Governmental discourse surrounding families in Germany from 1968 till 2006

A balancing act of family-integrity and societal change, with special attention to the mother’s occupation

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Abstract

In Germany, the family is historically that of a traditional one. A bourgeois family, in which the father takes care of the family’s existential situation, and the mother commits to housework and care of children (Fleckenstein, 2011; Nill& Schultz, 2010). This is mirrored in ‘subsidiarity’; that care and financial provision is first and foremost covered by the family itself, and then if first instance fails, covered by the state (Fleckenstein, 2011). Hence, ‘care’ is an explicit political expectation that the state has on families. Within this definition of family, contextualized is the mother; she constitutes a committed care-taker, and a less flexible employee on the labour market (Fleckenstein, 2011; Nill& Schultz, 2010).

This bachelor’s thesis, studies governmental discourse surrounding German families and women within them. The aim was to identify definitional constants in the German Family-reports about the concepts of family, and working mothers. For this family-reports from 1968, 1994, and 2006 have been analysed. To do this, the researcher made use of the discourse historical approach formulated by Ruth Wodak (Wodak& Meyer, 2001).

Keywords

Discourse Analysis, Discourse, Discourse-Historical- Approach, Individualization, Ulrich Beck, Family- reports, Family, Mother, Women, Employment, Definition, Germany, shift
I want to thank my supervisor for her criticism and her trusting support in my thesis. I would further like to thank my family deeply, who in a difficult phase overall, have given me the time I required to write, and the encouragement I needed to continue.
“Good and bad, I define these terms, quite clear, no doubt, somehow”

Bob Dylan, “My Back Pages”, 1941
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1.0. Introduction

I came about a term in German that we imprint mothers with if they do not precede to societal expectations; *Rabenmutter* (‘Raven mother’). I have heard it before, yet it slipped my mind until this research. In English, it is merely translated into ‘*bad mother*’ (dict.cc, n.d.), which doesn’t begin to grasp its dimension. It is in fact derogatively used to describe mothers, who ‘selfishly’ work, “‘leaving’ their children at home (dw.com, 2011). Terms like *Rabenmutter* are representing traditional family values in Germany and seem incompatible vis-à-vis a country whose minister of defence, Ursula Von der Leyen, has seven children; an epiphany of emancipation in the year 2016 (ursula-von-der-leyen.de, n.d.). Moreover, a study conducted in 2002 publicises the results that families questioned in West-Germany believe their families to suffer to a great extend if the to the family individual mother were to work full-time (Fleckenstein, 2010, p. 549).

It is a topic that I as a German woman had been confronted with since contemplating about my own career, and overall future.

To understand how discourse around family and its integrity a re established and have been throughout time, plus how women are integrated in their respective family and society, it is essential to understand *family integrity* in its national context. That includes background information on the term family itself. Indeed, the definition of the family itself in this research needs to be understood in terms of a contemporary, and to a German specific, meaning.

Commonly, integrity is a state of “*undivided or unbroken completeness*” (vocabulary.com, n.d.). Without a doubt, it represents numerous interpretations, that are unessential to this research; e.g. in law the European Convention Article 8.

Yet, family- integrity carries a German notion in specific. That if one looks at integrity as *unity or, complete*. The starting point to understanding family-integrity in Germany, is thus an understanding of the ‘*unbroken*’ family as perceived by the government.

Nill& Schultz deducts a to German specific understanding of family from *family policy*. It is that of a romanticised traditional one; A family in which the mother is responsible for homecare and childcare, and the father’s foremost commitment is the economic existential safeguarding of the family (2010). This “*unbroken*” family form is further illustrated within the system concept of *subsidiarity*, in which in place of state interventions, the family is perceived as the primary source of care for one another; both economically and socially (Fleckenstein, 2011). Family in that notion poses a self-
sufficient unit from which state interventions merely assist when the entity proves incapable to maintain itself. *Family-integrity* within this research may thus be understood as the to the German government understood healthy and whole family-form.

