Welfare Democracies and Party Politics: Explaining Electoral Dynamics in Times of Changing Welfare Capitalism

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CHAPTER

8 Electoral Demand, Party Competition, and Family Policy: The Politics of a New Policy Field

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Abstract

This chapter studies the effect of changing electoral demand and party competition on parties' family policy orientation in two continental and two southern European countries. Changes in the electoral landscapes represent a necessary but not sufficient condition that provides parties with an incentive to reform their family policy position. As the electoral relevance of the core constituency of both center-right and center-left parties is declining, both center-left and center-right parties are prompted to use progressive family policies to attract new voter groups. Yet, the chapter shows that the strategic configuration of parties influences the extent to which center-right parties modernize their family policy positions. The arguments are tested using data on attitudes toward gender roles and family policy from the European and World Values Survey and a new database on party positions on family policy in two continental and two southern European countries in the last two decades.

Keywords: family policy, social investment, party competition, public opinion, electoral politics, southern Europe, continental Europe, party positions

Subject: Political Economy, Comparative Politics

8.1. Introduction

In the last two decades, social investment has emerged as a new paradigm in social policy with the aim of adapting welfare capitalism to the postindustrial era. The social investment proponents view the welfare state as a productive factor for the economy if it invests in a competitive and productive population that is able to perform the complex tasks required in the knowledge economy (Jenson 2009; Vandenbroucke et al. 2011). With its emphasis on human capital development, activation, and social inclusion (Hemerijck 2015; Bonoli 2014), the social investment welfare state aims at "preparing instead of repairing" (Morel et al. 2012: 1). It is therefore not surprising that social investment policies such as education, childcare, or activating the unemployed are very popular among citizens across the political spectrum (Ansell 2010; Vanhuysee and Goerres 2012; Busemeyer and Neimanns 2017), both for their correspondence to values of social justice, autonomy, and self-reliance and their positive effects on growth and productivity.

Yet, the implementation of social investment policies in Europe remains patchy, confined often to activating the unemployed (Bonoli 2014), and parties have not uniformly endorsed the social investment approach. Given the popular demand for social investment policies and its putative positive effects on economic growth and social inclusion, why don't all parties react to these demands? The present chapter addresses this issue. It explains variations in the family policy orientation of center-right and center-left parties in continental and southern Europe in the last two decades. Family policy is a key element of the
 social investment approach which emphasizes the importance of investing ↳ in children, for instance by providing high-quality affordable universal childcare. Such early childhood education fosters a child's cognitive and social skills (Esping-Andersen 2002). At the same time, institutionalizing childcare removes a major obstacle to mothers' continuous employment and is thus beneficial not only to their labor market integration itself (OECD 2005; Lewis et al. 2008; Hook 2015; Esping-Andersen 2009) but also effective in combating child poverty (Esping-Andersen 2002).

For the purpose of this book, analyzing family policy is worthwhile because it *straddles both the socio-economic and the socio-cultural dimension*: family policy strongly impacts the labor division between the sexes and the labor market integration of women, in general, and mothers in particular (OECD 2005; Lewis et al. 2008; Hook 2015). Family policy also touches cultural ideals about the right way to raise children and how childcare should be shared between parents (Pfau-Effinger 2004). The family policy model is both influenced by and influencing these cultural norms. In addition, family policy is an excellent field for examining the argument advanced in Chapter 1 that *today's welfare democracies are the result of the long-term interaction between social groups and political actors*. In the case of female voters and parties, this interaction has undergone significant changes since the 1950s. From being the backbone of religious and conservative parties women have since turned to parties on the left, with the welfare state playing an important role in linking women to left-wing parties (Brooks et al. 2006; Emmenegger and Manow 2014; Randall 1987; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Giger 2009; Inglehart and Norris 2003). Women's support is putatively based on the left's "women-friendly" welfare state program (Huber and Stephens 2001). Here it is important to note that not all family policies are progressive, social investment policies. Family policy can be conservative in the sense that families receive benefits that allow the mother to withdraw from the labor market to care for the children.

Building on a recent literature on the electoral consequences of family policy expansion (Blome 2017; Morgan 2013), I focus on *changes in electoral demands* and *party competition* to explain variation in parties' positions on family policy. Secular transformations such as the increased female labor force participation, women's higher education attainment, cultural changes, and the increased likelihood of family split-ups have altered public opinion toward more progressive views on gender roles and family policy. In this chapter, I am interested in how these secular changes translate into politics. I argue that new electoral demands, caused by secular transformations, provide parties with incentives to reform family policies. Politicians seeking re-election will need to take such shifts in the normative beliefs of their electorate into account. Parties are even more responsive to the normative beliefs of their voters under conditions of intense political competition (Hobolt and Klemmensen 2008). This latter point is the second aspect relevant to the argument presented here.

p. 199 Competition for voters has intensified in recent decades. Core constituencies of both center-right and center-left parties are declining (see Emmenegger and Manow 2014; Häusermann, this volume) compelling parties to look for new voters. At the same time, political loyalties are waning and the mobilization of voters with specific political issues is increasing in importance (Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Green-Pedersen 2007). The core constituencies of both center parties (blue-collar workers for the center-left party, religious voters for the center-right party) prefer a traditional, conservative family model (Blome 2017; Lambert 2008). New voter groups such as high-skilled women, by contrast, prefer a modern, progressive family model that allows them to combine family and work life (Cunningham 2008; Edlund and Öun 2016). This presents both center-left and center-right parties with a dilemma, as their core constituencies reject a modernization of family policy but new voter groups demand such updated policies. Hence, parties modernize their family policy positions only if the electoral relevance of their core voters diminishes. I apply a spatial perspective to parties' positions on family policy. Parties adapt their positions strategically depending on the positions of their rivals (see Andersen and Beramendi 2012; Kitschelt 2001; see also Häusermann, this volume, for a similar argument regarding income redistribution and the welfare state in general). Because of the influence of the women's movement and the competition from left-libertarian parties in most countries, the left tends to promote a progressive family policy. As to the *center-right party's reaction* to changing electoral demands, I argue that Christian democratic or conservative parties, too, will embrace more progressive views on childcare and mothers' employment if the center-right party competes only with the center-left party. A radical right competitor, by contrast, is likely to pull the center-right party to the conservative side, hence making the party less likely to endorse social investment.

The present chapter examines the interconnection between electoral politics, party competition, and parties' programmatic orientation in two continental and two southern European countries, specifically France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. In these two types of welfare democracies, we should expect tensions between women's ambitions as professionals and mothers to create demands for changes in the family policy model.[1] I thus *compare two models of welfare democracy where family policy provides the opportunity to attract new voters* in times of changing electoral politics. I also highlight differences *within* the two welfare democracies since both the party configuration but also the family policy models vary not only between but also within the model of welfare democracy.

