

# The Low Fertility Problem and German Party Politics : An Unsuccessful Family-Political Regime Change under the Red-Green Government

ONO Hajime

## 果たせなかったレジーム転換

——ドイツ・赤緑連立政権の少子化問題への対応を中心に——

小 野 一

### INTRODUCTION

Because of its low TFR (total fertility rate) of 1.37 in 2003, Germany belongs to the group of countries whose birth-rates are the lowest in the world. Among EU countries at that time, only Italy (1.26), Spain (1.26) and Greece (1.35) suffered from lower birth-rates than Germany <sup>(1)</sup>. France and the Netherlands experienced a birth-rate increase in the latter half of the 1990's, while the TFR in the USA has oscillated between 2.0 and 2.1 since 1989 <sup>(2)</sup>.

Table 1 The TFR in some OECD Countries <sup>(3)</sup>

	1975-80	1980-85	1985-90	1990-95	95-2000	2000-05	2005-10	2010-15
Australia	1.99	1.91	1.86	1.86	1.78	1.76	1.79	1.83
Denmark	1.68	1.43	1.54	1.75	1.76	1.76	1.8	1.82
France	1.86	1.87	1.81	1.71	1.76	1.88	1.89	1.85
Germany	1.52	1.46	1.43	1.31	1.34	1.35	1.36	1.39
Italy	1.89	1.53	1.35	1.28	1.21	1.29	1.38	1.41
Japan	1.81	1.76	1.66	1.49	1.39	1.29	1.27	1.27
Netherlands	1.6	1.52	1.56	1.58	1.6	1.73	1.72	1.72
Spain	2.57	1.89	1.48	1.27	1.18	1.29	1.41	1.5
Sweden	1.66	1.65	1.91	2.01	1.56	1.67	1.8	1.84
UK	1.72	1.8	1.81	1.78	1.7	1.7	1.82	1.85
USA	1.79	1.83	1.92	2.03	1.99	2.04	2.05	2.02
Europe	1.97	1.89	1.83	1.57	1.4	1.41	1.45	1.48
World	3.92	3.58	3.38	3.05	2.8	2.65	2.55	2.46

This problem has been known about for some time. The TFR in West Germany has hovered around 1.4 since 1975, with the birth-rate in East Germany starting to converge on the level of West Germany. Nevertheless, thanks to immigration<sup>(4)</sup>, the German population continued to increase from 1972 and the nominal birth-rate was stable, as although an average German woman has only 1.2 children, an immigrant woman has 1.8<sup>(5)</sup>.

Figure 1 shows the German population prediction for the 21st century. If the current tendencies of mortality, birth-rate and immigration continue unchanged, the population will follow curves A and B: curve C is a calculation with no immigration. In short, the German population will halve by 2080 if it accepts no immigrants. The TFR of 1.4 means that only two-thirds of the current female population will be replaced through generational change and that the 771,000 births of 1999 will be reduced to 378,000 by 2050. Demographic factors have exponential effects. A long-term reduction below the required numerical value for population reproduction (usually considered to be 2.08) will result in a serious population decline over time.

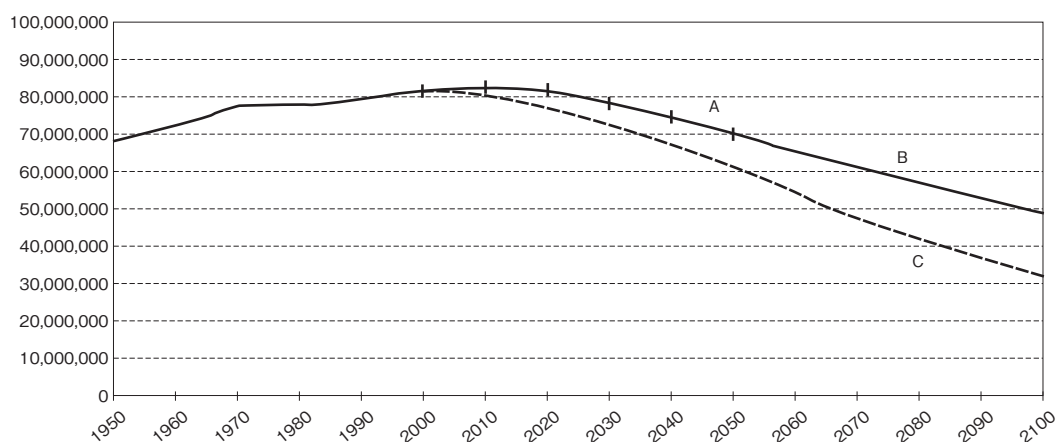


Figure 1 Projected German Population<sup>(6)</sup>

Is such a rapid population decline avoidable? Table 2 shows that it would be possible to maintain the population in a demographically acceptable range if Germany could succeed in raising its birth-rate to 1.6, as in other Western and Northern European countries, and if it would accept 150,000 immigrants every year. Even with such interventions, the aging-society problem would continue, with the necessary working-age population heavily dependent on immigrants<sup>(7)</sup>.

Despite the clear implications of the low birth-rate, it was seemingly not taken as a pressing matter. For example, the *Enquête-Kommission* in the Federal Diet (from 1992 to 2002) issued a report detailing the demographic trend, but its main concern was how to

react to the changing generational structure and immigration problems, so that the theme of population decline was hardly addressed seriously. Though the government committee for social policies (Rürup-Commission) proposed radical reforms for the pension and medical insurance systems in 2003, it took an optimistic view that the negative effects of population decline would be neutralised somehow by an increase in labour participation and productivity<sup>(8)</sup>.