I argue that the understanding of the, afore mentioned, deviations in discourse of the mother’s emancipation and the traditional valued family, are not accessible through a picture of momentum, but can only be understood from a diachronic view on the, one might say, highly dynamic terms of family and women in Germany. I further claim a perspective from the state-generated discourse, through analyzing the family reports from Germany. In short, family reports are state manuscripts that offer access to the family situation in Germany. Therefore, this dissertation will mainly draw on three of the seven national family reports from 1968 till 2006.

1.1. Relation to International Social Work

Social workers intervene in families on the background of a domestic political framework and its understanding of families and women. There is and was a normative way of thinking, I argue, of family and women. Through this study I aim at making visible an underlying conflict woman have experienced throughout time from a specific discourse on them. Tensions that materialized when aspiring to work and being a mother. Yet, objective was not to show a momentum of contemporary discourse, but it’s development in its political context; The latest family-report analyzed is from 2006. It in fact displays a slow political reaction of discourse surrounding families and mothers, further an explicit agenda to encourage one family-form, and role of women, over other possible forms and roles. Being aware of this tenacious development of discourse, social workers may develop sensitivity their own values placed on mothers and women or reach the understanding one might be influenced by the normative state discourse. Ultimately, this study illustrates the “how” and “why” to a discourse generating state, exposing the notion that states carry agendas that change the social surroundings and the people within it. This is important to know when working with people all together.

1.2. Aim

To understand how German governmental discourse on family is outlined in the family reports in the time frame of 1968-2006, specifically in relation to the definition of family, and the mother’s occupation in the labor market.
**Research Question**

1. How does the governmental illustrated definition of family change over time, from 1968-2006?
2. How are mothers displayed within that definition of family in these reports?
3. How is the government’s perception about mother’s compatibility with work presented in the family reports from 1968-2006?

**1.3. Key Concepts**

This part will serve as frame for an enhanced comprehensiveness of this thesis’s content. Though the concepts will be explained subsequently in their respective segments, it indeed is substantial to have a preliminary understanding of the subject researched. Thus, despite threat of repetition, the segment here is shortly pre- and re--summarizing the main concepts of the ‘Family-report’, ‘Family’, and ‘women's role in society’, as understood in this thesis.

**a) The Family-report**

The report was first issued 1965 and publicized initially in 1968 (Unger- Soyka, 2009; Gerlach, 2014). Up until the year 2012, eight reports have been published. The following report will be published in the year 2017.

The matter of the reports informs the reader about the situation of families in Germany at that time, and was originally created to protect the bourgeois German family (Gerlach, 2014). Every report is separated in two segments; First, the Federal Government of Germany’s statement on the matter, and following, a group of experts (commission) that researched the contemporary role of family, to then inform on the situation and provide resolution to issues found (Unger- Soyka, 2009; Gerlach, 2014). It is a singular nature of a report in which the Federal Government is urged to state own stance as an answer to the independent commission (Gerlach, 2014), and thus is of an overall discourse- embodying nature (Unger- Soyka, 2009). Part of the commissions proposed solutions are in fact implemented (Gerlach, 2014).

**b) Family**

The concept of family, in this study, is to be understood in a to German specific context. I will make use of the concept of a, to the government understood, “whole” family;
family-integrity. This is important, to understand the position the state locates family to. The reader can observe the positioning of family in first, a historical context, and second an overall political notion.

Historically the family is that of a traditional one. A bourgeois family, in which the father takes care of the family’s existential situation, and the mother commits to housework and care of children (Fleckenstein, 2011; Nill & Schultz, 2010).