The chapter is organized as follows. First, I discuss the relevance of family policy for women's careers and family decisions and present different visions of family policy, before developing the theoretical argument.
p. 200 Second, I present ↳ the institutional context by outlining the evolution of family policy in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain over the last twenty years. I then show, using data from the European and World Values Surveys (1990–2014), how normative beliefs regarding gender roles and family policy have changed, and demonstrate the declining relevance of traditional core voters. Section 8.4 analyzes the partisan configuration around family policy in the four countries based on a new dataset on parties' positions on family policy. Section 8.5 concludes.

8.2. An Incomplete Revolution: Family Policy and Women's Employment

Family policy performs a wide range of functions: horizontal redistribution between families with children and those without, increase of fertility rates, enhancement of individual choices, the promotion of economic growth and productivity, as well as the reduction of gender inequalities. From a feminist perspective, family policies should aim to equalize opportunities between men and women by defamilializing care (Mahon 2002: 343), by encouraging men's involvement in care work (Gornick and Meyers 2009), and by facilitating employment for women (Lewis 2002). The social investment approach also emphasizes the importance of mothers' employment, though not from a gender perspective, but rather for economic considerations and the relevance of mothers' employment in combating child poverty (see Jenson 2009). But not all family policies are social investment policies. Not all family policies have employment-promoting effects for women. The dominant family policy model in the postwar period, for example, envisaged separate roles for men and women and provided support for the male breadwinner family in the form of benefits that allowed the wife to withdraw from the labor market. Such a *familialistic*—or *conservative* in the terminology of this chapter—view considers the family to be the primary locus of welfare provision (Esping-Andersen 1999; Lohmann and Zagel 2016; Trifiletti 1999). Accordingly, conservative family policies foster dependencies among family members by actively lowering the negative social and economic consequences of such dependencies (Leitner and Lessenich 2007), such as women's financial dependence on a breadwinner, children's dependence on their parents, and dependence of elderly people on their adult children. The term also includes policies that provide parents with resources allowing them to withdraw from paid work to care for children or elderly family members (Saraceno and Keck 2010). *The social investment approach to family policy*, by contrast, corresponds more closely to a "dual earner" model where both parents participate actively in care and paid work (Lewis 2001; Crompton 1999; Gornick and Meyers 2003). Individualizing
p. 201 policies consider the individual rather than the family to be the bearer ↳ of social rights and duties and thus enable the individual to act autonomously (Daly 2011; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001).[2] This short discussion indicates that family policy should not be equated with social investment policy. Parties can either promote conservative, familialistic family policies that encourage the traditional division of care and paid work or progressive, individualizing family policies that encourage a dual earner model.[3] Consequently, we must distinguish between two different visions of family policy to identify the electoral dynamics of parties' family policy visions.

What is interesting for the purpose of this book is that the family policy orientation and the reform dynamics vary strongly within continental and southern Europe (Kowalewska 2016; Estévez-Abe et al. 2016). Conservative continental France, for instance, has a comprehensive system of preschool education (Morgan 2006) with the effect that women in France are more active in the labor market than in other continental European countries. In Germany, for most of the postwar period, family policy followed the vision of a male breadwinner model. With the expansion of childcare services and the reform of paternity leave in the 2000s, however, the orientation of German family policy changed radically. Historically, family policy in southern Europe is oriented toward a traditional division of both care and paid work, but provides much less support for families in terms of services or transfers, an arrangement that has been termed "familialism by default" (Saraceno and Keck 2010) or "implicit familialism" (Leitner 2003). Scholars point to an increasingly divergent development of family policy in southern Europe in recent years: while Italy expanded neither services nor transfers toward families (Blome 2017), Spain implemented a range of reforms reducing the dependency of individuals on the family (Estévez-Abe et al. 2016; León et al. 2016).

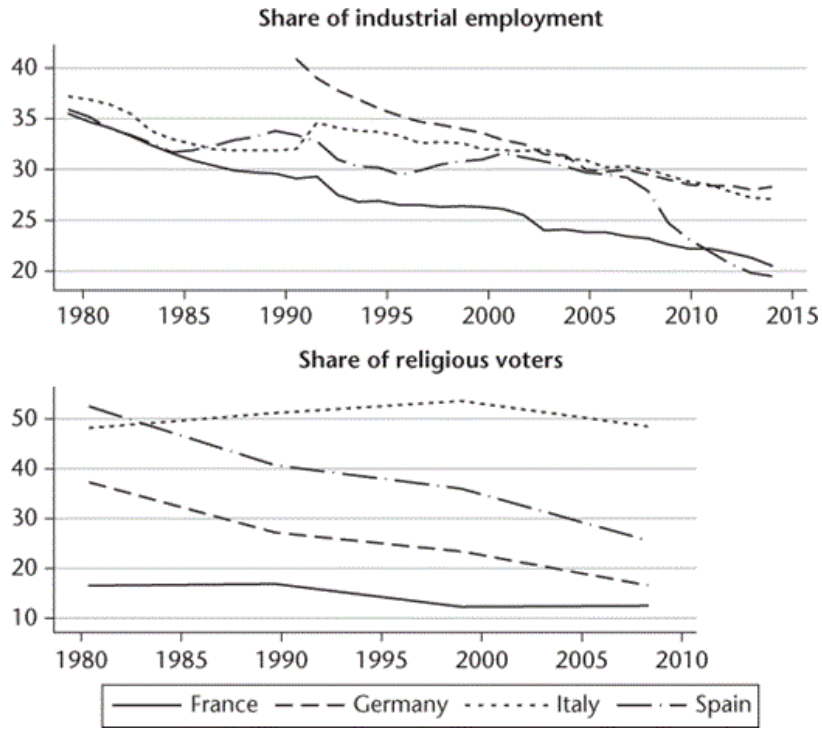
8.2.1. Changing Electoral Landscapes

I argue that two aspects of political competition shape the positions of parties on family policy: electoral demand and party competition. Social modernization, secularization, women's organizations, higher educational attainments of women, and their participation in the labor market stirred support for more egalitarian gender models. This increases electoral demand for a more progressive family policy model (Inglehart and Norris 2003; Giger 2009; Emmenegger and Manow 2014). As I will show, support for the male breadwinner model declined even in continental Europe, where public opinion was traditionally geared toward the single-earner model and mothers' employment was viewed with suspicion.

These changes in public opinion offer parties the opportunity to use family policy issues to mobilize the middle class and in particular high-skilled middle-class women. In times of declining political loyalties,
p. 202 mobilizing ↳ voters with specific policy issues is a key strategy for electoral success (Karreth et al. 2013). However, both center parties are confronted with a dilemma as the attitudes of their core and new voter groups on family policy diverge. These parties are therefore only likely to put progressive family policy on the agenda when their core voters decline in electoral relevance. Although left parties are portrayed in the literature on the gender vote gap to promote a progressive welfare state to mobilize female voters (Huber et al. 2009; Huber and Stephens 2001; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006), a core constituency of the center-left party, the working and lower middle class, holds traditional orientations toward gender roles (Lambert 2008). A party that mainly represents the working class might thus not be eager to adopt progressive family policies (Morgan 2006). Center-right parties must also decide between the preferences of their core voters, the religious voters, who hold conservative attitudes toward the division of labor between spouses, and new voter groups.

