 3 that background ideas are conceptualised as constellations of different ideas that provide an overarching framework, rather than tightly defined singular ideas. This is important because actors use background ideas as ways of justifying their new ideas. The process of framing occurs in the political foreground; it draws on background ideas to make the new ideas seem both necessary and legitimate. However, because background ideas are multiple, some elements of background ideas can be drawn upon for support, while others, and the institutions associated with them, are blamed for a particular problem, thus creating an imperative for reform (see Section 3.4.6). This process draws background ideas into foreground political debate and, depending on political outcomes, can lead to the institutionalisation of new ideas in their place. The importance of the notion of blame in this process implies that ideas at the level of problem definitions are more likely to function

[110] Although interviews suggested that there was ambivalence among some women's organisations towards shifting the emphasis of leave policy away from a sole focus on mothers (UK_8; UK_14).

as weapons against background ideas than policy solutions are, which necessarily must fit within a problem definition. Indeed, as discussed in Section 6.2, in England, new ideas, framed at the level of policy solutions, did not challenge background ideas but were themselves constrained by them.

By contrast, in Germany, the problem definition of work-family reconciliation drew legitimacy from references to the existing background idea of the centrality of the institution of the family to German society, which had long dominated family policymaking and was at the heart of the family's 'protected' position in the German constitution (Gerlach, 2010; Moeller, 1993). In particular, the framing drew on Hans Bertram's (1997) research to highlight that, despite much talk about the 'death of the family', in fact the vast majority of young people wanted to live in families and have children. However, the framing also highlighted that the family was under threat, as despite these wishes fewer young people were forming families and fewer were having children. As discussed above, this situation was linked to numerous negative outcomes and as such, the problem definition stressed that work-family reconciliation was not just a problem for individuals, but its consequences threatened the social and economic future of the country.

The blame for this problem was aimed at the hitherto taken-for-granted normative preference for male-breadwinner model families. As discussed in Chapter 2, in (West) Germany the male-breadwinner model family represented a key underpinning of the development of family policy and was only somewhat modified in the 1980s and 1990s. This modification involved a preference for the sequential model of maternal employment, in which women were expected to leave the labour market at childbirth, and return to part-time employment once children were of kindergarten age (three or older) at the earliest. This idea had not explicitly been challenged; for example, while the SPD did express concern about women being 'trapped' in traditional gender roles, the party focused policy attention on providing women with 'choice' of different employment and care patterns and did not fundamentally address the overall normative promotion of male-breadwinner, female-caregiver roles, meaning that most of the 'choices' available involved part-time employment (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004; Blome, 2016b). Similarly, the CDU's family policy in the 1980s and 1990s focused on providing women with the 'choice' to opt for full-time caring roles (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser, 2004; Blum, 2012; Gerlach, 2010).

The framing of the problem of work-family reconciliation by Schmidt and the Family Ministry from 2002 repeatedly highlighted that its consequences were *both* low birth rates and

low levels of women's employment (R Schmidt, 2002a; Schmidt, 2003; SPD, 2001). The earlier work of Forum Familie had stressed that young people's plans for their lives no longer fit with traditional gender roles: "Career orientation is of course part of the female biography today. Thus, the gendered division of labour is in question … Women in the vast majority no longer want to be responsible for household and family work, and they cannot [be] … The number of families with the father as the main breadwinner will continue to decline…" (SPD, 2001: 303). The framing of the Family Ministry built on this by arguing that the infrastructure of family support was to blame for the lack of work-family reconciliation. As Schmidt argued in 2003:

> What kind of life model do we currently offer the best educated generation of women in West Germany? Getting a good education, then working for a few years, then the so-called biological clock is ticking, then the decision must be made: Child, yes or no? If the decision is yes, then for the women concerned it means, first of all, three years out of work because we do not have the necessary childcare. Then perhaps when the child is three they will find one of the rare all-day places in a kindergarten in western Germany. Then she can be in employment again. But many cannot find such a full-time place because in many communities in western Germany, all-day kindergarten means bringing the child early, picking it up at 12 or 12.30 so that the poor little one can have a tin of ravioli or fish fingers from the freezer at home, bringing the child back at 2 and picking it up again at 4.30. This doesn't even allow the possibility of having a reasonable part-time job. Women are completely fed up. They don't want this anymore. (Schmidt, 2003: 408)

In reports it was noted that, unlike in other European countries, women employed full-time had fewer children than those whose lives fit more closely to the sequential model of employment (Bertram et al., 2005a). Moreover the reports highlighted that Germany was not a comparatively low spender on family policy, but argued that the way that Germany supported families served to reinforce the problem of work-family reconciliation, rather than solve it (BMFSFJ and Bundesregierung, 2006). As such, the framing of the new problem definition explicitly blamed existing institutions and the background ideas upon which they were based, which Schmidt referred to as "obsolete role patterns" (SPD, 2001: 303). This drew the previously taken-for-granted background ideas of the male-breadwinner model into the foreground of political debate. The problem definition was therefore used as a 'weapon' against this previously dominant background idea. This was the source of the intense controversy over von der Leyen's reforms in 2006 and 2008 discussed in Section 4.4.2. The result was that this framing, begun by Schmidt in 2000 but continued by von der Leyen in 2005 ultimately led to the normative preference for male-breadwinner model families being replaced with a preference for dual-earner families, which was subsequently institutionalised through the reforms of parental leave in 2006 and the right to a childcare place in 2008.

6.4 Timing and Ideational Windows of Opportunity

If framing can illuminate how background ideational change came about in Germany, but not in England, the question remains of why the new ideas were framed at different levels in the two countries. The answer to this relates to the notions of timing and agency discussed in Section 3.4.5, which argued that in order for background ideational change to happen, an 'ideational window of opportunity' must be open, which occurs when there is an increasing 'gap' between social reality and the background ideas embedded in institutions. In other words, when background ideas, and the institutions in which they are embedded, jar with the way that people live or wish to live their lives, an opportunity emerges for them to be challenged. This section draws on comparative socioeconomic and attitudinal data to argue that such a gap is evident in both the UK[111] and Germany towards the end of the 20th century. However, Section 3.4.5 also noted the importance of congruence in timing between the opening of ideational windows and political windows to permit change. If ideational windows are open for some time without a concomitant political window being open, the institutions in question may adapt, thus releasing some of the pressure and perhaps closing or at least reducing the ideational window. This section goes on to argue that the ideational window opened significantly earlier in the UK than in Germany, but in both countries a political window only opened in the 1990s. During the 1980s and 1990s therefore, gradual institutional adaptation to mothers' employment meant that by the late 1990s, the ideational window was less evident in the UK than in Germany.

Substantiating the notion of a 'gap' between background ideas and social reality is necessarily an imprecise task; given the amorphous nature of the two concepts it is impossible to specify a variable that could account for such a gap. Instead, the following paragraphs highlight demographic trends, shifting social attitudes towards gender roles, child rearing and maternal employment and increases in the proportion of mothers engaged with the labour market to indicate that in both countries the way that families were living was increasingly out of step with minimal work-family policy institutions and approaches in both countries based on non-intervention in the family. As Table 6.1 demonstrates, in both countries similar trends can be observed, such as falling marriage rates, rising divorce rates and an increase in the proportion of children born outside marriage. These trends contributed to a rise in children in lone parent families; in 1991 lone parent families represented 15 percent of all families with a child in Germany and 19 percent in the UK (Bradshaw et al., 1996: 8). It is worth noting here that the

[111] While thus far all of the empirical analysis in this thesis has referred to England, due to the data available this section refers at times to the United Kingdom and at times to Great Britain.

largest changes in most of these indicators came in the 1970s and 1980s in the UK, whereas the largest changes in Germany took place in the 1990s.