Politically this is mirrored in the Christian altruistic idea of ‘subsidiarity’; that care and financial provision is first and foremost covered by the family itself, and then if first instance fails, covered by the state (Fleckenstein, 2011). Assumingly, this not only reflects financial importance of family to the state, but also expectations the state meets families with. Hence, ‘care’ is an explicit political expectation that the state has on families. This traditional family, contextualized in a historical and political frame, is thus the notion of a “whole” family. The integrity of family is penetrated if traditional familiar factors do not apply, or expectations are unfulfilled.

c) Mother’s role in society

The subject of the role mothers take within the Germany society, has been shortly brought up within the concept of ‘family’. Mothers in Germany have conventionally been positioned with their families (Fleckenstein, 2011; Nill & Schultz, 2010); specifically, the house-care and upbringing of children. Indeed, West-German families questioned in a study in 2002, believe their families to suffer to a great extend if the mothers pursued work (Fleckenstein, 2011). In 2013, four times the number of women work part-time in Germany then men (demografie-portal.de, 2015). Auxiliary, 34% of women deciding to working part-time in Germany, justified their decision of working part-time with familiar responsibilities. This, whereas it is merely 4% of men working in part-time vindicated with the same reasoning (demografie-portal.de, 2015).

Thus, German women until contemporary time, show to affiliate themselves and be affiliated with familiar responsibilities more than they are tied to work obligations.
2.0. Previous Research

While I was trying to gain a relative overview on the subject researched, three broad notions of the definition of family and women in it became apparent.

One, there is seemingly an accepted consensus that family patterns have historically changed, considering the databases overlooked for the thesis. Whether it is in Ghana, the transformation of extended to nuclear family (kpoor, 2015) or in the United States of America, the decline of the American Family (Haskins& Sawhill, 2016); The shift or a shift itself is little contested and in general terms the same, at least have I not found an article that claims different. Two, a handful of researchers, read for this thesis, report discrepancies of the contemporary ‘reality of family-forms’ and the contemporary collective definition of family (Poston et al, 2014; Tillman& Nam, 2008; Peters, 1999), therefore displaying that the shift had exhibited different paces on a societal and on a political level. And finally, three, scholars referring to a change within societal understanding of family, stated a simultaneous adjustment of inequality between the roles of men and women. The researches that I chose to present in my thesis, display all three notions; First the report of change itself. It may be important to note, that in this research I am not aiming to define a specific family-form but merely shift focus on the change from one family-form to another. Thus, I am not merely defining all existing family forms, but will illustrate deviations from normative understood family forms throughout time in a specific national context. Second, an alternative definitional approach to family, and third the meaning and implications for mothers of that new maternal role.

a) Shift of family systems

A Shift of family systems can evidently be found in various national context. Two of which will be enumerated here; in the US and in Ghana. Hence, instead of illustrating studies from the same national context, attempts will be made to display different perspectives on the shift itself.

American family

Haskins and Sawhill (2016) display indication that children are progressively born out of wedlock, therefore evidence of an almost equal increase of single families. This shift from nuclear families to single families leads to an instability, which proves to be bad for
children. Nevertheless, this shift is not true for all families, but mostly white families (Haskins& Sawhill, 2016). The racial gap is still not fully explained and may diverge from various factors. One of the causes to this change of family-forms is traceable to the decline of economic prospects of men (Haskins& Sawhill, 2016). Not only are children ill-affected by this change, but it consequences range from a higher rate of poverty, and less social mobility, to an overall increase of social inequality (Haskins& Sawhill, 2016). Interpretations illustrate that one parent has neither as much money, nor time as two parents. Further that the uncommitted parents may display an equally uncommitted or ‘bad’ parent (Haskins& Sawhill, 2016). Ultimately Haskins and Sawhill examine five interventions helpful to all in all decrease the negative consequences (2016): more birth control, the reduction of marriage penalties in for example tax policies, interventions to improve the relationship of married and cohabiting parents, help young boys to enter employment and prevent them from getting into prison, and to help single mothers to independency.

Ghanaian families
The familiar patterns in Ghana have been shifting too in the past years, Kpoor (2015) illustrates. In his literature review research, he mainly refers to the shift from the, in Ghana, traditional extended family pattern, to the in size smaller nuclear family. The extended family refers to the distant kin of one family included in the construct, which Kpoor (2015) characterizes as responsible, obligational-aware and caring for one another. The modern nuclear family pattern consists of a pair of parents and their children, or a lone parent with their children. The main concepts of this argument entail six interdependent factors that influence the, in this paper dubbed, “nuclearization”- shift to the nuclear family.