Yet, deindustrialization causes the core voters of center-left parties—the industrial working class—to shrink. Center-right parties are struggling with the declining share of religious voters as fewer and fewer Europeans consider themselves religious. Figure 8.1 shows the declining relevance of the two core
p. 203 constituencies for center-left and center-right parties, respectively. ↳ As a consequence, both center-right and center-left parties need to attract new voters (Karreth et al. 2013; Kitschelt 1994; Morgan 2013; Häusermann, this volume). Only in this context of declining electoral relevance of their core voters and changing normative beliefs among the voters, I argue, will parties alter their family policy platform to attract new voter groups.

Figure 8.1.



Declining relevance of core voters

Despite these changes in electoral politics, not all parties promote progressive family policies. I argue that the strategic configuration of parties is relevant for the extent to which parties modernize their family policy beliefs. Because of the influence of the women's movement and the competition from left-libertarian parties in most countries, the left tends to promote a progressive family policy. As to the *center-right party's reaction* to changing electoral demands, I argue that Christian democratic or conservative parties, too, will embrace more progressive views on childcare and mother's employment if the center-right party competes only with the center-left party. If, however, they face competition from the radical right party, they will adhere to a more conservative view as they fear loosing conservative votes to their competitor.

The selection of countries is based on variation in the two explanatory factors: changing electoral landscapes and the party configuration. As I will show, the need to attract new voters for center parties is greater in France, Germany, and Spain than in Italy. The partisan constellation varies too: in France, the main center-right party faces the radical right challenger *Front National* (FN). I therefore expect the party configuration around family policy to be strongly polarized with the center-left party taking a progressive position and the center-right party taking a conservative position. In Germany, the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) forms a party union with its more conservative Bavarian sister party, the Christian Social Union (CSU), which is why I expect polarization as well. In Spain, I expect parties to agree on a progressive consensus as only the left *Izquierda Unida* (IU) pulls the socialist *Partido Socialista Obrero Español* (PSOE) toward a progressive family policy stance and the *Partido Popular* (PP) would follow suit since there is no competitor on the right. Finally, in Italy, I expect family policy issues not to be politicized due to lacking electoral demand. Table 8.1 displays the expected partisan configuration around family policy in the four countries under study.

Table 8.1. The competitive party constellation and its effect on parties' family policy constellation

		Change in electoral demand	
		Yes	**No**
Competition on the right	Yes	France, Germany: polarized party configuration	
	No	Spain: progressive party consensus	Italy: no issue

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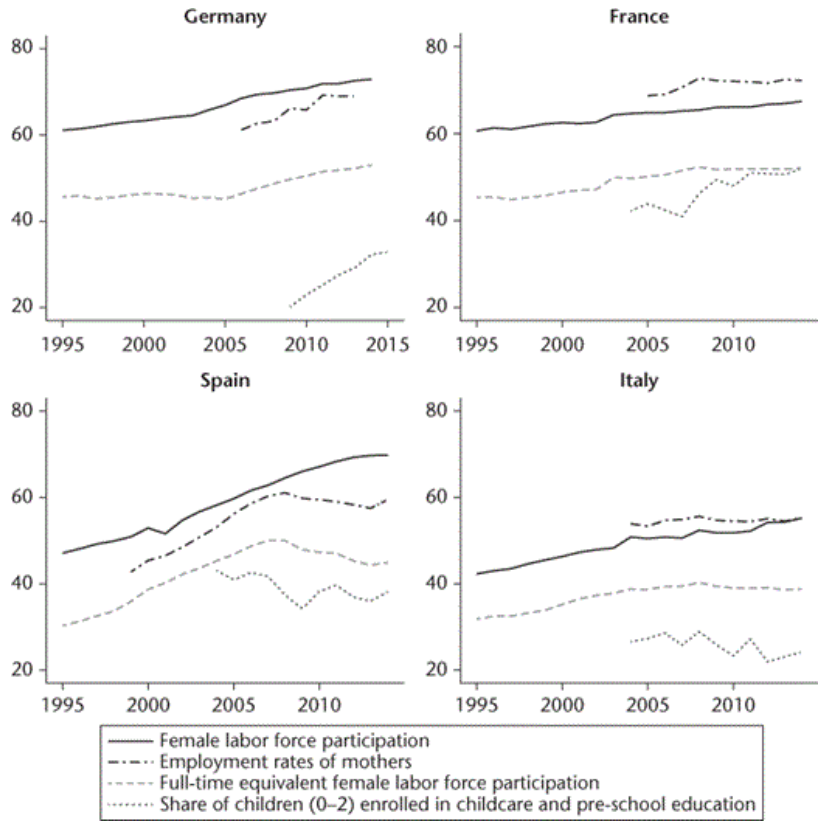
The Institutional Context: Family Policy Trajectories in Germany, France, Spain, and Italy

Before I provide evidence for the changing electoral landscape and parties' statements on family policy, I will outline the institutional context of the family policy debates by discussing the family policy configuration in the four countries since the late 1990s (when the present analysis starts) and its subsequent development.

France differs from other continental European countries (but resembles the southern European countries) for its comprehensive system of *écoles maternelles* for children between three and six years which goes back to the late nineteenth century and represents an integral part of the national educational system (Morgan 2006). Children are traditionally perceived as a "public good" and a source of human capital due to the national trauma experienced in World War I and the related demographic challenges (Martin 2010). As a result of the longstanding tradition of *écoles maternelles* for children over the age of three, and despite a limited commitment to public childcare for younger children, employment rates among women and mothers in France were comparatively high until the early 1990s (Morgan 2006). However, since the late 1980s, family policy has become closely linked to the employment situation in France (Martin 2010; Morel 2007). During a period of stubbornly high unemployment from the 1980s up to the late 1990s, women were encouraged to withdraw from the labor market (Morel 2007). In 1985, for instance, the socialist government introduced a new parental leave policy (*Allocation parentale d'éducation*, APE), a low flat-rate benefit for working families with at least three children which was primarily taken up by low-paid and unemployed mothers. As these women were simultaneously encouraged to stay at home and to have more children, APE served both the employment-regulating and the pro-national considerations of French policies (Jenson and Sineau 2001). In 1994, the conservative government extended APE to families with two children and fostered part-time employment. Accordingly, full-time employment rates among women rates declined as Figure 8.2 shows. Since the late 1990s, family policy aimed at encouraging job supply for low-skilled women. The rhetoric of "free choice" has been guiding French family policy since that time (Martin 2010). Instead of promoting public childcare, several cash-for-care policies[4] have facilitated the use of private childcare by subsidizing the childminder's social contributions and introducing tax deductions for childcare costs. French family policy continued in this direction in the 2000s with an increase in paid leave for fathers to fourteen days and the merging of the previous free choice benefits and the parental leave APE. PAJE (*Prestation d'Accueil du Jeune Enfant)* can be used either as paid leave or to hire a private nanny, and also includes various measures to foster part-time employment. These measures were highly popular but
p. 205 reinforced social stratification by ↳ making middle-class women "more free to choose than others" (Morel 2007). Low-income mothers are encouraged to care for their children themselves or to rely on informal or public childcare (Bressé and Galtier 2006). Investment in childcare stagnated, however (Lewis et al. 2008). The period since 1985 therefore combines a "free choice" element with an individualization of benefits and selectivity, which, in turn, has increased inequality among families (Martin 2010; Morel 2007).