Table 6.1: Demographic indicators, 1970-2000

	Germany				UK			
	1970	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*	*1970*	*1980*	*1990*	*2000*
Marriage rate	7.4	6.3	6.5	5.1	8.5	7.4	6.6	5.2
Divorce rate	1.3	1.8	1.9	2.4	1.0	2.6	2.7	2.6
Women's age at marriage	-	-	25.5	27.7	-	-	25.2	28.2
Fertility rate	2	1.6	1.5	1.4	2.4	1.9	1.8	1.6
Share of births outside marriage	7.2	11.9	15.3	23.4	8.0	11.5	27.9	39.5

Source: OECD (2021a)

A comparison of survey data reveals that in both countries, attitudes towards gender roles and mothers' employment became more progressive between 1988 and 2002. Table 6.2 shows that the proportions of respondents holding traditional attitudes decreased in both Great Britain and West and East Germany during this time.

From a comparative perspective the data show that British attitudes were more accepting of mothers' employment and less associated with the traditional division of labour throughout this period, although the gap between British and West German attitudes narrowed during the 1990s. Three features are particularly notable in terms of German attitudes. First, while West German attitudes changed the most during this period, it was the period between 1994 and 2002 that saw the largest drop in traditional views; by contrast the shift towards less traditional attitudes in Britain was more consistent over the whole period but less pronounced. Second, East German attitudes were considerably less traditional than those in either Britain or West Germany. Third, some of the biggest shifts over the whole period were in West German women's attitudes, indeed one of the trends during this period was a reduction in the difference between the views of all women in West Germany and women aged under 35, who in 1988 held much less traditional views. Taking these three points together, the data indicate a significant shift in German attitudes during the second half of the 1990s, which is particularly evident in women's views in West Germany. Further, after 1990 approximately one fifth of the population of the reunified Germany was from the east, and on average held much less traditional attitudes (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2020).

Table 6.2: Social attitudes towards the family and employment, 1988-2002

A pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works							
		1988	1994	2002	change 1988-1994	change 1994-2002	change 1988-2002
Great Britain	All respondents	11.9	-4.0	-7.1	-15.9	-3.1	-19.0
	Women	1.9	-13.5	-17.9	-15.4	-4.4	-19.8
	Women under 35	-31.7	-31.0	-43.1	0.7	-12.1	-11.4
West Germany	All respondents	55.7	52.9	25.7	-2.8	-27.2	-30.0
	Women	52.0	48.5	13.7	-3.5	-34.8	-38.3
	Women under 35	34.1	34.6	11.7	0.5	-22.9	-22.4
East Germany	All respondents		-17	-23.3		-6.3	
	Women		-26	-35.3		-9.3	
	Women under 35		-38	-58		-20	
All in all, family life suffers when the woman has a full-time job.							
		1988	1994	2002	change 1988-1994	change 1994-2002	change 1988-2002
Great Britain	All respondents	1	-18	-9	-19	8.8	-10.0
	Women	-3.5	-16.7	-11.7	-13.2	5	-8.2
	Women under 35	-31.5	-39.3	-32.5	-7.8	6.8	-1.0
West Germany	All respondents	33	38	11	4.5	-27	-22.0
	Women	32.8	34.8	7.2	2	-27.6	-25.6
	Women under 35	-0.6	13.8	-12.30	14.4	-26.1	-11.7
East Germany	All respondents		-28	-32		-4	
	Women		-26.4	-38.5		-12.1	
	Women under 35		-33.3	-73		-39.7	
A man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family							
		1988	1994	2002	change 1988-1994	change 1994-2002	change 1988-2002
Great Britain	All respondents	-24.6	-34.9	-46.9	-10.3	-12	-22.3
	Women	-32.1	-39.3	-53.9	-7.2	-14.6	-21.8
	Women under 35	-73	-66	-56	7.9	10	17.0
West Germany	All respondents	8.6	-10.5	-37.8	-19.1	-27.3	-46.4
	Women	7.1	-18.6	-45.8	-25.7	-27.2	-52.9
	Women under 35	-37	-53	-41	-16.4	11.9	-4.0
East Germany	All respondents		-28.4	-32.4		-4	
	Women		-69.2	-61.6		7.6	
	Women under 35		-75	-42		32.8	
Women should stay at home when there is a child under school age							
		1988	1994	2002	change 1988-1994	change 1994-2002	change 1988-2002
Great Britain	All respondents	69.1	62.2	56.2	-6.9	-6	-12.9
	Women	65.9	57.4	53.2	-8.5	-4.2	-12.7
	Women under 35	51.6	45	38.7	-6.6	-6.3	-12.9
West Germany	All respondents	75.8	68.5	52	-7.3	-16.5	-23.8
	Women	73.9	65.3	43.8	-8.6	-21.5	-30.1
	Women under 35	63	58	42.9	-5	-15.1	-20.1
East Germany	All respondents		20.7	14.8		-5.9	
	Women		18.3	11.6		-6.7	
	Women under 35		10.7	2.8		-7.9	

Source: (ISSP Research Group, 1990, 1997, 2013). The figures given for the top three questions are the proportion of people who agree minus the proportion of people who disagree. In these questions negative numbers indicate that more people disagree than agree. The figures given for the final question are the proportion of people who chose 'stay at home' as opposed to 'work full-time' or 'work part-time'. For all questions a lower number indicates a less 'traditional' attitude and a negative number in the 'change' columns indicates a shift away from 'traditional' values.

By contrast there is no a similar attitudinal shift in the British population during this period, but rather a continued gradual decline from an already lower level of traditional values. Due to the fact that the above cited demographic trends took place earlier in the UK than in West Germany, one can speculate that a similar shift in British attitudes had already taken place. Unfortunately, comparable data on social attitudes is not available before 1988, although results from British data do appear to support this assumption. Table 6.3 presents data from a question from the British Social Attitudes Survey that reflects attitudes towards gender roles. It indicates a large decline in traditional attitudes to the gender division of labour during the late 1980s. Analysis by age indicates that this was largely driven by considerably less traditional views in younger cohorts, as well as substantial declines in the proportion of traditional views among those who would have been in their thirties during the late 1980s. Other data concurs: in 1988 45 percent of working-age women believed that a married woman with children under school age should stay at home, a figure that had fallen dramatically from 78 percent in 1965 and 62 percent in 1980 (Witherspoon, 1988).

Table 6.3: British attitudes to gender roles, 1984-2002

	1984	1987	1989	1994	2002
% agree 'a man's job is to earn money; a woman's job is to look after the home and family'					
All	43	48	28	24	17
Birth cohort					
1910s	71	69			
1920s	57	50	46	46	42
1930s	39	38	33	27	34
1940s	31	21	23	20	14
1950s	28	11	16	14	7
1960s		11	14	9	11
1970s				8	9

Source: Park et al (2013: 137–138).

While demographic trends and attitudinal data provide a sense of a growing gap between background ideas and social reality, rising maternal employment gives the clearest sign of how families' behaviour was increasingly diverging from the ideas embedded in policy institutions. Between 1985 and 1993 the proportion of employed mothers of children under ten grew from

35 to 46 percent in West Germany[112] and from 38 to 53 percent in the UK (EC Childcare Network, 1996: 137–8). The difficulties that mothers faced in the labour market are hinted at by the high proportion of mothers that were employed part-time. In 1993 66 percent of employed mothers of children under ten in the UK worked part-time, whereas in Germany the overall proportion was 49 percent, but in the former West Germany stood at 61 percent (EC Childcare Network, 1996: 137–8). These rates were much higher than the proportion of employed women working part-time in both countries, which stood at 41 percent in the UK and 28 percent in Germany (OECD, 2020a).