(percent)

Mortality Rate	Immigrants	2000-2010		2020-2030		2040-2050		2060-2070		2080-2090	
		1.4	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.6	1.4	1.6
Not Declining	0	-2.6	-1.7	-6.5	-5.1	-11.3	-8.6	-12.8	-8.9	-13.6	-8.8
	150,000	-0.5	0.3	-3.7	-2.4	-7.1	-4.8	-7.5	-4.4	-7.3	-4
	300,000	1.5	2.3	-1.2	0.1	-3.8	-1.8	-3.9	-1.4	-3.8	-1.1
Declining	0	-1.7	-0.9	-5.1	-3.9	-8.8	-6.6	-12.3	-8.7	-13.3	-8.6
	150,000	0.3	0.7	-2.4	-1.8	-5	-4	-7	-4.2	-7.1	-3.9
	300,000	2.2	3.1	0	1.2	-2	-0.1	-3.5	-1.1	-3.7	-1

Table 2 Rates of Population Increase/Decrease<sup>(9)</sup>

But herein a conceptual problem lies. What does it mean to address the low fertility problem as a political theme? In the narrowest sense, it may mean policies to raise the birth-rate. But quasi-compulsory encouragement to reproduce is mostly unacceptable in advanced societies where having babies is not regarded as a political decision, but as an individual choice. This is especially true in Germany where memory of the population policies of the NSDAP age is still alive.

It is important to consider the multi-dimensionality of this issue. Family policies are indispensable to support those who take care of children. For the sake of maintaining the labour force and economical strength, immigration intake and social integration become political themes, too. The low fertility problem builds an arena in which various actors must compete. The purpose of this article is to analyse such this polemic theme in the context of German party politics.

## ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK AND BACKGROUND

### *Typology of Welfare Regimes and Modified Models*

One of the most well-known theories for cross-national comparison is Esping-Andersen's classification of welfare regimes. In his typology, he supposes two indices; de-commodification and stratification. The former is a measure of the various social policies which allow citizens to freely, and without potential loss of job, income, or general welfare, opt out of work when they themselves consider it necessary<sup>(10)</sup>. The higher a country's place on this index, the less that working people are subject to the labour market and,

therefore, the more highly developed the welfare state is. His other index is related to the question of what kind of stratification system is promoted by social policies. The lower a country's position on this index, the more egalitarian the society is.

Combining these indices, Esping-Andersen classifies Western European welfare regimes into three groups; liberal, social democratic, and conservative<sup>(11)</sup>. In a liberal welfare state, in which means-tested assistance, modest universal transfer or modest social insurance plans predominate, de-commodification effects are minimised but an order of stratification is erected: there is a blend of a relative economic equality among state-welfare recipients, market-differentiated welfare among the majorities, and a class-political dualism between the two. The archetypical examples of this model are the USA, Canada and Australia. The Scandinavian countries belong to the social democratic regime-type, in which the principles of universalism and de-commodification of social rights are extended also to the new middle classes. In conservative and strongly corporatist welfare states, such as Austria, France, Germany and Italy, the liberal obsession with market efficiency and commodification was never pre-eminent and, as such, the granting of social rights was hardly ever a seriously contested issue. On the other hand, the state's emphasis on upholding status differences means that its re-distributive impact is negligible. These types of welfare regimes were formed under the influence of conservative forces, such as catholic political parties. Therefore, in contrast to the universalism pursued by labour movements, their welfare systems make much of familial support functions and have in effect aimed to keep women in the position of full-time homemakers.

Esping-Andersen's model is sometimes reviewed critically. One critique comes from feminists who question whether a country's higher position on the de-commodification index really means it is progressive. While de-commodification has a positive meaning for male workers who have already been commodified, commodification may be a concern of women who have been held back from joining the labour market. Siaroff provides a scatter plot of 23 OECD countries<sup>(12)</sup>: its horizontal axis indicates female work desirability, which is calculated by female/male ratios in wages, unemployment and responsibility; the vertical axis indicates the family welfare orientation, which is measured by family policy expenditures and family policy benefits. There are approximately four groups. Four Scandinavian countries belong to the first group, where female workers are almost equal to their male colleagues, family welfare is highly developed, and the conditions for working mothers are favourable. The USA, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand belong to the second group, where female work desirability is relatively good, but family welfare is not so highly developed and working women are heavily burdened by their families. To the third group, in which female workers are ill-treated but relatively well supported by family welfare systems, belong France, Belgium, the Netherlands, West Germany and Luxembourg. The first and the second groups correspond to the social

democratic and the liberal regimes in Esping-Andersen's model. The third group resembles the conservative regime in that the welfare institutions are designed under the implicit premise that a man is a breadwinner. Siaroff's model implies the existence of a fourth group: Japan, Switzerland, Spain and Greece belong here. Scores on both female work desirability and on family welfare orientation are so low that conditions for working mothers are unfavourable.

Siaroff's argument is an important modification to the conventional theory. Esping-Andersen, perhaps conscious of such critique, rethought his own model in 1999. He reconceptualised the social-political functions of family and distinguished between 'familialisation' and 'de-familialisation' regimes. The welfare states of de-familialisation can be captured by four kinds of indicators; overall servicing commitment, overall commitment to subsidising families, the diffusion of public child-care, and the supply of care to the aged<sup>(13)</sup>. On the grounds that there were not any great differences between the Mediterranean sub-regime accompanied with strong familialism and the conservative regime in Continental Europe, he concluded that his original typology may suffice for most of his argument<sup>(14)</sup>.