Figure 8.2.



Employment rates of women and mothers and coverage rates of children under three years in childcare and pre-school education

Germany, on the other hand, used to be the paragon of a conservative family model, with Christian democratic visions of the labor division between spouses (Lewis 1992; Ostner 2003; Esping-Andersen 1990). Cash benefits were preferred over services: child allowances, for instance, supported the income of families
p. 206 and the length of the parental leave (introduced in 1986), was ↳ gradually extended until mothers were entitled to take three years' leave.[5] The combination of long parental leave, a tax system favoring the traditional family, and a lack of childcare services encouraged mothers to withdraw from the labor market (Henniger and von Wahl 2010). Accordingly, the number of mothers in full-time employment was low and only few children attended childcare prior to part-time preschool (*kindergarten*) at the age of five.

The 2000s brought a shift toward a more progressive model. The red-green coalition (1998–2005) repeatedly voiced concerns about the negative impact of long career interruptions on women's human capital and on issues of gender equality. In response, the government started to implement policies to speed up mothers' return to the labor market (such as higher benefit levels for shorter periods, measures to make leave more flexible and state subsidies to create childcare places, Wiliarty 2013). The decisive move, however, was in 2007, when the Grand Coalition between the social and the Christian democrats introduced a new earnings-related, tax-financed parental leave (*Elternzeit*), paid at 2/3 of previous earnings.[6] The parental leave can be split between both parents, in which case the duration increases from twelve to fourteen months. This generous benefit was explicitly designed to foster women's employment, and its link to paid employment and the introduction of a "daddy quota" clearly breaks with the values of a conservative welfare state. Equally important and equally groundbreaking was the introduction of the right for a childcare place for children over the age of one from 2013 onwards. Today, 25.5 percent of children under the age of three attend childcare (see Figure 8.2), though there is substantial regional variation (Andronescu and Carnes 2015). While this does not match coverage rates in Scandinavian countries, it nevertheless signifies a tripling of coverage rates in the last two decades and has resulted in a noticeably stronger labor market integration not only of women in general, but of mothers more specifically: both women's full-time equivalent employment and the employment of mothers have been on the rise since 2005, as Figure 8.2 shows. While the new policies are open to all women, higher-educated women benefit more. The earnings-related benefits and the childcare services reduce the opportunity costs of child-rearing and facilitate the return of mothers to the labor market. The reforms illustrate how social investment policies might increase gender equality but at the same time increase inequality between women with different socio-economic status (see also Kazepov and Ranci 2016; Morel 2007). Since 2013, a home-care-cash benefit for stay-at-home parents (*Betreuungsgeld*) that was actively advanced by the conservative CSU helps (low-skilled) women to withdraw from the labor market.

The reform trajectories of family policy also vary within the southern European type of welfare democracy.
p. 207 Italy used to be and still is "familialistic ↳ by default," that is without providing explicit support for families for their care tasks. There is no universal child allowance[7] and the tax system takes the presence of dependent children into account only to a very limited extent (Naldini 2000; Saraceno 2003).

Nevertheless, Italy introduced a paid parental leave for fathers in 2000 but with very low take-up rates due to the strict eligibility rules and low replacement rates. Besides introducing a maternity leave of five months at a replacement rate of 80 percent, Law 53, passed in 2000, entitles working fathers of newborns to a portion of a parental leave at 30 percent of earnings with an implicit daddy quota of three months (Naldini and Jurado 2013). However, due to the change of government to a conservative one, employers' resistance, and the highly segmented labor market, which excludes the large share of temporary employed parents from the benefit, the discussion did not gain momentum.

Equally, childcare for children under the age of three is scarce despite two governmental initiatives in the 2000s.[8] In 2011, on average around 16 percent of children below the age of three were covered (see Figure 8.2).[9] The availability and quality of childcare services are characterized by significant regional inequality (Naldini and Saraceno 2008; Blome 2017).[10] Working mothers are forced to rely on grandparents and other informal arrangements (Naldini and Saraceno 2008), what results in low employment rates among mothers, especially in southern Italy (Del Boca and Giraldo 2013; see also Figure 8.2). Hence, Italy was and still is a familialistic country.

Like Italy, Spain was a highly familialistic country under the Franco regime, but has embarked on a different road since the 1990s. The Spanish Socialist Party (PSOE) politicized gender equality soon after democratization in an attempt to mobilize around new value issues. The conservative PP followed suit to distance itself from the fascist past (León et al. 2016). Policies oriented toward a work/family balance did not appear on the political agenda until the 1990s, then taking an individualizing approach. In the late 1990s and early 2000s the conservative government issued a yearly child allowance for working mothers with children under the age of three and a subsidy to firms that employ women as well as a monthly tax benefit to subsidize childcare costs for children under three. This first series of individualizing reforms had the explicit aim of creating jobs and enhancing women's labor market integration (Estévez-Abe and Naldini 2016). Three kinds of parental leave exist in Spain: Spanish women have been granted sixteen weeks of fully paid maternity leave since 1989 (Act on the Extension of Maternity Leave, BOE-A-1989-5272). Apart from a mandatory period of six weeks after giving birth, the leave can be split between the parents. With regard to parental leave, Spain is less progressive. Parental leave is unpaid but very long term with the ↳ basic function of securing employment. In the full-time version of parental leave, the leave may be taken until the child is three years old. Working time reductions are a social right until the child is eight years old. Take-up rates are very low, however.[11] By contrast, take-up rates for the fifteen-day full-paid paternity leave, introduced in 2007, are around 80 percent (Naldini and Jurado 2013).

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In 2006, the Plan Educa3 was launched with the aim of increasing public childcare services for children aged 0–3 years (León 2011). As in France and Italy, childcare services had always been provided in the context of education, and enrolment of children above the age of three is almost universal (León and Pavolini 2014). Childcare for children below the age of three, by contrast, continues to be scarce. Just as in Italy, many Spanish parents rely on informal care arrangements (Delgado et al. 2008). In addition, public funding for childcare services has been drastically cut in Spain due to the economic turmoil (León and Pavolini 2014).