Further, substantial difference in employment rates between mothers and women without children and between mothers of younger and older children reveal the difference that young children made to women's employment. In 1988, 83 percent of women aged 20-39 without children were employed in the UK, compared to only 46 percent of women with children under ten; in West Germany the respective figures were 75 percent and 38 percent (EC Childcare Network, 1990: 6). Figures from 1993 show that while nearly three in five mothers of children aged between three and ten were employed in Germany (58 percent) and the UK (59 percent), among mothers of children under three the respective rates were much lower (40 and 44 percent) (EC Childcare Network, 1996: 140). By 1998, the gender gap in employment rates between men and women, which for those without children was 3.8 percent in Germany and 1.5 percent in the UK, stood at 32 percent and 34.6 percent respectively for those with children under three (Eurostat, 2018).

Finally, a comparison of the employment rates among lone mothers and married or cohabiting mothers reveals that in the UK, the growth in maternal employment was not shared by lone mothers, a group particularly reliant on the availability of childcare for employment (e.g. Dilnot and Duncan, 1992; Millar and Ridge, 2001). While in Germany in 1992 lone mothers and married or co-habiting mothers shared low employment rates of 40 and 41 percent respectively, in the UK the employment rate of lone parents (40 percent) was considerably lower than that of married or cohabiting mothers (62 percent) (Bradshaw et al., 1996: 11–12). This difference had grown substantially since the 1970s as the employment rate of married and cohabiting mothers increased, while that of lone parents actually decreased (Haskey, 1998).

Overall therefore, the demographic, attitudinal and employment data combine to provide a picture of an ideational window of opportunity opening in both countries. However, while the

[112] In East Germany in 1993, the proportion of mothers of children under 10 in employment was 69 percent, with 55 percent in full-time employment and 14 percent in part-time (EC Childcare Network, 1996: 137).

timing of the opening of the German ideational window roughly coincided with the opening of a political window with the election of the SPD-Green coalition in 1998, in the UK it appears that a window opened around at least a decade before Labour came to power in 1997. It is notable, as discussed in Section 2.3.2, that work-family policies emerged as political issues in the UK in the late-1980s, perhaps reflecting this gap. However, in the context of a government hostile to work-family policies, nothing came of this pressure until the minor reforms of the Major government in 1994 and 1996. In the absence of ideational change, work-family policy institutions did undergo a process of adaptation. In particular, the late 1980s and early 1990s are characterised by rapid growth in the provision of child daycare among private providers (Randall, 2000). Table 6.4 sets out this growth, which demonstrates that, while nowhere near sufficient to meet demand, the rise in places among private nurseries and childminders in the late 1980s and early 1990s was markedly different to the previous decade.

Table 6.4: Growth of services for pre-school children, England, 1975-1994

	1975	**1985**	**1994**
Places per 100 children aged 0-4			
Local authority day nurseries	0.8	1.0	0.7
Private nurseries	0.8	0.8	3.8
Childminders	2.6	4.7	11.0
Pupils as % of 3- and 4-year-olds			
Nursery schools and classes	10.0	22.5	26.4
Infant classes in primary schools	18.9	20.7	25.0

Source: Pugh (2001: 13).

Moreover, some large firms were, by the early 1990s, offering their employees more generous maternity leave in terms of length, payment and eligibility than the meagre level of statutory provision, and some were also providing paid paternity and parental leave (House of Commons, 1995; The Hansard Society, 1990). This is corroborated by interview data from interest groups which highlighted that campaigners for improved leave policy had considerably more success with individual employers than with the government in the early 1990s (UK_3; UK_4; UK_8). It is clear that limited levels of privately provided childcare and firm-level leave policies were not a sufficient solution to a national problem of work-family reconciliation; indeed such provision only catered for middle-class families who could afford the significant fees, while provision of firm-level leave policies was mainly in large private firms or in the public sector (Forth et al., 1997).

Comparative data suggests that, as discussed in Chapter 3, this institutional adaptation did act as something of a pressure valve in the UK, reducing the gap between lived reality and the background ideas embedded within them, whereas in Germany, where the gap was only emerging in the mid-1990s, the ideational window was starker. For example, according to the 1998 European Employment Options for the Future survey, among families with children under six, over half (52.3 percent) of Germans were living in couples in which the father worked full-time and the mother was not employed, despite only 5.7 percent saying this was their preferred employment pattern. The respective figures for the UK were 32.8 percent and 13.3 percent (OECD, 2001a: 136). The 1996 Eurobarometer survey also indicates some difference in the way that work-family reconciliation was felt in Germany and the UK by the mid 1990s: Table 6.5 shows that when women were asked to choose between two statements about the possibilities of balancing employment and childcare responsibilities, German respondents (in both the former East and West) were more pessimistic than their UK counterparts.

Table 6.5: Women's perceptions of work-family reconciliation, 1996

Which of these statements do you think is closest to reality nowadays?			
	Women are often forced to choose between having childen and working	Women can combine working and having children	weighted n=
West Germany	76.5	23.5	660.6
East Germany	68.2	31.8	682.8
Great Britain	36.6	63.4	682.1

Source: European Commission (2012)

Taken together there is therefore some evidence for the claim that the ideational window in Germany was, by the late 1990s, starker than in the UK, where a process of institutional adaptation had been ongoing since the mid-1980s. While this evidence is not sufficient to claim that the window in the UK was closed by 1997, and there was clearly still a large gap between social reality and background ideas, it could indicate that it may have been less evident to decision-makers, which would have made the task for potential ideational entrepreneurs more difficult.

6.5 Agency and Institutional and Political Context

As Chapter 3 argued, ideational change is closely related to the notion of agency. Indeed, the opening of a window of opportunity is ultimately meaningless if it is not seized by actors with new ideas. This section focuses on the comparative role of agency in the two countries. It demonstrates that the key 'carriers' of new ideas – Renate Schmidt in Germany and Harriet Harman in England – faced different political and institutional contexts in their attempts to get work-family policy onto the agenda of their respective parties. The result of this was that Schmidt acted as an 'ideational entrepreneur', while Harman played the part of a 'policy entrepreneur'. Chapter 3 highlighted the key differences between these two concepts: while a policy entrepreneur attempts to take advantage of political windows of opportunity in order to get their preferred policy solution onto the political agenda, ideational entrepreneurs deliberately seek to challenge ideas and persuade others of the necessity and legitimacy of change. Chapter 3 also highlighted that the ability of actors to play these different roles relate to their resources, which are a function of their institutional position, the opportunities available to them but also to their personal ability to persuade others to support their ideas. This section addresses each of these factors in turn; it argues that while there were some differences in Schmidt and Harman's power within their respective parties, in order to get new ideas onto the agenda both were faced with the same challenge of persuading party leaders to support their ideas. Despite similarities in the two parties' ideological approach and to the way in which party leaders were, in the mid-1990s, largely uninterested in work-family issues, political circumstances in the two countries led party leaders in the SPD to be more receptive to new ideas than those in Labour.