Leitner's article in 2003 further developed Esping-Andersen's new classification system by establishing a gender-sensitive typology. She combines two axes that indicate respectively the orientation to familialisation and to de-familialisation to classify welfare regimes into four groups. Explicit familialism maintains policies which strengthen the family in caring for children, the handicapped, and the elderly. It also lacks any alternative care services, regardless of whether they are public or market-driven. Within optional familialism, services as well as supportive care policies are provided. Thus, the caring family is strengthened, but is also given the option to be (partly) unburdened from caring responsibilities. Because implicit familialism neither offers de-familialisation nor actively supports the caring functions of the family, this type relies implicitly upon the heavily burdened family when it comes to care issues. De-familialism would be characterised by strong de-familialisation due to state or market provision of care services and by weak familialisation. Family carers are (partly) unburdened but the family's right to care is not honoured<sup>(15)</sup>.

	Formal Child-Care	
	Widespread	Poor
Payment for Child-Care	Optional Familialism	Explicit Familialism
	Belgium Denmark (Finland) France Sweden	Austria Germany Italy Luxembourg Netherlands
No Payment for Child-Care	De-Familialism	Implicit Familialism
	Ireland UK	Greece Portugal Spain

Figure 2 Classification of Countries in the Field of Child-Care<sup>(16)</sup>

Leitner applies this framework to compare the family policies of EU countries. Because one child-care supporting policy is paid parental leave, the existence or absence of it should be taken as a criterion for strong versus weak familialisation, on the one hand. On the other hand, the percentage of children under three years old who are in formal child-care indicates the dimensions of strong or weak de-familialisation. This analysis leaves us with country-clusters which represent four types of familism in the field of child-care: (1) optional familism - Belgium, Denmark, France and Sweden; (2) explicit familism - Austria, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands; (3) implicit familism - Greece, Portugal and Spain; (4) de-familism - Ireland and the UK (cf. figure 2). Finland borders both optional and explicit familism.

Her classification differs from Esping-Andersen's approach. His de-familised Scandinavian cluster is firstly classified as a familistic system (optional familism) in her model, and secondly, is complemented by Belgium and France. The latter two countries were given a special status within the conservative welfare regime by Esping-Andersen because of their strong tradition of formal child-care services. In Leitner's analysis, Esping-Andersen's conservative cluster is further split into explicitly and implicitly familistic systems, with the Southern European welfare states (except Italy) positioned in the implicit familism grouping. Ireland and the UK, which are found in Esping-Andersen's liberal cluster, are placed within the de-familism grouping. Leitner's intention to develop a gender-sensitive conceptualisation succeeds as far as child-care is concerned<sup>(17)</sup>. Based on her earlier work on gender (in)equality in care policies, she insists that Denmark and Sweden have the most de-gendered profiles in paid parental leave throughout the EU, and that France, Germany, Italy and Luxembourg, clearly represent gendered familism<sup>(18)</sup>.

Though some argue that family policies like parental leave have little, or at best a marginal impact on birth-rate<sup>(19)</sup>, more detailed analyses would deepen our understanding. At least, we should pay attention to three tendencies; the 'child benefit' model, financial support for care leave, and the provision of public care facilities<sup>(20)</sup>. Which type of social policy is preferred depends not only on socio-economic factors, but also on such factors as value judgements and historical traditions in the societies. Models of welfare regime classification include such information and, therefore, help us investigate the relations between family policies and the low fertility problem.

### *Family Politics in the German Party System*

The ideological constellation of the German party system is (was) so clear that we can relate family-political development with interparty dynamics.

There is some distinction between the 'politics for institutions' (*Institutionenpolitik*) up until the beginning of the 1960's, and the 'politics for family members' (*Familienmitgli-*

*ederpolitik*) in the 1970's. Such an understanding seems legitimate if we think of the ideological differences of German parties: while the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) intended to protect and support the family as a whole, it was rather important for the Social Democrats (SPD) to promote equal rights and opportunities for individual family members (e.g. women and children) and to assist those from poorer families<sup>(21)</sup>.

Under the CDU/CSU-led government from the 1950's until the middle of the 1960's, the family was regarded as an economically and culturally indispensable basic organisation and the state refrained from interfering, so as not to impede the functions of the family. A particular form of family was presupposed here; a father as breadwinner, a mother engaged not in wage labour but in reproducing or nourishing children, and two or three children. The reason why this form of nuclear family based on sexual role division was widespread could be attributed to the fact that it was suitable for the production style of Fordism.

In the first half of the 1970's, however, more and more young women made much of occupational careers as well as domestic life. The idea of dependence on their husbands became old-fashioned and a paradigm change was underway, promoted by factors such as improved living standards, rising educational levels, the advance of women to every occupational field, expansion of the service sector, and so on. Naturally, this was influenced by the women's liberation movement, or the second wave of feminism, too. To such social and cultural transformation, the SPD-FDP government reacted ambivalently.

After the formation of the CDU/CSU-FDP government in 1982, retrospective tendencies were reinforced under the Federal Chancellor Kohl. Instead of the argument about equal rights in the family, the motto of a 'new partnership of man and woman,' which insisted that the household work (of women) was in no way inferior to vocational engagement, became dominant. Family policy in West Germany was conservative in comparison to other European countries, but many women hoped for a life-style and society in which they were not inferior to men, even though they continued to take care of child-raising based on the male breadwinner model.

The difference between the family policies of the CDU/CSU-FDP government and those of the SPD-FDP government was rooted in their political principles. To understand such an opposing structure, the confrontation model of 'politics for institutions' and 'politics for family members' was a persuasive one.