Spain also introduced policies to decrease the dependency of young adults on their parents. In Spain, as in most southern European countries, a substantial share of young adults between the age of 25 and 34 still live with their parents. Tax deductions for a young person renting a flat have been in place since the early 2000s. In 2008, a cash benefit for housing was implemented (*Renta Básica de Emancipación*). These policies facilitate the formation of independent households for young adults and represent a shift in the responsibility for young people's welfare from the family to the state (Naldini and Jurado 2013). The same cannot be said for Italy, where there have been no new public policies to supplement the income of young people without work and very scant programs supporting independent housing for young adults (Barzi et al. 2011).[12] However, it has to be noted that many of these new policies were either not fully implemented or fell victim to cuts on account of the euro crisis (Hendrickson 2014; León and Pavolini 2014).

In sum, the four countries have embarked on different family policy reform trajectories. France—originally the only "moderate male breadwinner" model with a range of individualizing family policies—introduced a seemingly contradictory mix of reforms, with greater individualization for middle- and higher-income families and greater familialization for lower-income families. Germany, which used to be a very familialistic male breadwinner state, moved toward a more progressive family model with the introduction of individualizing family policies. A similar trend, but stopping short of France and Germany, can be observed in Spain, while family policy in Italy remains familialistic by default. Employment rates of mothers and coverage rates of children under three years vary considerably across the four countries. Figure 8.2 illustrates this variation.

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8.2.2. Attitudes toward Gender Equality and Family Policy: An Unmet Demand?

This section provides evidence for the change in normative beliefs toward gender equality and family models in France, Germany, Spain, and Italy. Relying on data from the European and World Values Surveys (VS) from 1990 to 2014, I dichotomize agreement with the statement that "a pre-school child suffers with a working mother" as an indicator of support for the male breadwinner model. Education is measured by years of education. The top quintile of a country represents the "high skilled," the bottom quintile is coded as "low skilled," and the residual group are "skilled" (for more information on the operationalization, see supplementary material on the author's personal website). On the basis of ordered logistic regressions, I estimate support for the male breadwinner model among women and men in general and across the three educational levels.

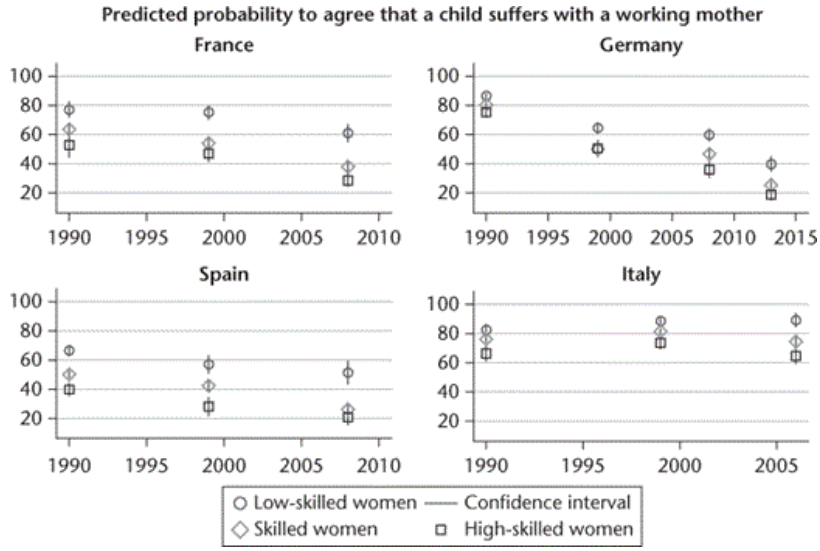
Table 8.2 shows the probability of women agreeing with the statement that a preschool child suffers if it has a working mother. We clearly see how strongly support for the male breadwinner model declines over time. Support is declining both among men and among women, whereas women have a less skeptical attitude toward working mothers than men. There has been a particularly pronounced change in attitudes in Germany, where support for the male breadwinner model drops by more than fifty percentage points for both genders. France and Spain also show substantial change in values. In Italy, by contrast, normative beliefs have not changed. Reflecting the continued high share of believers in a Catholic country (see Figure 8.3), around three-quarters of the population consider maternal employment harmful for a preschool child.

Table 8.2. Support for the male breadwinner model among men and women, over time

Germany	**1990**	**1997**	**2006**	**2013**	**France**	**1990**	**1999**	**2008**
Men	84.1	60.9	56.5	29.1		67.6	60.8	47.5
Women	80.2	51.4	43.6	24.5		63.3	52.2	32.2
Spain	1990	1999	2008	2011	Italy	1990	1999	2006
Men	54.0	45.9	51.6	27.1		76.1	82.5	76.3
Women	53.8	45.6	45.7	29.8		76.0	80.4	73.7

Predicted probabilities of agreeing/agreement with the statement "A preschool child suffers with a working mother." Data source: VS (1990–2014).

Figure 8.3.



Support for the male breadwinner model among women with different skill levels, over time

Attitudes toward family policy are not uniform but depend on educational attainment. The assumption is that women with higher educational levels should be keener to put their education to use in the labor market and therefore more interested in individualizing family policy. Women with higher education are more likely to be attached to the labor market, and to ↳ remain so when they become mothers (Esping-Andersen 2009). Lower-skilled women, by contrast, often have less satisfying jobs and are therefore more willing to give up paid work if material needs are fulfilled, either by the state or their partner (Hook 2015). In addition, education is a strong predictor of progressive value orientation (Kriesi et al. 2008) and emphasis on self-autonomy (Beramendi et al. 2015; Esping-Andersen 2009).

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As expected, and in line with the literature (Cunningham 2008; Edlund and Öun 2016), women's support for a conservative family model varies with education, as Figure 8.3 shows. In all countries, we find consistently significant differences between low-skilled women and skilled or higher-skilled women who are much less likely to think that a child suffers when it has a working mother.[13] In Germany and France, for example, around 50 percent of low-skilled women are skeptical toward working mothers while only around 20 percent of high-skilled women held this view in the mid-2000s. In Spain, differences between high- and low-skilled women are even more pronounced due to the conservative view among low-skilled women (51 percent chance of agreement among low-skilled women, 26 percent likelihood among high-skilled women). In Italy, by contrast, education seems to mediate gender values to a lesser extent as women of all skill levels express comparatively conservative views (around three-quarters of all women and more than 90 percent of low-skilled women). Although high-skilled Italian women are starting to embrace more progressive ↳ gender values, the demand for individualizing family policy is still less pronounced than in the other three countries, which is emphasized by the low number of high-skilled women in Italy.[14] The findings concur with a recent study on family policy expansion in Germany and Italy, finding that public opinion in general but also specifically among women remains more traditional in Italy compared to Germany (Blome 2017).

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I conclude that women display considerable variation in their preferences for a conservative family model depending on their educational attainment, but overall preferences remain more traditional in Italy than in the other countries. This change in values offers parties the opportunity to compensate for the declining support by their traditional voters and mobilize the middle-class and in particular high-skilled women in France, Germany, and Spain, by putting progressive family policies on their platforms. However, a conservative family policy orientation might be useful to attract lower-skilled voters.