Commercialization, one, refers to the industrialization that had mainly been started by the West through colonialism and the integration of money. Further, Kpoor (2015) identified, migration as a feature. He explains that people in search for jobs in the city, only through commercialization, physically separate from their traditional familiar concept, and finally emotionally detach themselves from their original identity. Often it is women who are left in the home-village or town, thus they compulsory start a nuclear family. The women depend on remittances their husbands send home from the urban areas, who in the city get confronted with the western lifestyle, in character more individualistic and heterogenic.
“[...] urban dwellers pursue self-fulfilment rather than the goals associated with traditional collective family values and interest.” (Kpoor, 2015, p.9)

The aspiration to go to the city, Kpoor (2015) ties to the spread of education, as taught by western countries. The values incorporated in the education lead to further individualization which is the same for Christian religion and national law, sturdily leaning on the principle of marriage, thus the notion of nuclear family.

The interdependent features leading to nuclearization, point to one all-entailing concept: Individualization. Individualization leads to nuclear families. Kpoor (2015) explains that the political structure is not constructed on individualism, but on kinship support. Individualization excludes the weak members of society, who had been prior cared for by their extended kin. That refers to economic, as much as emotional and moral support; child care for example. Nevertheless, Kpoor (2015) assesses the egalitarian authority shifts in families as pivotal for women’s empowerment. Besides the general instability of familiar patterns, Kpoor (2015) thus concludes both nuclear and traditional family patterns need to be safe-guarded, acknowledged, and family policies reformed, to further develop the country.

b) Redefining Western Families

Whether it is extended-, or nuclear- family, Peters (1999) declares the term “family” to be “one of the most misused concepts in the English language” (1999, p. 55). Neither of those terms are unaccustomed to the West either, and in definition closely related the above illustrated approach of family; People connected in biology. Conventional definitions merely refer to heterosexual unions and their children in coexistence. Yet, Peter (1999) claims, our surroundings have changed, and revealed a discrepancy in definition and real-life experiences. Human Rights, the accent on equality and feminism, led to Peters (1999) argumentation to redefine family. Individual need and circumstances have changed and constantly do so; People frequently contextualize themselves in different families at once.

Contemporary definitions are used for family policies and researches. By using the general definition of family, one cannot grasp family, not reach it, because they often don’t exist as such. Additional meaning connected to family, is drawn out of the definition itself (good, stable, positive), and doesn’t reflect what families mirror in society.
Still, it is not Peters (1999) intention to find a general all-inclusive definition, in fact he says:

“the researcher is unlikely to find a universal definition to suit all scholars, let alone the public” (Peters, 1999, p.63).

This is further presumably not his purpose as his notion to redefine “family” is set to mostly fit the individual instead of all. In depth, he enumerates four features necessary to redefine family.

For one, he argues, Self-Perception, which group or person one feels connected to and the characteristics he defines the grouping with, is pivotal for redefining family in modern times. Depending on geography, age, cohort, gender, social class, and religion, individuals define the general concept of family differently, which Peter (1999) dubs public-perception.

Professionals attempting to define family, must moreover consider the aspect of law, that gradually redefine the familiar illustration through taxation regulations et cetera.

Lastly, history and tradition, have implications for families’ expectations and practices. Individuals are in antagonism with contemporary definitions of family and, Peter (1999) argues, if the above-mentioned features are ignored, will continue to be so.

c) Struggling to be a ‘good’ mother

Between the estate and the state: struggling to be a ‘good’ mother

After having established the general circumstances and definitions that mantle “family”, the next qualitative interview-based research presented here, sheds light on one of its members (mother), in its present position in society.

In it, “contradictory” is the term Vincent et. al (2010) decided to describe political discourse surrounding mothers with; specifically working mothers. The responsibility mothers carry of their children and the decisions they made whether to work or not work, is determent of whether they are characterized as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ mothers.