The different attitudes of women toward occupational labour caused friction after the reunification of West and East Germany, but the behaviour of East Germans started to move closer to that of West Germans: though the rate of mothers working full-time was higher in ex-East Germany, it began to decrease with a consequent rise in the part-time working rate.

Overcoming the remnants of mother worship in the NSDAP age and the co-

existence of irreconcilable attitudes in the age of the West-East division, family policy in Germany finally arrived at the European average standard at the beginning of the 21st century<sup>(22)</sup>. However, there were repeated attempts to persuade young women to get back to their 'natural' mothering role. Problems of gender were exclusively understood as a female dilemma and not connected to policies promoting male involvement in household duties.

Under the four-party-system<sup>(23)</sup> since the 1980's, the following confrontation schema seemed generally accepted: the parties built two party-blocs and the winner of the election between the CDU (/CSU) -FDP bloc and the red-green bloc (the SPD and the Green) formed the governmental coalition. German reunification accelerated the realignment of the party system: 'Grand Coalitions' from the CDU (/CSU) and the SPD were more often built on the condition that neither party-bloc could keep a majority in parliament. Coalitions including the Left Party (the PDS) were not taboo any more, but were realised only in some ex-East German states. The SPD-FDP governments became exceptional.

The first red-green federal government was formed after the Federal Diet election in 1998. Generally speaking, the Schröder administration in the first period carried out several important reform policies, but at the same time, its limits became clear. This red-green government perhaps pushed Germany forward to a liberal market economy more than the preceding CDU/CSU-FDP government had done<sup>(24)</sup>. It won in the Federal Diet election in 2002 again. However, faced with a surging unemployment rate, the Schröder administration in the second period was on its final legs. As a result of the moved-forward election in September 2005, the red-green federal government of seven years was dissolved and gave way to a grand coalition. Because the Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) was dominated by opposition parties, the red-green government could not execute any important policies without help from the side of the CDU/CSU. It is possible to say that a virtual grand coalition had already begun in the period of the red-green governmental coalition.

Paralell to the realignment of German party system in recent years, a radical change is going on in the realm of family policies.

## POLITICAL PROCESS

### *Development of Child-Care Policies*

In addition to the ongoing tax deduction for child-caring families, the Adenauer administration introduced a system of child benefits and increased the amounts gradually (Table 3a). A spousal deduction (*Ehegattensplitting*) was introduced at this time. The family policy of the CDU/CSU-led government gave preference to families



based on the conventional marriage system, and the spousal deduction was suitable for the breadwinner model <sup>(25)</sup>.

The SPD, which held counterproposals to the family policies of the CDU/CSU-led government, implemented some reforms after 1969 together with its coalition partner FDP (the Free Democratic Party). Its central aim was to make occupation (for women) and family compatible with each other. Simultaneously, it tried to equalise the child-care burden beyond social strata: the child benefit was applied for the first child, too, and the tax deduction was abolished. The political implication is clear if we think of the vertical re-distribution effect of child benefits which are paid regardless of recipients' income level. The most important reform was the foundation of a maternal leave allowance (*Mutterschaftsurlaubsgeld*) in 1979: exclusively working mothers who were obliged to pay for their social insurance benefitted from this system. The *Unterhaltsvorschussgesetz*, a law which enabled public assistance for single carers, was also enacted in 1979 <sup>(26)</sup>.

**Table 3a Long Term Development of Child Benefit** <sup>(27)</sup>

(Euros per Month)

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child	4th Child	Following
Jan. 1955 - Sept. 1957			13	13	13
Oct. 1957 - Feb. 1959			15	15	15
Mar. 1959 - Mar. 1961			20	20	20
Apr. 1961 - Dec. 1963		13	20	20	20
Jan. 1964 - Aug. 1970		13	26	31	36
Sept. 1970 - Dec. 1974		13	31	31	36
Jan. 1975 - Dec. 1977	26	36	61	61	61
Jan. 1978 - Dec. 1978	26	41	77	77	77
Jan. 1979 - Jun. 1979	26	41	102	102	102
Jul. 1979 - Jan. 1981	26	51	102	102	102
Feb. 1981 - Dec. 1981	26	61	123	123	123
Jan. 1982 - Dec. 1982	26	51	112	123	123
Jan. 1983 - Jun. 1990	26	36-51	72-112	72-123	72-123
Jul. 1990 - Dec. 1991	26	36-66	72-112	72-123	72-123
Jan. 1992 - Dec. 1995	36	36-66	72-112	72-123	72-123
Jan. 1996 - Dec. 1996	102	102	153	179	179
Jan. 1997 - Dec. 1998	112	112	153	179	179
Jan. 1999 - Dec. 1999	128	128	153	179	179
Jan. 2000 - Dec. 2001	138	138	153	179	179
Jan. 2002 -	154	154	154	179	179

**Table 3b Long Term Development of  
Tax Deduction for Child-Carer** (Euros per Year)

	1st Child	2nd Child	3rd Child
1946 - 1948	205	205	205
1948 - 1952	307	307	307
1953	307	307	378
1954	307	307	429
1955 - 1956	368	368	859
1957	368	736	859
1958 - 1961	460	859	920
1962 - 1974	614	859	920
1975 - 1982	-	-	-
1983 - 1985	221	221	221
1986 - 1989	1270	1270	1270
1990 - 1991	1546	1546	1546
1992 - 1995	2098	2098	2098
1996	3203	3203	3203
1997 - 1999	3534	3534	3534
2000 - 2001	5080	5080	5080
2002	5808	5808	5808

**Table 3c Extra Child Benefit**

	Euros
Jan. 1986 - Dec. 1989	24
Jan. 1990 - Dec. 1991	25
Jan. 1992 - Dec. 1995	33

It was not surprising that the Kohl administration made a turn. With the re-introduced tax deduction, the dual system was restored, and the amount of the child benefit for the second or the following child was subject to the poverty degree of the recipients. There were also extra child benefits for low income earners (Table 3c). Such a complicated system was simplified in 1996. In spite of economic difficulties, expenditure related to family policies was expanded, showing a re-orientation of social policies.