8.3. The Party Configuration of Family Policy Orientation

Due to electoral competition and changing voter–party links, I expect left parties to promote individualizing family policies to mobilize high-skilled voters and high-skilled women in particular. In the absence of a radical right contender, I argue that conservative parties should also pursue a more progressive family policy model. A radical right contender, however, tends to pull them toward a conservative model.

The database for party positions on family policies are party statements geared toward women and families in electoral campaigns as reported in the media. For this purpose, I coded each party's family policy statements in newspapers during the last two months of the electoral campaign using a sentence-by-sentence coding method developed by Kleinnijenhuis and Pennings (2001) and Kriesi et al. (2008, 2012). Based on a detailed coding scheme that includes over thirty issues according to the national family policy debate, I recode four distinct aspects of family policy: the treatment of people as individuals or as family members for social rights, the location of care, the treatment of the family as an institution, and the treatment of gender equality (see Daly 2011). Table 8.3 provides a few examples of individualization and familialization policies.[15]

Table 8.3. Examples of individualizing and familializing family policy

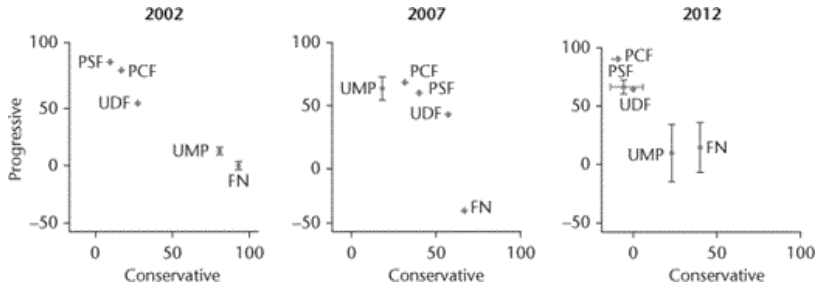
Individualization (progressive)		**Familialization (conservative)**		
Policy examples		**Aspect of family policy**		**Policy examples**
Promotion of employment for women, particularly mothers; extension of social rights for children; generous, relatively short maternity leaves	←	Treatment as individual or family member	→	Granting social rights around care, for instance pensions, credits for caring periods, support for part-time employment of mothers
Expansion of childcare services	←	Location of care and its treatment as paid or unpaid	→	Subsidies or allowances for care at home
Reduction of support for single-earner family, for instance via the tax system	←	Treatment of family as institution	→	Continuation of joint tax system with high marginal tax for second earner
Introduction or extension of paternal leave, in particular with "take or leave" character and high replacement rates	←	Treatment of gender inequality	→	Extension of maternity leave only for mothers

Based on Daly (2011: 9)

I code the progressive and conservative family policy orientations as two separate dimensions because welfare states often feature both progressive and conservative policies at the same time (e.g. public childcare and generous family benefits) or neither (see the implicit familialism in Italy). In fact, most national family policy models as well as the recent reforms incorporate individualizing and familializing
p. 212 elements (see also Lohmann and Zagel 2016; Daly 2011). ↳ While this might not be a coherent family policy from an incentive-based point of view, voters may still appreciate such a combination.[16]

Using these data, I estimate parties' average positions on the individualization versus familialization dimensions. To keep in line with the terminology used in the previous discussion on women's preferences and values, I relabel the dimensions of family policy progressive (individualizing) and conservative (familializing). Figure 8.4 shows the evolution of the party configuration around family policy in France. The lines around the position indicate the coherence of a party position. The upper line indicates the percentage of statements in favor of a family model. The lower line represents the percentage of statements against a family model, subtracted from the mean position. The larger the distance between the upper and the lower line, the more contested family policy is within a party.

Figure 8.4.

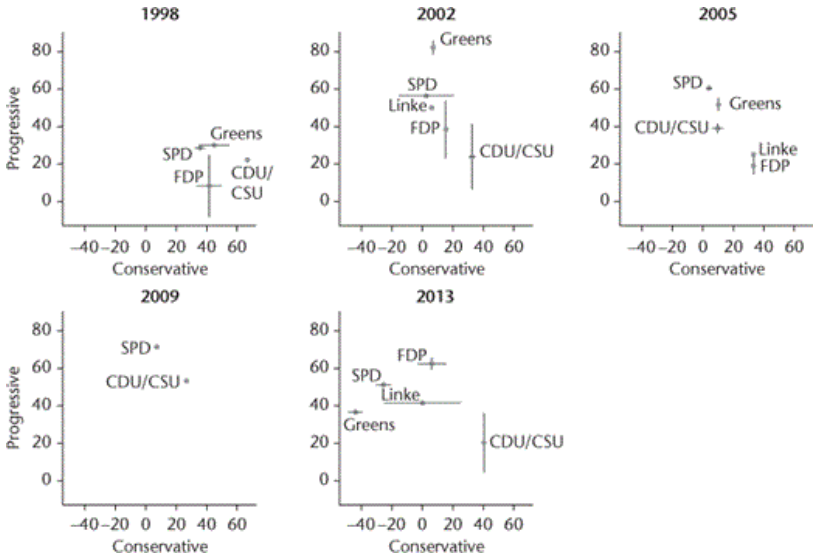


Party configuration of family policy orientation in France, 2002–12

In France, as expected, we find a polarized party configuration around family policy according to party families. Left parties propose progressive family policies while the Conservative Party (*Union pour un Mouvement Populaire*, UMP) and, particularly, the right radical FN advocate a conservative family model.[17] The *Union pour la démocratie française* (UDF) takes a rather leftist position regarding family policy. On the left of the party spectrum, the configuration is relatively stable over time. On the right side of the party spectrum, there is more of a dynamic, however: in 2002, the UMP suddenly abandoned its conservative position and took a progressive stance, probably in response to the female socialist candidate Ségolène
p. 213 Royal. Even the FN ↳ proposed a slightly less conservative family policy model but still remained firm in its rejection of the progressive model. As a result of the changed positions of parties of the right, family policy in France grew *less polarized* during the covered time period. At the same time, family policy became *more contested within the parties of the right* as the increased lines around the position indicate.

Figure 8.5 displays the party configuration around family polices over time in Germany. In 1998, there was *an all-party consensus on a conservative family policy orientation*, consistent with Germany's conservative
p. 214 family policy model. This began to change in 2002, when the social democratic and the ↳ Green parties started to move toward a more progressive family policy. Hence, family policies became *more contested*, mostly along the progressive dimension as polarization on this dimension between a conservative CDU/CSU and progressive red-green alliance increased. In 2005, the CDU/CSU began to modernize their family policy orientation too. Responding to the SPD promise of expanding childcare and introducing a paid paternity leave for both parents, the CDU/CSU took a progressive position while downplaying the conservative orientation of family policy. Together with the Green and the Social Democratic Party, the CDU formed a progressive alliance while the Left Party (*Die Linke*) and the liberal *Freie Demokratische Partei* (FDP) occupied conservative positions. The CDU/CSU maintained its positive stance toward a progressive family policy in 2009, although alongside/in addition to its progressive policies the party began to propose conservative policies, such as an increase in child allowance, to appease the conservative CSU voters. Examples are the introduction of a home-care-cash benefit for stay-at-home parents (*Betreuungsgeld)* or taking into account periods of child-rearing for the calculation of pension benefits. These proposals indicate that the CDU/CSU had moved to the right in the conservative dimension, a trend that continued in 2013.