The opportunity structures that faced Schmidt and Harman in their respective parties were in some ways similar. Both parties had undergone processes of organisational modernisation since the 1980s which had increased the representation of women within the party, but men still held the most powerful roles. As discussed in Section 5.2, part of Labour's 'modernisation' process since 1987 involved increasing women's representation in the party. By the 1990s, a number of women had gained positions of influence, even though the highest positions in the party remained dominated by men. However, the process of modernisation that led to the increased representation of women also involved an increasing centralisation of power in the party leadership, at the expense of first party members and subsequently of the shadow cabinet (Annesley and Gains, 2010; Hay, 1999). Under Blair, decision-making power was concentrated in a very small group of politicians and advisors which coalesced around Blair and Gordon

Brown (Bashevkin, 2000; Hay, 1999; Smith, 2000). Interviews confirmed the sense that for those not in this tight-knit group, getting policy onto Labour's agenda involved attracting the attention of those who were. As one politician stated, "at the end of the day, what was of critical importance, was what were Tony and Gordon really interested in and focused on" (UK_11). Thus, while organisational reforms provided opportunities for women to achieve senior roles within the party, the centralisation of power simultaneously reduced the influence of these senior roles in comparison to the leadership, which remained dominated by men. The effect was that women ministers, such as Harman, had little direct influence over policymaking; indeed an advisor working in government in the late 1990s described the atmosphere in the leadership group as "a boy's club" who saw policy for women as "instrumental" (UK_2; UK_7). In this context, as Perrigo (1996: 117) stated in her analysis of women's ability to influence the agenda, "[t]hose forcing the pace of party change have had a very different agenda. Women have been both constrained by and forced to adapt their own strategies in order to influence those other agendas."

The German context provided similar opportunities for reform. Following its loss of power in 1982 the SPD had also taken steps to improve the representation of women within the party. By 1998, 40 percent of SPD party positions and parliamentary seats were reserved for women, and women held 21 of the 45 positions in the party leadership in 1999 (Junker, 2001: 10). However, as in England, it is notable that decision-making positions remained male-dominated and women ministers in the Schröder governments remained in traditionally 'female' policy domains such as health, education and family policy (Mckay, 2004; Meyer, 2003). However, power at the top of the party was not as centralised in the SPD as in Labour. In fact, the leadership of the party was characterised in the 1990s by competition between different factions of the party. Indeed, the late 1980s and 1990s were a period of instability in the leadership, illustrated by the fact that the position of party chair, which had been held by Willy Brandt between 1964 and 1987, was occupied by six different people before Gerhard Schröder took up the position in 1999.[113] Indeed, the leadership in the 1990s existed in a constant state of internal competition.[114] From 1995 the party was led by Oskar Lafontaine, who

[113] The party chair is the leader of the party, but the party's candidate for Chancellor is not necessarily the same person. It is worth noting that this is a trend that has continued; since Schröder left the position in 2004 there have been a further eight permanent holders of the position, with only one, Sigmar Gabriel holding it for longer than three years.

[114] In part this was the result of the SPD's fragmented structure in which local and Länder parties form regional power bases and in which different interest groups and different networks of left, centrist and right activists compete for influence (Busch and Manow, 2001); a structure that Lösche (1993) has described as being made up of "federation of federations of federations of local groups."

represented the left, while Schröder, who was seen as a 'moderniser', developed his profile within the party through criticisms of party leadership, which he could afford to do because of his power base as Minister-President of Lower Saxony (Busch and Manow, 2001; Jun, 2003; Lösche, 1998).

However, the political context of the two parties in the late 1990s meant that the SPD was more open to new ideas than Labour. As highlighted in Section 5.2, Labour's policy programme had undergone a protracted process of 'modernisation' that began under the leadership of Neil Kinnock in the aftermath of a third successive electoral defeat in 1987. The 1987 Policy Review ushered in a new focus on supply-side economic policy, an emphasis on fiscal restraint, a distancing from pro-union positions and a multilateral, pro-European foreign policy (Labour Party, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992). When Blair became leader in 1994, he rebranded the party 'New' Labour and symbolised the break with the past by rewriting clause IV of the party's constitution which had stressed commitment to "common ownership of the means of production" (see Smith, 2000). Under Blair and Brown, New Labour's policy agenda further developed in the direction begun in 1987 and was labelled 'the Third Way' between old-style Keynesian social democracy and the unfettered neoliberal approach of Thatcherism (Blair, 1995a, 1996b, 1998; Giddens, 1998; Mandelson and Liddle, 1996). The distinction between New Labour and 'old' Labour was considered crucial by party leaders in the electoral strategy of winning middle-class voters and was repeatedly referred to in speeches and documents (Blair, 1996a, 1996a, 1996b; Labour Party, 1997b; Mandelson and Liddle, 1996). As Perrigo (1996: 125) notes about the New Labour leadership in the mid-1990s: "The leadership's concern with the electorate's perceptions of the party dictated its attitudes." The central leadership group therefore kept an extremely tight grip on policy, leaving little leeway for policy development outside what were considered core areas that would form the basis of the 1997 manifesto: investments in education and health, the introduction of a minimum wage and moving people "from welfare to work" (Labour Party, 1997b). Indeed an interview with a civil servant who worked closely with leading Labour figures after 1997 noted: "They were so afraid … they'd spent 17 years in the wilderness, being told they were unelectable…and so it was really important for them to keep everything under strict control" (UK_2).

By contrast, despite a similar run of electoral defeats, the SPD had not undergone such a process of programmatic reform, and neither did it have a central leadership with a tight grip on the policy agenda. After being ousted from government in 1982, the party spent much of the 1980s in internal debate about how best to deal with the new electoral threat of the Green Party

and in drafting a new 'basic programme' that would update the 1959 Bad Godesberg programme for the challenges of the modern world (Busch and Manow, 2001; Jun, 2003; Lösche, 1993, 1998). However, after lengthy discussion and compromise between the various factions in the party, the unveiling of the Berlin Programme in December 1989 was completely upstaged by the falling of the Berlin Wall and the political context was so totally altered that the new political direction was immediately considered irrelevant (Busch and Manow, 2001; Lösche, 1998). After a catastrophic defeat in the 1990 federal elections, in which the SPD had been leading in the polls until a few months before the election, the party was run by a succession of chairmen with very short tenures, none of whom made significant attempts to redesign the party's programmatic stance, instead being more preoccupied in shoring up political support in the competitive context of the party leadership, discussed above (Jun, 2003).[115] The lack of programmatic reform meant that the SPD approached the 1998 federal election with an approach that attempted both to shore up its traditional vote and to appeal to new voters who felt that the CDU of Kohl was increasingly old-fashioned. This can be seen both in the twin figures of the SPD election campaign, Lafontaine as chairman and Schröder as the candidate for chancellor, as well as in the party's manifesto title "Work, Innovation and Social Justice" (SPD, 1998). While the party's slogan 'die Neue Mitte' was effective in casting the party as a modern alternative to the Kohl government, it was according to Busch and Manow (2001: 179) "merely a slogan … not one of deeper programmatic dignity." Contrary to the position of Labour in 1997 therefore, the SPD did not have a clearly defined ideology; indeed, Lösche (1998: 536), in characterising the party in 1998 noted that "[a]lthough the party is informed by a vague ideological consensus, this consensus does not influence day-to-day political decisions."