Drastic innovation was brought about through a series of reforms started in 1986: parental leave (*Erziehungsurlaub*), parenting allowance (*Erziehungsgeld*), and inclusion of the child-caring period in pension calculations. The maximum amount payable as a maternal leave allowance was reduced and later replaced by parental leave and a parenting allowance, with a maximum period of 10 months at first, extended to 36 and 24 months respectively in 1993. Parental leave permitted part-time working less than 19 hours per week, and employment was guaranteed for the whole leave period. In the pension system, from 1986, one year of child-care was regarded as the equivalent to employment with premiums, extended to three years in 1992. It meant that those who had raised two children would be entitled to receive a pension even though they had not been employed. The income rate applicable for the child-care period would be 100 percent of average real income up until 2000. Finally, a pension system favourable for child-carers regardless of their occupational engagement was realised. Nonetheless, such policies did not solve all problems: there was still a three-year-gap from the end of the parental leave period until the child would enter school. To address this problem, a law was enacted guaranteeing a right to a place in a child-care facility.

Though the opposition parties to the Kohl administration believed that family policies stressing traditional gender role division would lock out women from the labour market, the red-green coalition, especially in its first term from 1998 to 2002, took the course of the previous CDU/CSU-led government: not only the amount of child benefit (Table 3a) but also the ceiling of the tax deduction (Table 3b) was raised, with the spousal deduction remaining intact. There were also some innovative policies. Parental leave and parenting allowance were integrated into 'parents-time' (*Elternzeit*) which enabled mothers and fathers to get parental leave simultaneously. Part-time work of less than 30 hours per week during the leave period was allowed, instead of just 19 hours. Remaining parents-time (up to a maximum of a year) could be transferred to a three to seven year old child if the employer agreed. Parents-time was clearly aimed at improving conditions so that family life and careers would be compatible for both parents<sup>(28)</sup>. An expansion of child-care facilities was advocated during the Federal Diet election in 2002 and the re-elected red-green government had an intention of using the budget for this purpose<sup>(29)</sup>.

During the red-green period, the confrontation structure related to family policies was in the changing process. Faced with newly occurring problems, not only governmental but also opposition parties were compelled to rethink their own policies. It is too simplified to state that there were no elemental differences between both party-blocs and that they were competing with each other only in practical measures. In fact, the CDU/CSU, whose election program in 2002 proposed a 'family grant' (*Familiengeld*) as a substitute model for parenting allowance and child benefit<sup>(30)</sup>, believed that parents should receive the money and decide freely whether they would use public or private child-care facilities or not. While the SPD had still the intention of improving conditions for the compatibility of family life and career, the CDU/CSU favoured 'freedom of choice', including an option that parents (mostly mothers) could give up their careers to take care of their child/children by themselves<sup>(31)</sup>.

The *Tagesbetreuungsausbaugesetz* (law for enlargement of day-care facilities) was enacted in 2004. In spite of governmental change after that, such policies were not interrupted<sup>(32)</sup>. One of the most important reforms assisting child-carers under the grand coalition was the parents-allowance (*Elterngeld*) which was introduced in 2007: a parent received 67 percent of his/her previous income if he/she used parents-time and reduced his/her working hours to less than 30 hours per week. The maximum monthly amount was 1,800 euros. As well, those who earned less than 1,000 euros per month received extra benefits, up to a maximum of 300 euros. These benefits could continue for 14 months if both parents received parental leave simultaneously for longer than two months.

The parents-allowance, mostly for mothers, was intended to encourage a return to

work after the period of child-care through an income guarantee according to his/her wage. In other words, it was hoped that female workers who hesitated to have children would feel less anxious about the possible incompatibility between careers and child-raising. It was also hoped to help promote familial involvement of fathers. It is justified to regard the parents-allowance as a re-orientation of conservative German family politics with its strong tradition of sexual role division. Moreover, it is interesting that such a policy was introduced under the initiative of a CDU-minister, Ursula von der Leyen.

The amount of child benefit and the ceiling for tax deduction have remained unchanged since 2002. After the Hartz IV reform which integrated unemployment insurance and social security<sup>(33)</sup> in 2005, parents who earn less than the minimum standard receive *Kinderzuschlag* (extra child benefit). The latest information regarding German child-care policies is available in the official publications<sup>(34)</sup>.

### *Applicability of Theoretical Models*

According to Esping-Andersen's model, Germany is a country with a conservative welfare regime. In Siaroff's model, it belongs to the group where female work desirability is not so good but family welfare is highly developed. Leitner regards Germany as a regime of explicit familism with strong familialisation and weak de-familialisation in the realm of child-care. With the help of these theoretical conceptualisations, how should we interpret the political process mentioned above?

Firstly, we should look at the expanded child benefit in the 1970's. It was more than a policy of vertical income re-distribution. The potential ability of the family as child-carer was stronger in an age where it seemed natural that fathers as breadwinners sought wage labour and mothers took care of households. It was enough for the ministry to provide measures to reduce the economic burden of families with many (more than three) children. In the social transformation after the World War II which reduced the status of the traditional form of family as a result, the gradual expansion of child-care support became a social issue which would be worked on not only by progressive but also by conservative politicians. If we apply Leitner's explanation model, a shift was happening which reinforced the tendency towards familism.