Figure 8.5.



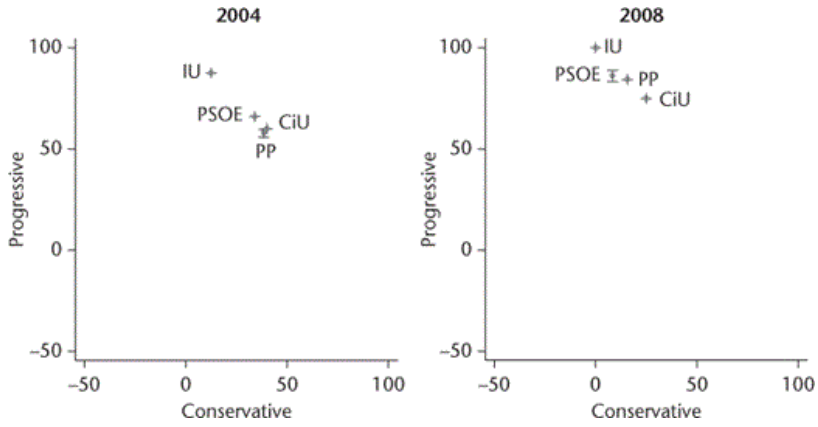
Party configuration of family policy orientation in Germany, 1998–2013

Although the CDU/CSU kept emphasizing the need to expand childcare facilities, they returned to their conservative roots in 2013. This conservative return is mainly explained by the parties' positions on three issues: first, the CDU/CSU fiercely defended the *Betreuungsgeld*, which had been introduced in the previous legislature. Even though the benefit was introduced at the instigation of the CSU, the CDU stuck by its sister party and defended the highly contested policy during the electoral campaign. The second issue was a similarly controversial proposal to increase the old-age pensions of mothers with children born before 1992. These mothers were disproportionally affected by the recent cuts in the pension system because of their limited contributions to the pension system.[18] The third issue contributing to the conservative backdrop is a non-distributive moral issue: the CDU/CSU defended the institution of marriage as a bond between a heterosexual couple and dismissed not only the "homo-marriage" but also tax relief or other legal rights for homosexual partnerships. After the bold progressive move in the 2002 and 2005, it seems that the CDU had to acknowledge its conservative fractions and the pressure of its more conservative sister party.[19,20]

From 2002 to 2009, it was mainly the progressive dimension that was contested. Then, the shift toward a more "sustainable" family policy, with more active involvement from the state (which was very contested until recently on account of historical experiences, see Naumann 2005) was generally accepted among the left parties. Only the CDU, and particularly the more conservative Bavarian CSU, decided to move back to a more conservative position in 2013, allegedly in an attempt to soothe their conservative constituencies,
p. 215 which had ↳ been grumbling about the earlier modernization. Hence, parties are polarized along the conservative dimension as well as along the progressive dimension, making family policy truly contested in Germany.

In contrast to the pattern in Germany and France but in line with the expectations, *parties are not polarized* on family policy in Spain but follow a progressive consensus. Figure 8.6 shows the party consensus on a progressive family policy in both years. The share of statements suggesting an individualizing family policy is 64 percent in 2004 and 86 percent in 2008. As in the other two countries, the dominant issue was the debate on childcare facilities. Both parties agreed with proposals for more public places and promises to reduce taxes on childcare costs. In 2004, 24 percent of all statements of the PSOE refer to childcare (16 percent for the PP), and in 2008 more than a third of all statements (around 30 percent for the PP) refer to childcare. The introduction of a paid parental leave was the second most important issue for the Spanish Socialist Party in 2008, while the introduction of long-term care as a new social right was the second most important issue in 2004. The PP had other priorities: in addition to childcare, it proposed to promote women's employment by granting a subsidy of 100 euros (2004) or a tax credit of 1,000 euros (2008) to each working woman.

Figure 8.6.



Party configuration of family policy orientation in Spain, 2004–8

Despite the progressive consensus, the main parties also proposed familializing policies, mainly in relation to accounting for care periods in the pension system. The conservatives also wanted to extend unpaid maternity leave. Thus, retrenchment was not on the agenda for either party, which stands to reason given the overall low level of support provided to families until recently. In addition to the party consensus, family policy does not seem to be controversial *within* parties, as the small standard deviations suggest.

p. 216 An analysis of election campaigns in Italy from 2006 to 2013 did not produce sufficient data to allow a systematic analysis of party positions on family policy. This confirms my contention that in light of the continued importance of conservative voters (see Figure 8.1) and the absence of middle-class voters with progressive gender attitudes (see Figure 8.3 and Table 8.2; see also Häusermann, this volume), parties have no incentive to put family policy issues on the agenda to mobilize new voter groups. This is why family policy is not a politically salient issue during Italy's electoral campaigns.

8.4. Conclusion

The present chapter studies the *effect of changing electoral landscapes and party competition on parties' adaptation of social investment policies* based on the politicization of family policy in continental and southern Europe. I argue that changes in the normative beliefs of the electorate and the declining relevance of their (conservative) core voters provide parties with an incentive to alter their family policy position. The left has traditionally used the welfare state to mobilize female voters, but for center-right parties too, family policy is potentially an important mobilization issue. I propose that party configuration determines whether a party alters their family policy: in the absence of a radical right contender, the center-right party is likely to follow the center-left party and endorse social investment. A right competitor, by contrast, pulls the center-right to the conservative side, thus making the party less likely to endorse social investment policies.

An analysis of party programmatic offers in electoral campaigns over the last twenty years confirms that changes in the electoral landscapes and patterns of party competition are indeed relevant for the programmatic orientation of parties. In France, Germany, and Spain, voters in general, and high-skilled women in particular, hold more progressive views on family policy and gender roles. Promoting progressive family policy therefore represents an opportunity to mobilize new voter groups and family policy becomes salient issue in the electoral campaigns. In Italy, by contrast, public opinion remains conservative, even among high-skilled women. Consequently, parties did not campaign on family policy issues. The examples of France and Germany demonstrate how an additional right competitor anchors the main party of the right to the conservative orientation of family policy. The radical right FN in France campaigns fervently for a traditional conservative family model[21] and the conservative UMP keeps its conservative profile. In Germany, due to its close alliance with the conservative Bavarian CSU, the CDU is confronted with a conservative rival within its unique party structure. After modernizing its family policy profile in the early
p. 217 2000s, the party moved back to a more conservative policy ↳ orientation as it had to acknowledge its more conservative sister party. In the absence of such competition, the center-right party follows the center-left party and adapts a more progressive model, as the family policy configuration in Spain evidences.