These differences can be seen clearly in the two parties' interpretations of the electoral potential of work-family policies. As Chapters 4 and 5 highlighted, research conducted in both contexts demonstrated that Labour and the SPD could better appeal to women voters through work-family policies. In England, in the context of Labour's rigid agenda, this electoral incentive was interpreted by Labour leaders in an instrumental way: policy change could be exchanged for women's votes. This can be seen most clearly in leave policy, where the plans

[115] While timing and weak leadership played a part in the lack of reformulation of policy, it should also be noted that the SPD was not deprived of power in the same way that Labour was. Due to the German federal system, the party remained in positions of power in a number of Länder and, from the early 1990s held a majority of seats in the Bundesrat. This meant that, in comparison to Labour, the SPD's "electoral failure was simply never as evident" (Busch and Manow, 2001: 178).

to expand maternity leave to one year, raise the level of maternity pay and introduce paternity leave were announced by Gordon Brown in March 2001 (Hansard, 2001), in the run up to the 2001 general election and formed a part of the party's attempts to appeal to women voters (Labour Party, 2001; The Guardian, 2001). Similarly the expansion of maternity pay to nine months was announced by Tony Blair shortly before the 2005 general election and the manifesto highlighted the Conservative's opposition to this expansion (Labour Party, 2005; The Guardian, 2005).

By contrast, the SPD was, in the late-1990s, actively searching for new ways in which it could consolidate its election victory. Interviews with politicians and advisors highlighted that the research on the 1998 election victory, which led to the creation of the Forum Familie (see Section 4.2.2), was prompted by concern that the election victory had been more due to efficient communications and a general sense of fatigue with the Kohl government after 16 years, rather than to any positive view of the SPD (DE_4; DE_6). Therefore unlike the limited way in which the electoral incentives were interpreted in England, in the SPD they were seen as an opportunity to create a new agenda for the party, which could lead to the family becoming a topic that the party could 'own' over the long term. As one member of Forum Familie noted:

> The impulse [for change] did not come from within the wider SPD; nor did it originally come from academia, we found Mr Bertram[116] but he was very surprised to be contacted; nor did it come from family organisations; nor from the media; nor from within the ministry … There was no pressure on the SPD to take this path, it was a big surprise and came accidentally thanks to the discovery of the expectation in the population and the hope in the population. (DE_4)

Despite this however, the view of work-family policy among the (male) leadership of the two parties in the 1990s is best characterised as one of indifference, with a clear sense that even if improving work-family reconciliation was a laudable aim, it was not in itself an important policy area. This was the context that faced Harman and Schmidt, who both aimed to persuade party leaders of the importance of work-family policy. Here Schmidt possessed a number of advantages in comparison to Harman. In particular, her personal attributes provided her with considerably more influence in the SPD than Harman had in Labour. While Schmidt had been the SPD leadership's spokesperson for gender equality in the late 1980s and for families in the late 1990s, she was not a member of the ASF and was known by her colleagues for other aspects of her career. Indeed, Schmidt had developed a reputation as a tough and uncompromising politician through her work as opposition leader in the Bavarian legislature (DE_7; DE_12).

[116] This is a reference to the sociologist Hans Bertram, see Section 4.2.2.

Interviews highlighted Schmidt's strong personal relationship with Schröder (DE_5; DE_6). According to one member of the working group, this meant that she could demand his support in ways that other politicians, for example Bergmann, could not have done: "It has a lot to do with personalities. Schmidt would go to Schröder and say to him this is what I want to do, and I expect from you that in the best case you support me and if you don't want to support me, you shut up" (DE_13).

While Harman had held a number of shadow ministerial positions since the late 1980s and also had a high profile both within the party and in the media, she was primarily associated with women's issues including campaigns in the 1980s and 1990s for work-family policies (Childs, 2008; Harman, 2017). This association with feminist campaigning led to her developing a reputation within the party, according to interviews and her own memoirs, of being a difficult colleague to work with (UK_2; UK_22; Harman, 2017). Nor was she especially close to Blair or Brown, despite working closely with them throughout the 1990s. Unlike Schmidt, Harman's public persona was also one of being strongly associated with feminist campaigns, and she was often portrayed negatively by the British press (Childs, 2004, 2008; Harman, 2017). This association with feminism was important in limiting her influence among Labour leaders. For New Labour's largely male leadership, feminism was associated with factional 'old' Labour politics, and the group-based nature of feminist politics did not suit New Labour's individualistic conceptions of equality of opportunity (Bashevkin, 2000; Perrigo, 1996). In the party's electoral calculus, work-family policies offered an opportunity to 'do something for women' but threatened to appear too close to feminist causes and to the kind of campaigns that Harman had been running since the late 1980s. In an interview a colleague highlighted this view among the New Labour leaders: "feminism and Harriet were regarded as a minority voice, who would put off 'Worcester Woman' by being too radical, too feminist, too overt" (UK_11). By contrast Schmidt's lack of association with feminism meant that, unlike her predecessor Christine Bergmann (and unlike Harman in England), she was taken more seriously by her male colleagues and not dismissed as only concerned with 'women's issues', yet could count on consistent support from women in the party (DE_6; DE_7). Moreover it is also the case that work-family policy had been, in England, associated with high-profile feminist campaigns since the mid-1980s (when the ideational window first opened) for increases in childcare and maternity leave. By contrast, in Germany, work-family policies were not the subject of feminist campaigning in West Germany due to the 'autonomous' nature of

feminist politics and the suspicion with which the state was viewed (Ferree, 1987, 2003; Kamenitsa, 2001).

Thus Schmidt was in a stronger position than Harman, and she used this to challenge the SPD's approach to work-family policy, which she did explicitly and publicly. For example, she noted in a newspaper interview in 2000 her belief that "we as a party have an ideological problem with family policy, and that is because for too long we have seen it as a mere appendage to women's policy" (Schmidt quoted in Die Zeit, 2000). Such framing aimed to appeal to party leaders that hitherto had ignored family policy as irrelevant to the more serious topics of government: labour market policy and the economy. Indeed, Schröder had not always been in favour of such changes; as he states in his memoirs, what persuaded him were Schmidt's proposals that linked family policy to wider social issues, particularly the economic arguments in relation to prospective labour shortages due to demographic ageing:

> I must admit that I needed some time to assess the societal relevance of family policy correctly… It became clear to me – especially during conversations with Renate Schmidt – that parents need more than just higher child allowances, they need better child care infrastructure so that mothers, but also fathers, can reconcile work and family life. Because never before has there been a generation of so highly qualified women… For companies, which will have difficulties in finding qualified personnel within a few years, these women are also the qualified workforce of the future. (Schröder, 2006: 439–40)

In persuading Schröder of the importance of the problem of work-family reconciliation, Schmidt prompted party leaders to reconsider the whole policy domain. As such, she acted as an ideational entrepreneur, not only seeking to change policy approaches but to fundamentally alter the way in which policy problems were perceived, first within the SPD and subsequently, as discussed in Chapter 4, in Germany more broadly.

By contrast, Harman's framing did not explicitly attempt to recast Labour's approach to the issue of work-family reconciliation. She was a veteran of campaigns from the 1980s for work-family policy reform and was therefore experienced at attempting to reframe feminist issues for a hostile political audience (see Section 5.2). Lacking a position of power from which to establish a new agenda, she therefore adopted a similar approach to that favoured by campaigners for work-family policy and sought to recast work-family policies as interventions that could fit within New Labour's agenda. In doing so, she acted as a policy entrepreneur, taking advantage of the opportunities that presented themselves to get her preferred policies onto the political agenda. As such, while Schmidt's framing established new problem definitions, Harman's introduced new ideas at the level of policy solutions.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has compared the role of ideas in the processes of work-family policy reform in England and Germany. It has demonstrated that the key difference is in the depth of ideational change that took place in the two countries. While in both countries foreground ideas changed during this period, as work-family policies came onto the political agenda, in Germany, this change extended to the background ideas that had previously structured work-family policymaking. By contrast, the English case demonstrates the enduring power of background ideas, which acted as cognitive locks constraining reform.