The most symbolic reforms of the SPD-FDP coalition were the abolition of the tax deduction and the foundation of a maternal leave allowance. The former is understandable as part of the traditional confrontation axis between the right and the left. The latter reflects a multi-dimensional conflict structure, for such a system is undoubtedly based on a belief that compatibility between career and family should be improved in order to encourage female occupational engagement. Here, the confrontation between 'politics for institutions' and 'politics for family members' was expressed most concentratedly. At the same time, Esping-Andersen's model is profitable because women are more likely to be

kept at home in a conservative welfare regime. It seems theoretically legitimate to say that the SPD-FDP government attempted, through the foundation of a maternal leave allowance, to move Germany towards an ideal type of social democratic regime.

After the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition came back to power in 1982, the tax deduction for child-carers was revived and the maternal leave allowance was virtually abolished. Importantly, such a political re-orientation contained elements not only of 'politics for institutions' but also of 'politics for family members' (e.g. extension of parental leave), and in this sense an argument about the liberalisation of the family-political concept of the conservative parties<sup>(35)</sup> is justified. However, the governmental change to the red-green did not lead to a political change. While the SPD, for example, insisted in its election program in 1983 that 'the state has to improve conditions in which individuals can freely and self-responsibly live together with their families,' it emphasised the significance of the family for individuals and society in its election program in 1998: 'A family gives people love, safety, appreciation and warmth. The family belongs to the most important institutions for welfare services in our society'. With such praise of the family, the SPD came closer to the position of the CDU/CSU. Both the SPD and the Green Party essentially abandoned their elemental criticism to the 'politics for institutions' by the last half of the 1980's<sup>(36)</sup>. Are there any criteria which distinguish the familial policies of the SPD from those of the CDU/CSU?

The explicit familialism of Leitner's classification is different from the optional familialism regime in the sense that the de-familialisation index measured by the ratio of children under three years old in public care facilities is not so high in the former regime. Generally speaking, the SPD and the Green Party favoured expanding public child-care services, but the conservative parties had only limited intentions to do so: the CDU/CSU wanted parents to take care of their children by themselves and the FDP preferred private child-care facilities. This leads to the hypothesis that the red-green family policies resembled optional familialism and those who expected such a system were seeing a potential break-through in the formation of the red-green government.

The actual possibility of regime change should not be overestimated. Some traditional viewpoints, for example, the discourse that a pre-school child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works<sup>(37)</sup>, would negatively influence Germany's rise on the de-familialism index. But the fact that a law was enacted in 1992 giving parents of three to six year olds rights to child-care facilities reveals that family policies containing some elements of optional familialism could be pursued even under the CDU/CSU-led government. However, the family grant model was a counterproposal to the red-green coalition which preferred public child-care services, and we can find here the desire of the conservative parties to prevent a change of social order.

Kolbe, who compares family welfare policies, paying attention to factors such as

tradition and discourse, points out that German social policies are clearly distinguishable from those of Sweden, though the male breadwinner model was formerly premised in both countries. 'As far as the history of social and familial politics in (West) Germany was concerned, the choices in the 1950's or earlier had been continuously important. Not only the child benefit but also the tax deduction was allotted to those who got their income from their occupational labour and were responsible for nourishing their children'. Fathers were regarded as recipients of the child benefit in legislation, political discussions, judicial proceedings, and in administration. The patricentric policies for familial burden equalisation were the remnants of traditional social policy which had its roots in Imperial Germany (*Kaiserreich*) and were accentuated especially under the NSDAP<sup>(38)</sup>.

Contrastingly, in Sweden, the male breadwinner model disappeared from welfare policies soon after the World War II. After the reforms of 1948, the tax deduction for child-carers was abolished and replaced by a kind of child benefit (*barnbidrag*) which was uniformly allotted to all children from tax revenue. Interestingly, mothers were the recipients of the child benefit in the Swedish system. Sweden was a matricentric welfare state model: in no other OECD countries was the family-political benefit paid exclusively to mothers in 1950<sup>(39)</sup>.

In spite of partially progressive policies, the red-green government failed to transform German system into social democratic regime or optional familialism. But we have not thought about another direction of regime change yet: Could a shift from a conservative to a liberal regime happen easily?

The parents-allowance had its origins in the late phase of the red-green era. With the concept of a 'sustainable family policy', Renate Schmidt (SPD), who was designated as family-minister in 2002, identified strategically family policy with an economic theme<sup>(40)</sup>. To accomplish a successful transition from an industrial to a knowledge-based society without a birth-rate decline, she pursued some measures to enhance the compatibility between career and family. Especially, it was important to motivate high-earning double-income households to have children. But the gender-biased structure of the labour market remained. The federal government intentionally promoted employment in low-wage sectors and more women engaged in 'mini-jobs', typically unstable and disadvantaged work forms which strengthened gender segregation. It was presupposed that mothers earn no more than additional income<sup>(41)</sup>.

Such a development was parallel to what is called 'workfare' reform, a neo-liberal version of welfare. In Germany, where labour market policy became the most important issue, Schröder announced the 'agenda 2010' in March, 2003.<sup>(42)</sup> It was a general reform program which intended not only to re-activate the economy through tax reductions and investments in competitiveness, but also to reorganise the financial and social welfare systems which were in crisis. Within the limit of social expenditure, the grand coalition

had to execute family policies selectively. If we take account of the fact that the parents-allowance was relatively profitable for high-earners, we understand why the CDU/CSU was eager to encourage such a system <sup>(43)</sup>.