The chapter thus connects the literature on the social investment turn of welfare states with the literature on women's political realignment. The literatures on women's political realignment and the gender vote gap focus mainly on the link between women and left parties, but a key part of the story of women's political alignment is related to their dealignment from center-right parties (see Emmenegger and Manow 2014). Yet, as this chapter has shown, differences in the social investment orientation of parties cannot be explained by focusing solely on party families but must be studied in its political context. Hence, based on the premise that the programmatic orientation of parties matters for party–voter links, and that this orientation, in turn, is shaped by party competition, I argue that we need to study the programmatic offers of both left and center-right parties in order to understand women's political realignment and its consequences for the welfare state and the political economy.

Notes

1. In the Nordic and liberal political economies, such transformations took place earlier and family policy has already adapted to women's transformed roles. This is why I focus on continental and southern Europe.

2. According to this interpretation, reducing gender-related dependencies through statutory support for individuals instead of families fosters individualism, but is not equal to a "family-hostile" environment as the negative suffix "de" implies.

3. I follow Daly's (2011) suggestion to replace "defamilialism" with "individualism" which is usually used as a contrast to familializing policies when classifying family policy proposals (see also Lohmann and Zagel 2016). *Individualization* is a process of continuing separation of an individual from traditional and familial dependency (Daly and Scheiwe 2010). Further critique of the concept defamilialization refers to its ambiguity with regard to gender equality, the limited recognition of parents' right to care for their children and the role of fathers in providing care, an overemphasis on the aspect of commodification, and a reification and overly static view of the family (Knijn and Kremer 1997; Daly 2011; Lewis 2001; Ciccia and Bleijenbergh 2014; Leitner and Lessenich 2007).

4. 1986: *Allocation de garde d'enfant à domicile* (AGED); 1988: *Préstation spéciale d'assistante maternelle* (PSAM); 1990: *Aide pour l'emploi d'une assistante maternelle agréé* (AFEMA).

5. Up to a certain income threshold, mothers received a flat-rate benefit of approximately 300 euros for the first of the three years.

p. 218 6. ↳ The benefit is capped at 1,800 euros.

7. The existing child allowance is means-tested and targeted towards low-income dependent employees.

8. The 2001–6 center-right Berlusconi government promoted the role of enterprises in childcare provision by facilitating the creation of childcare services at the workplace (*micro-nidi aziendali*). However, the respective laws were declared unconstitutional with respect to the part concerning the funding of childcare services on grounds of violating the regions' autonomy in allocating their funds (Oliver and Mätzke 2014). In 2007, the Prodi center-left government proposed a three-year national childcare strategy "Special plan for the development of early childhood socio-educational services". With the objective of meeting the Lisbon target of the 33 percent childcare coverage for children aged 0–2, the Prodi government substantially increased public spending for childcare at all administrative levels (local, regional, and national), and charged the newly created Ministry of Family Policy with allocating national funding. It pledged to fill the gaps in provision through the creation of at least 40,000 new places and to reduce the significant imbalance between the north and south of the country in available facilities. Moreover, it focused on the supply of quality services and the experimental provision of innovative pre-school nursery, early childhood education, and care services. The absence of a law that would establish national standards and secure resources represented a major obstacle to these plans (Blome 2017).

9. As in France and Spain, coverage in the form of nursery schools, by contrast, is almost universal for children aged 3–5 years.

10. The federal system in Italy might explain some of the difficulty the Italian state experiences in developing and implementing a coherent policy strategy towards early childcare education. In Germany, however, federalism did not stop the federal state to push its reform strategy.

11. Given the economic disincentives, the very low take-up rate is not surprising. Since 2000 some regions have implemented flat-rate benefits in order to stimulate the low take-up rates of full-time parental leave. Second, since 2007 the state has been paying both the worker's and employer's social security contribution to the old-age pension for up to two years. Nevertheless, take-up rates remain low (Naldini and Jurado 2013).

12. In addition, the Socialist premier Zapatero introduced a series of high-profile "moral" family policy reforms, for instance the legalization of gay marriage (2005) and the National Equality Law in 2007 (León 2011: 67–8). Benefits for widows and orphans were extended to cohabiting families in 2007 too.

13. In Germany and the two southern European countries, differences are significant for all three levels of education in most years, whereas in France, the main divide is between low-skilled women and women with at least secondary education.

14. Occupational change remained weaker in southern Europe's insider-oriented welfare democracy (Oesch 2015; Beramendi et al. 2015). In Chapter 6, Häusermann shows how this insider-orientation of welfare democracy weakens the electoral realignment between the middle class and the social democratic parties in southern Europe. Ansell and Gingrich's
p. 219 analysis of the labor market prospect and political preferences ↳ of university graduates not only evidences how low the share of graduates is in Italy, but also that most university graduates will find themselves in jobs below their qualification levels (Ansell and Gingrich, this volume).

15. The process of data-generation is described more extensively in the supplementary material on the author's personal website.

16. Note that another type of family policy exists. These policies aim to support the family in general without specific effects of the employment of mothers or the reconciliation of work and family (see Korpi 2000). Policies that aim to reduce poverty among children (*Kindergrundsicherung* proposed by the Greens and the Left Party in 2012) or rather unspecific statements in support of the family (such as "enhance general conditions for families to increase birth rates," FDP 2002) fall into this category. Although these statements were coded, I do not include them in the analysis.

17. See also Afonso and Rennwald, this volume, on the welfare state positions of radical right parties in Europe.

18. Although the proposal aims to correct an existing dysfunction of the system rather than being a prospective policy proposal, I included the policy because of its electoral signal. If I were to exclude this issue and similar ones, the overall family policy orientation of the German party system would be slightly less conservative as no party voiced a concern about such issues. In particular, the CDU/CSU would send a less conservative signal to its voters as it campaigned strongly on the issue.

19. This would also hold if I were to exclude the moral issues. Although the CDU would take a slightly less conservative position, the overall configuration remains unchanged. As family policy has not only distributive but also moral dimensions, and I am interested in both aspects of family policies, I keep the moral issues in the analysis. A scatter plot of the party family configuration on the moral dimension can be found in the supplementary material on the author's personal website.

20. While the Social Democratic and the Green Party have taken a progressive stance since 2002, the position of the Left Party is inconsistent: shifting from a neutral in 2002 to a conservative stance in 2005 before taking a progressive stance again in 2013. This might be related to the reluctance of the Left Party to position itself along these categories: a large share of statements expresses the intention to support families in general and to combat child poverty, most notable through the introduction of a "basic income for children" (*Kindergrundsicherung*).

21. Until now. In the presidential campaign in spring 2017, Marine Le Pen finds it necessary to defend the achievements of the women's movement against a conservative Islam.

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