The chapter sought explanations for this fundamental difference with reference to the framework for analysing ideational change discussed in Chapter 3. It highlighted three interlinked factors that are important in ideational change: framing, timing and agency. One key difference was how ideas were used in the two countries; that is, how new ideas were framed in the political foreground. In Germany, the ideas about work-family policy were framed at the level of problem definitions whereas in England they were framed at the level of policy solutions. This provided the German ideas with more power than those in England, allowing them to act both as coalition magnets and as weapons against the institutions and background ideas of the status quo, which enabled the latter to be challenged and changed.

The chapter argued that in terms of timing, an ideational gap emerged in both countries but while in Germany it coincided with the opening of the political window in the late-1990s, in England it opened roughly a decade before the political window. One result of this was that a certain amount of institutional adaptation to the gap between social reality and institutions took place, reducing some of the pressure caused by this gap. By the late 1990s when the political window opened therefore, evidence suggests that in Germany the gap between social reality and the background ideas embedded in institutions was starker than in England. This may have had the effect of making the need for a new approach to work-family reconciliation appear more pressing in Germany than in England.

Finally, the chapter addressed agency by focusing on the opportunities presented to the carriers of new ideas. It demonstrated that Renate Schmidt was in a more advantageous position than her English counterpart Harriet Harman in terms of influencing key decision-makers in her party. This related to their personal attributes, but also to the respective political and institutional contexts in which they operated. Overall, these factors combined to shape the way that ideas came onto the agenda in the two countries, which in turn shaped these ideas' influence

on the policymaking processes and ultimately the different trajectories of German and English work-family policy.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Brief Summary of the Thesis

The context of this project has been the dramatic expansion of work-family policies across the OECD since the 1990s. This thesis has sought to contribute to the understanding of this expansion by comparing variation in the extent of work-family policy reform in England and Germany in the period 1997-2008. In particular, it set out to explain why the changes undertaken in Germany were more extensive than those in England; in the terms introduced in Chapter 2, why Germany underwent 'path switching' change while the changes in England were better characterised as a more gradual 'path departure'. Chapter 1 noted that while there is an extensive comparative literature explaining why change in work-family policy has occurred, many of the explanations provided by this literature are ill-equipped to account for cross-case variation in change. This is because they have focused on explaining the presence or absence of change, rather than exploring factors that helped shape the content of that change. Moreover, the most prominent explanations struggle to account for why change was greater in Germany than England: as discussed in Chapter 1, if anything, the English case appeared to offer more favourable political and institutional context for change.

In reaction to these limitations in the existing research, the thesis adopted an approach which focused on the ideas involved in the reform processes in the two countries. The rationale for such an approach is that while the political and institutional theories that dominate the comparative welfare state literature are useful for explaining the conditions under which change occurred, without an understanding of the ideas involved in policy change, it is impossible to account for the content and direction of that change. Chapter 3 outlined this approach by elaborating a framework for analysing ideational change, highlighting the key role that framing, timing and agency play.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 presented the empirical findings of the thesis. Drawing on an analysis of policy documents as well as interviews with a range of participants in the policy change in the two countries, these chapters sought to reconstruct the processes of policy change in order to answer three research questions:

RQ1) How did new ideas about work-family policy come onto the political agenda in Germany and England?

RQ2) How did these new ideas influence the policymaking process of work-family policy reform in Germany and England?

RQ3) What explains the differences in the influence of new ideas in the two countries?

These chapters argued that the fundamental difference in the two countries' processes of reform was that in Germany deeper ideational change took place, which altered the constellation of background ideas that structured family policy development. In particular, the normative preference for the male-breadwinner model family was brought into the political debate during the processes of reform and through this process was replaced by a preference for a dual-earner family model. By contrast, change in England remained in the ideational foreground. While work-family policies became the focus of considerable political attention and were framed and attached to problem definitions in new ways, English background ideas remained unchallenged. In fact, Chapters 4 and 6 showed that the background ideas of the family as a private realm and of the limited role of the state acted as cognitive locks at key moments during the reform processes, constraining the possibilities for further change.

Chapter 6 located the explanation for this difference in depth of ideational change in three aspects of the framework set out in Chapter 3: the level at which ideas were framed, the timing of windows of opportunity and the opportunity structures for key actors to emerge as potential ideational entrepreneurs. In particular, it highlighted that in Germany the framing of new ideas was at the level of problem definitions, which have more ideational power than ideas at the level of policy solutions, which is the level at which new ideas in England were framed. In particular, German ideas were framed in a sufficiently polysemic manner so as to act as coalition magnets, attracting a consensus of support among actors that had previously been opposed to work-family policy reform. Furthermore the framing took advantage of ambiguity in background ideas to position the new problem definition as legitimate in relation to the central role of the institution of the family, but also as a weapon against the preference for the male-breadwinner family model. By contrast, the new ideas in England performed neither of these roles, and background ideas were left unchanged.

Chapter 6 also argued that in England the ideational window of opportunity opened around a decade earlier than the political window; as theorised in Chapter 3 it appears that market institutions acted as a pressure valve, removing some of the perceived urgency for reform. By contrast the ideational window was more congruent with the political window in

Germany, meaning that the perceived need for work-family policy reform was at its height just as Schmidt and the Forum Familie began making the case for reform. This point is not one of coincidence or contingency however; the key point is that ideational windows are opened due to changing socio-economic and demographic conditions.

However, ideational windows must also be seized by ideational entrepreneurs. Chapter 6 highlighted the political and institutional conditions that shaped the opportunities available to potential entrepreneurs in the two countries and argued that these were more favourable for an ideational entrepreneur in Germany. In particular the political context of the two centre-left parties and the way in which they had reacted to a series of electoral defeats since the early 1980s shaped the way in which the potential electoral benefits of work-family policy reform were interpreted by party leaders and made a key difference to their level of openness to new ideas. Finally, in Germany Renate Schmidt possessed significant power resources and influence within the SPD, which she exploited successfully to create an imperative for reform in work-family policy. By contrast, lacking these resources, Harriet Harman was able to play the role of policy entrepreneur, in which the policy solutions of childcare and leave were reframed to fit with New Labour's agenda. Each of these factors combine to explain the deeper level of ideational change in Germany than England and ultimately why the former undertook the more dramatic path-switching reform.

7.2 Contribution to Empirical and Theoretical Literature

The thesis has engaged primarily with two literatures – the comparative social policy literature and the theoretical ideational literature – and offers a contribution to both. The comparative social policy literature has sought to explain the dramatic expansion of work-family policy across OECD countries in the past few decades. Much of this literature is focused on explaining this change in countries, including England and Germany, where the change confounds previous expectations (e.g. Blum, 2012; Boling, 2015; Fleckenstein, 2010; Fleckenstein et al., 2011; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Leitner, 2010; Morgan, 2012, 2013; Seeleib-Kaiser and Toivonen, 2011), or on comparing countries in which change did occur with countries in which it did not (e.g. Blome, 2016a, 2016b; Estévez-Abe and Kim, 2014; Estévez-Abe and Naldini, 2016; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2017; León et al., 2021; White, 2009). This thesis has offered a different approach, seeking to explore variation in change, and opening up a new set of research questions that move away from the focus on moments of change and focus more closely on a comparative examination of the shape, direction and extent of change.