It shows that some partly progressive child-care supporting measures are not always contradictory to workfare policies. To keep high birth-rate on the basis of comprehensive welfare as in Scandinavian countries is one of the strategies, but not the only one. Germany in the transitional phase from the red-green to the grand coalition reacted to the low fertility problem in harmony with neo-liberal resolutions. It is worth investigating the possibility of a regime change from conservative to liberal.

According to Esping-Andersen, the warriors inside the Trojan horse of our times are globalisation, ageing, and family instability: a simultaneous market and family failure is threatening the welfare state <sup>(44)</sup>. Every welfare regime is trying to adapt itself to this emerging situation differently. The social democratic nations have responded actively with a redirection of welfare state efforts, increasingly emphasising services and shifting resources towards younger households, both to sustain their incomes and to maximise their employment. The conservative regimes, in contrast, have responded 'passively', in a double sense of the word. Firstly, the old transfer bias remains and has in fact strengthened, as passive income maintenance has been their major weapon in dealing with new risks. Secondly, new risks and new responsibilities are largely related to the family. And the liberal, deregulatory approach is also passive: the strategy which combines a scaled-back social wage and the 're-commodification' of labour leads to a polarisation of society <sup>(45)</sup>.

It is important to note that the declining birth-rate not only affects social systems, but is also itself a product of a changing society. Familialising social risks like unemployment can be an effective antidote against poverty, but they incur indirect costs <sup>(46)</sup>. It is illustrated most clearly by the experiences in the Southern European countries where most unemployed people are dependent on families with at least one earning member. It also implies delayed autonomy, family formation, and fertility, and here we can find one of the principal reasons for Southern Europe's low fertility equilibrium <sup>(47)</sup>. Birth-rate is higher in Northern European countries with advanced de-familialisation.

Another risk lying within the Trojan horse is globalisation. Faced with a demand for competitiveness in the world market, the high level of social welfare in developed nations stands at a precipice. What kind of results will the reinforced re-commodification of labour and social welfare bring about for the low fertility problem? It is not simple. Leitner's model shows that there are some liberal regime countries with a high degree of de-familialisation (the UK and Ireland). They would be closer to optional familism if their systems of child-care assistance, such as parenting allowances, were improved. In



fact, the birth-rate in these liberal regime countries is not as low as in Germany.

But one fear remains unsolved: if social inequality increases, would some strata be excluded from the protection of the welfare system? In any case, if welfare state residualism with de-regulation is associated with alarmingly high child-poverty statistics, fertility would have to be reserved for the non-poor to avoid growing social polarisation. If growing up poor produces systematic disadvantages that affect one's entire life course, and if these continue to be carried over from generation to generation, clearly the greater their fertility, the worse their situation becomes<sup>(48)</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

Low fertility is a multi-dimensional issue. Quasi-compulsory population politics is unacceptable and only a combination of measures from which a birth-rate increase would result is pursuable. Family policies are directly related to this issue and, therefore, the typological classification of welfare regimes and modification models are important clues to explain what kind of policy options different countries would choose. In Germany, family-political difference has been related to governmental party coalitions. It does not mean that the confrontational axis is without change: the party-political constellation can be re-arranged under the influences of the socio-economic situation, political and cultural discourse, value judgements, and so on. After all, Germany in the era of the red-green government failed to solve the low fertility problem on the basis of a high standard of gender equality and comprehensive welfare. This unsuccessful regime change should be partly attributed to the fact that, in spite of various social changes, some factors like conventional social institutions and ideas have hindered a thorough paradigm change. However, some kinds of family-political improvement in harmony with workfare policies are not excluded.

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- (1) Leok Halman/Ruud Luijkx/Marga van Zundert, *Atlas of European Values* (Tilburg: Tilburg University, 2005), p.132.
  - (2) Michael Opielka, *Sozialpolitik: Grundlagen und vergleichende Perspektiven* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Verlag, 2004), p.100.
  - (3) This table is based on United Nations, *World Population Prospects: The 2006 Revision* (<http://esa.un.org/unpp/>). Estimated values are shown with 'medium variant'.
  - (4) Germany registered a population growth of 0.04 percent in 2000. It should be attributed to the immigration excess of 105,000 in this year (Irene Gerlach, *Familienpolitik* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2004), p.52).
  - (5) Franz-Xaver Kaufmann, *Schrumpfende Gesellschaft: Von Bevölkerungsrückgang und seinen Folgen* (Frankfurt/M.: Schrakamp, 2005), p.50.
  - (6) *ibid.*, p.55.
  - (7) *ibid.*, p.54.