However, while offering a different approach, the thesis has also engaged with a number of the key theories from this literature. Empirically, the case studies of English and German work-family policy reform found some support for explanations of change that stress the impact of electoral competition (e.g. Fleckenstein, 2010, 2011; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013). However, the thesis offers two findings that add to the understanding of the role of electoral competition. First, in the English case, this thesis found that the electoral motivation was much less prominent than the literature suggests. While it is certainly true that proponents of work-family policies attempted to gain support for them through stressing their electoral appeal, in fact New Labour decision-makers were ambivalent about policies that could be considered 'feminist' in origin. The research presented here demonstrates that the key motivating factor for work-family policies coming onto Labour's agenda was not their electoral appeal but their reframing to fit with Labour's policy agenda. The exception here is maternity leave policy, where the electoral motivation was a clear factor in its expansion, but where the tension between the electoral benefits of appealing to women and the fear of the accusation of the 'nanny state' was evident and served to constrain comprehensive reform.

Second, in the German case, the focus of these accounts is almost exclusively on the reforms undertaken by Ursula von der Leyen after 2005 and therefore on the way that work-family policies were interpreted by the CDU as having electoral benefits (Fleckenstein, 2011; Häusermann, 2018; Henninger et al., 2008; Henninger and von Wahl, 2014; Seeleib-Kaiser, 2010; Wiliarty, 2013). Yet the research presented here demonstrates that while the CDU did undergo a period of 'modernisation' under the leadership of Angela Merkel, it was the personal decision of von der Leyen to support the whole of the agenda put forward by Schmidt that was crucial in explaining the dramatic change in the CDU's approach. Indeed, given that the SPD leadership had seemingly lost enthusiasm for Elterngeld after the 2005 election defeat, and that the policy had been heavily criticised by the CDU in the run-up to the election, it is plausible to imagine a scenario in which a CDU family minister, motivated by electoral incentives, continued to expand work-family policies without provoking the internal rows in the party that the more 'social democratic' elements of von der Leyen's reforms did, such as the partner months. As both of these points show, a focus on ideas can help illuminate exactly which parts of the reform processes were spurred by electoral competition, and where other explanations are more pertinent.

The thesis also finds limited support for the notion that women's agency within political parties was an important factor in leading to policy change (e.g. Bonoli and Reber, 2010;

Fleckenstein, 2010; Fleckenstein and Lee, 2014; Morgan, 2013). In both England and Germany, it was women who acted as the key advocates for policy change within the parties. In England, Harriet Harman in particular was an important figure who ensured that childcare and, to a lesser extent, leave policy were on Labour's economic agenda. In Germany, the ideational entrepreneurship of Renate Schmidt and the political risk-taking of von der Leyen were vital in creating policy change. However, in each case the key to this successful agency was the support of powerful figures in the party (who in the case of Labour and the SPD were men). This points to support for the literature that emphasises the importance of 'critical actors' (e.g. Childs and Krook, 2009) rather than a 'critical mass' of women parliamentarians (e.g Dahlerup, 1988), while also highlighting that the opportunity structures provided by gendered political and institutional contexts are crucial to the extent to which women's agency can make a difference (e.g. Annesley, 2007; Annesley and Gains, 2010). Indeed, the research presented here indicates the importance not of the presence or absence of women but of what actors actually do to push for change: both cases demonstrate that the determining factors of the effects of women's agency were both the structure of opportunities they faced and their creative strategies of framing and reframing.

Besides offering caveated support for some of the existing explanations for work-family policy reform, this thesis also contributes a new approach, highlighting the role of ideas in explaining the content and direction of change. Indeed, the cases demonstrate that none of the existing explanations can fully explain the way in which work-family policies were reformed in England or Germany. For example, arguments about the role of policy legacies ignore the fact that policymakers decide what to do based on their interpretation of the context. While the existence or not of policy legacies may shape how they see the prospects for reform, the research presented here demonstrates that actors view policy legacies through the prism of their ideas. In England, policy legacies played a strong role because the priority was to build on them; in Germany they played a weaker role because the problem definition specifically blamed them for the problem of work-family reconciliation. Thus the level at which reform ideas were framed has implications for the way in which policy legacies were interpreted, and therefore on their role as a determinant of the shape of change. A final empirical contribution therefore is to demonstrate that a focus on ideas can add to other explanations, providing a richer account of policy change that explains not only the conditions under which change takes place, but also the subsequent direction of that change.

As regards the theoretical ideational literature, the thesis provides a contribution by elaborating a framework for conceptualising background ideational change. As discussed in Chapter 3, the ideational literature has ironically developed a similar stability bias as that of the neo-institutionalist literature, a stability bias for which ideas were first seen as a theoretical solution (Carstensen, 2011a, 2011b). The chapter argued that the conception of ideational change in much of the literature rests implicitly or explicitly on Hall's (1993) model of a paradigm shift, in which ideas only change very rarely and when they do they are fundamentally overhauled in a punctuated-equilibrium model of crisis-driven change (Carstensen and Matthijs, 2018; Daigneault, 2014b; Skogstad and Schmidt, 2011; Wilder and Howlett, 2014). Indeed, it was noted that neither in Germany nor England could changes in policy be satisfactorily captured by this notion of crisis-driven paradigmatic shifts in ideas. The framework proposed in Chapter 3 therefore involved loosening a number of the assumptions associated with the paradigm shift model. First it emphasised that in many policy domains, dominant ideas are not coherent and stable but instead are better conceptualised as constellations of multiple ideas (Carstensen, 2011a, 2015). Second, the assumption that ideational change can only come about in moments of great uncertainty was replaced by one that stressed the notion of ambiguity between relatively rigid institutionalised background ideas and an ever-changing external environment (Blyth, 2011). Third, the assumption that actors cannot think outside of dominant ideas was replaced by a conception of actors as strategic agents, using ideas as resources when pushing for change (Campbell, 2004; Carstensen, 2011b). While each of these assumptions has been critiqued previously in the ideational literature, incorporating them together in a systematic way, alongside insights from the public policy literature on agenda-setting, into a framework of ideational change offers a substantial contribution to the literature than can be applied beyond the case of work-family policy reform.

The framework outlined in this thesis makes two further contributions to the ideational literature. First, the emphasis on different levels of ideas permits a more dynamic approach to ideational research than exists in much of the ideational literature, which, as discussed in Chapter 3, has been so concerned to demonstrate the explanatory potential of ideas, that it has developed into a broad collection of empirical examples that show that ideas either cause or constrain change. Integrating a multi-level analysis of ideas can provide accounts which demonstrate that ideas can at varying times be catalysts for change and also the source of great stability. This chimes with the more recent ideational literature which has moved on from demonstrating that ideas matter to attempting to focus on how and under what circumstances

they matter (Béland, 2009, 2016a; Carstensen and Schmidt, 2016; Mehta, 2011; Padamsee, 2009; Parsons, 2016).

Second, the framework of ideational change presented here provides the potential for more systematic comparative investigation of the role that ideas play in episodes of change. This permits a systematic comparison of ideational effects and an examination of how they are used and their various impacts on the policymaking processes. While comparative analysis is a feature of part of the ideational literature, it tends to focus more on explaining cross-national differences in particular policy decisions through long-standing, stable, nationally specific background ideas (e.g. Chung and Thewissen, 2011; Dobbin, 1994; VA Schmidt, 2002; Schulze-Cleven and Weishaupt, 2015; Vail, 2014). This thesis has provided an example of how the framework can be used for a comparative study of ideational change.