- (8) *ibid.*, pp.30-32.
- (9) *ibid.*, p.53.
- (10) Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Princeton, 1990), p.23.
- (11) *ibid.*, pp.26-29.
- (12) Alan Siaroff, 'Work, Welfare, and Gender Equality: A New Typology', Diane Sainsbury (ed.), *Gendering Welfare States* (London: SAGE, 1994), p.94.
- (13) Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations of Post-industrial Economies* (Oxford, 1999), p.61.
- (14) *ibid.*, pp.93-94.
- (15) Sigrid Leitner, 'Varieties of Familialism: The Caring Function of the Family in Comparative Perspective', *European Societies* 5/4 (2003), pp.358-359.
- (16) *ibid.*, p.361.
- (17) Opielka, *Sozialpolitik*, p.113.
- (18) Leitner, 'Varieties of Familialism', p.370.
- (19) Beat Fux, 'Which Models of the Family are Encouraged or Discouraged by Different Family Policies?' Franz-Xaver Kaufmann (ed.), *Family Life and Family Policies in Europe (vol.2): Problems and Issues in Comparative Perspective* (Oxford, 2002), p.408.
- (20) Opielka, *Sozialpolitik*, pp.115-116.
- (21) Peter Bleses, 'Wenig Neues in der Familienpolitik', Antonia Gohr/Martin Seeleib-Kaiser (eds.), *Sozial- und Wirtschaftspolitik unter Rot-Grün* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2003), p.192; However, there is another interpretation that such a dichotomy is not always helpful (Gerlach, *Familienpolitik*, p.202.).
- (22) Opielka, *Sozialpolitik*, p.125.
- (23) Because of the appearance of the Left Party in the Federal Diet election in 2005, the five-party-system was established in Germany.
- (24) Christoph Egle/Reimut Zohnhöfer (eds.), *Ende des rot-grünen Projektes: Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder 2002-2005* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2007), p.517.
- (25) Bleses, 'Wenig Neues', p.191.
- (26) Gerlach, *Familienpolitik*, p.165.
- (27) Information of Table 3a, 3b and 3c is derived from Bundesministerium der Finanzen, *Datensammlung zur Steuerpolitik, Ausgabe 2007* (Berlin, 2008), pp.59-61.
- (28) Bleses, 'Wenig Neues', p.202; As far as the 4.7 percent of households that used parents-time in 2001/2002 were concerned, both parents were in part-time work supported by parents-time and only 0.2 percent of fathers were househusbands. After the reform, the involvement of fathers in child-care increased slightly; from 2 to 5 percent. However, the equalisation of the child-care burden between mothers and fathers under the red-green government was only beginning and it remained impossible to speak of the sexual-equality of social politics (Sigrid Leitner, 'Gender-Screening: Rot-grüne Sozialpolitik als Geschlechterpolitik', Egle/Zohnhöfer, *Ende* (2007), pp.324-325).
- (29) The coalition contract in 2002 promises to found an additional 10,000 all-day schools in order to improve care services for children under three years ('Mehr und bessere Betreuungseinrichtungen für Kinder', *Erneuerung, Gerechtigkeit, Nachhaltigkeit: Für ein wirtschaftlich starkes, soziales und ökologisches Deutschland: Für eine lebendig Demokratie* on 16. Oct. 2002, chap. IV).
- (30) *Leistung und Sicherheit: Zeit für Taten: Regierungsprogramm 2002/2006 von CDU und CSU*, p.37.
- (31) Bleses, 'Wenig Neues', p.204.
- (32) The coalition contract in 2005 promises to enlarge day-care facilities by an additional 230,000 places by 2010: 1.5 billion euros will be used every year from municipal revenues, which would save 2.5 billion euros through the integration of unemployment insurance and social security ('VI.1. Bessere Infrastruktur für Familien', *Gemeinsam für Deutschland: Mit Mut und Menschlichkeit: Koalitionsvertrag von CDU, CSU und SPD* on 11. Nov. 2005).
- (33) Such an idea is a pillar of the 'Agenda 2010'. Cf. Bundesregierung, *Agenda 2010: Deutschland 2010:*

*Unser Weg zu neuer Stärke* (Berlin: LVD GmbH, 2004), p.54.

- (34) Bundeszentralamt für Steuern, *Merkblatt Kindergeld* (<http://www.familienkasse.de>, 2008); *Merkblatt Kinderzuschlag* (<http://www.arbeitsagentur.de>, 2008); Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, *Elterngeld und Elternzeit* (<http://www.bmfsfj.de>, 2008)
- (35) Bleses, 'Wenig Neues', p.199.
- (36) Bleses, 'Wenig Neues', p.200.
- (37) 55.4 percent of Germans said they 'agree' or 'strongly agree' with this statement. This agreement scalar was high in Italy (81.4 per cent), in Greece (78.2) and in Portugal (70.8) and low in Denmark (18.0), in Sweden (37.9) and in Finland (38.4). Cf. European Values Study 1999/2000 (<http://www.europeanvalues.nl>).
- (38) Wiebke Kolbe, *Elternschaft im Wohlfahrtsstaat: Schweden und die Bundesrepublik im Vergleich 1945-2000* (Frankfurt/M.: Campus Verlag, 2002), pp.49-52.
- (39) *ibid.*, pp.53-57.
- (40) Sigrid Leitner, 'Ökonomische Funktionalität der Familienpolitik oder familienpolitische Funktionalisierung der Ökonomie?' Adalbert Evers/Rolf Heinze (eds.), *Sozialpolitik: Ökonomisierung und Entgrenzung* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2008), p.72.
- (41) Leitner, 'Gender-Screening', pp.321-323.
- (42) See fn. 33.
- (43) Sigrid Leitner, 'Vorfahrt für Familie? Zur Familienpolitik der großen Koalition', *Intervention* 4-1 (2007).
- (44) Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations*, p.148.
- (45) *ibid.*, pp.164-166.
- (46) *ibid.*, p.160.
- (47) In his book about the low fertility problem in Japan, Masahiro Yamada points out that birth-rates decreased in those Southern European countries where young adults were likely to live together with their parents until marriage and gender equalisation in social involvement was delayed. Contrastingly, in Germany, where most young adults and their parents live separately, but child-care support for working mothers is not sufficient, many married couples intentionally avoid having many babies because of the falling wages of young men (Masahiro Yamada, *Shoushi-Shakai Nippon: Mou Hitotsu no Kakusa no Yukue [Japan as Low Fertility Society: A Perspective of Economic Inequalities on the Other Side]* (Tokyo: Iwanami-Shoten, 2007), pp.122-123).
- (48) Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations*, p.178.

(おの はじめ 本学准教授)