7.3 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Further Research

The choice of ECEC and leave policies as focuses of the thesis was made to keep the project to a manageable size, given the extensive empirical investigation of the processes of reform. However, many studies of work-family policy include a broader range of policies, incorporating cash transfers relating to children, laws about flexible working and areas such as the extent to which tax policy encourages mothers' labour market engagement (e.g. Daly, 2010; Henninger et al., 2008; Lewis, 2009; Ostner, 2010).

While ECEC and leave policies were chosen because they were the policy areas most representative of the international trend in work-family policy reform, delimiting the study in this way has some implications with regard to the conclusions. First, it means omitting some policy areas in which significant expansions were made in the UK. For example, alongside Labour's reforms to ECEC and leave, cash transfers to families with children were also significantly increased (Lewis, 2009; Stewart, 2013). Moreover, the flagship policy of Sure Start is only tangentially related to this thesis, but represents a new approach to policies towards families that was unlike anything that had preceded it in the UK (Eisenstadt, 2011; Glass, 1999). Similarly, the analysis of German reforms does not take into account von der Leyen's failed attempts to reform Germany's system of family-based joint taxation, which provides financial incentives for families to maintain unequal patterns of employment (Henninger and von Wahl, 2014). One way in which the analysis of this thesis could be extended therefore is to broaden it into other related policy areas to see whether its conclusions still hold.

Another limitation is that the thesis only examined Germany at the federal level. While significant attention was given to the English decision to opt for market involvement in childcare, it was not possible to analyse equivalent decisions in the German case because of the federal government's limited competency for childcare policy. As issues to do with early education and quality of childcare provision are also the responsibilities of the Länder, these also did not feature in the analysis of the Germany case. Further research could therefore analyse the ECEC policies of a number of the German Länder to evaluate the extent to which the ideational effects seen on the federal level are also evident at regional level. Such work could engage with research which highlights that different Länder have different background ideas in the realm of family policy which impacts on, for example, the extent to which childcare expansion is a priority (e.g. Andronescu and Carnes, 2015; Busemeyer and Seitzl, 2017; Oliver and Mätzke, 2014).

Given that German reunification in 1990 involved the incorporation of the East German dual-earner family model into the West German state, it should be assumed that this could have dramatic implications for ideational change. Indeed, accounts of German family policy place emphasis on the differences in normative family models in the two Germanys and therefore on the significance of reunification (Ostner, 2010; Pfau-Effinger and Smidt, 2011). From the perspective of this thesis, it is plausible that reunification could have had an impact in several ways. First, that different background ideas about families and gender roles predominated in the former East Germany could have served to dilute the strength of those in the West or emphasise their ambiguity. Second, the fact that East Germans held less traditional attitudes about gender and family roles could have exacerbated the gap between lived reality and background ideas and therefore helped open the ideational window of opportunity. Third, politicians who had grown up in the East, such as Angela Merkel, could have been more receptive to new ideas about families and gender roles than their Western counterparts. The empirical investigation discovered no direct link between German reunification and work-family policy change. However, that should not be taken as an indication that the role of East Germany was unimportant, even though its legacy played very little part in the analysis in this thesis. Further investigation of this aspect of the German story, especially from an ideational perspective, is warranted.

While much of the focus has been on how Germany underwent background ideational change, even though political and institutional constraints appeared to be stronger than in England, it is worth considering further the constraints on ideational change in the English case.

Could there be something about liberal welfare states that are resistant to ideational change? One possibility is that the predominance of markets in liberal welfare regimes acts as a pressure valve when background ideas come under strain, allowing them to adapt in a way that welfare regimes less exposed to market forces are unable to. Thus the pressure for path switching change does not build up to the same extent in liberal welfare regimes. Such a conclusion would require more empirical evidence but would have echoes of Morgan's (2005) argument that a mixture of unequal societies and markets are an alternative route to work-family reconciliation, at least for part of the population.

Another possibility is that liberal ideas are more difficult to change due to their suspicion of the role of the state. The conclusions of this thesis highlighted that a key constraint in England was that the new ideas were framed at the level of policy solutions, rather than the more powerful level of problem definitions. Further research could explore the extent to which this is a typical pattern of ideational development in England, and more broadly whether the level at which new ideas are pitched varies according to the political system in which they operate. This could contribute to comparative study on the interrelationship between ideas and institutions such as Campbell and Pedersen's (2014, 2015) research on cross-national differences in the way that policy ideas are generated and Schmidt's (2002; 2008a) work on the different forms that discourse takes in different political systems.

Finally, could it be that the presence of liberal ideas mitigates against the creation of broad problem definitions that require an active state, such as that which was created in Germany? Such a conclusion would support Ruggie's claim that because liberal welfare states intervene in policy in an "ad hoc fashion, in response to the consequences of market forces, it follows that institution-building is incremental…The ability of such a system to develop a synoptic conception of problems is limited" (Ruggie, 1984: 15). This thesis does not provide sufficient evidence on this general point, but it does highlight how the interaction between ideas, institutions and socio-economic factors can help illuminate previously hidden aspects of welfare state continuity and change.

Appendix 1: List of Interviewees, England

Reference in text	Category of interviewee	Place	Date
UK_1	Interest group	London	16/08/2017
UK_2	Civil Servant	London	25/08/2017
UK_3	Interest group	London	29/08/2017
UK_4	Interest group	London	29/08/2017
UK_5	Interest group	London	21/09/2017
UK_6	Interest group	London	21/09/2017
UK_7	Political Advisor	London	27/09/2017
UK_8	Interest group	Macclesfield	04/10/2017
UK_9	Political Advisor	London	05/10/2017
UK_10	Civil Servant	Telephone interview	16/10/2017
UK_11	Politician	London	17/10/2017
UK_12	Civil Servant	London	23/10/2017
UK_13	Civil Servant	London	25/10/2017
UK_14	Interest group	London	26/10/2017
UK_15	Interest group	London	27/10/2017
UK_16	Civil Servant	London	31/10/2017
UK_17	Interest group	London	31/10/2017
UK_18	Interest group	Telephone interview	02/11/2017
UK_19	Political Advisor	Hertfordshire	15/11/2017
UK_20	Political Advisor	Birmingham	22/11/2017
UK_21	Political Advisor	London	29/11/2017
UK_22	Politician	London	29/11/2017

Appendix 2: List of interviewees, Germany

Reference in text	Category of interviewee	Place	Date
DE_1	Interest group	Berlin	14/03/18
DE_2	Political Advisor	Berlin	05/04/18
DE_3	Politician	Berlin	06/04/18
DE_4	Civil Servant	Berlin	18/04/18
DE_5	Political Advisor	Berlin	20/04/18
DE_6	Politician	Nuremberg	23/04/18
DE_7	Politician	Düsseldorf	24/04/18
DE_8	Civil Servant	Berlin	04/05/18
DE_9	Civil Servant	Berlin	05/05/18
DE_10	Interest group	Telephone interview	07/05/18
DE_11	Politician	Berlin	15/05/18
DE_12	Political Advisor	Berlin	16/05/18
DE_13	Politician	Berlin	22/05/18
DE_14	Politician	Berlin	18/06/18
DE_15	Politician	Telephone interview	21/06/18
DE_16	Interest group	Berlin	25/06/18
DE_17	Politician	Telephone interview	28/06/18
DE_18	Politician	Telephone interview	30/06/18
DE_19	Politician	Telephone interview	22/08/18
DE_20	Interest group	Telephone interview	03/09/18

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