The research looks at the way women vindicate their maternal identity when questioned about their decision to work or not work. Results illustrate that the in a society in which ‘good person’ is equated with a ‘good worker’, women display an ambivalence towards the decision to work. They further indicate a conflict when mothers are both perceived as “earners” and carers”, that the decision not to work may have influence on the quality of
their locality, but equally the decision to work means leaving room for criticism on their mothering.
Mothers who decide not to work often rely on benefits, and have little resource to support their children’s talents. Mothers on the other hand who decide to work, have little flexibility, are vulnerable to be predicated as a ‘bad’ mother, and thus feel a sense of guilt.
To sum, being a mother especially a single mother, in a highly moralised political discourse and a world in which self-worth is defined through work (p. 135), to an extent means to choose between being a ‘good mother’ or a ‘good’ citizen.

2.1. Summary
The previous research I chose for this thesis, exemplifies varies perspectives to look upon family-patterns and definition of family. It displays highly contextualized understanding and connotations of family. Illustrating what family means in different cultures and what ‘family’ could entail to mean in the future. Showing both positive and negative conclusions drawn from the shift that had taken place in modern times, I attempted to provide a framework and place for criticism to my alternative conclusion. Ultimately, where women stand within family and society, and how discourse affects them, I deemed important as it provides individual faces to a societal issue.
3.0. Historical Background

The historical contextualizing of family politics in predominantly West-Germany until unification, starts with 1953, and the founding of the ministry of family related questions. I am not intending to enumerate family policies, but instead aim to grasp the nature of that time regarding the value families held, and the position women had within that framework. The character of Germany’s family politics and history is too multifaceted, the parties that have been elected in Germany throughout time to dissimilar, to have written the history in a single text. For the sake of comprehension, it is thus split into various subtitles.

3.1. Conservative family politics in its beginning years: The govern of the CDU (Christian democratic Union)

In 1953, the ministry of family related questions was found by the CDU and on the premise that the churches prior charity for familiar matters needed to be given a compensation. The founding of the ministry was against the will of opposing parties, who doubted that familiar health had anything to do with political interventions. Other than economic restoration from the Second World War, former contemporary politics was unconcerned with familiar subjects.

Accordingly, and in adherence to the church, the ministry’s function was it to uphold catholic ideals; thus, preserve the institutions of family and marriage. In fact, the first minister of family affairs, Franz-Josef Würmeling, viewed inherently healthy families’ as a bastion against the threat of communism (Gerlach, 2004, p.152-153). The institutionalized family was in effect one of the core entities the German welfare state was built upon. Not only to provide for a robust labour market, which men were urged to do.

But moreover, Christian altruism stipulated the concept of subsidiarity, which describes the act of caring for the close ones in times of need. The notion that the state only offers financial help if all other human resources near are stretched out, still applies today. It is the idea of familiar self-sustainability, and devotion to family’s health, that the state partially relies on (Fleckenstein, 2011). While men were urged to work, women’ responsibility, to uphold the ideal of family and subsidiarity, was thus being at home and caring for their children; the concept is called the male-breadwinner model (Fleckenstein,
2011, Gerlach, 2004). The quote below exemplifies the value that was seen in housewives; the importance of health and care in relation to material matters.

“A mother at home, supersedes in many ways cars, radio-phonographs and foreign travels” (own translation, germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org, Würmeling, 1963)

This urge on both genders to fulfil their function, is manifested through for example the scarcely held kindergarten places, and their limited opening times of for instance three hours a day. Moreover, financial aid such as child-support, was offered per child, and merely if one of the partners was employed, which was naturally understood to be the father. Still so when labour in Germany was desperately needed, women were perceived as the last resource for employment (Gerlach, 2004).

Nevertheless, societal changes took place at the end of the 60’s and in the context of the first family report. Gradually, alternative forms of coexistence were sought, illegitimate children born, women started to work, and divorce rates increased. At the end of the CDU reign 1969, family politics thus changed from the former ideological- to a factual paradigm, which the first family report from 1968 is a token of (an attempt to objectively assess the situation of the family in Germany, set in motion by the ministry) (Gerlach, 2004).

3.2. Years of Reformation; the social liberal coalition 1969-1982
The Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Free Democratic party (FDP) were still sceptical of the concept of an overall family politics, but preserved the institution, however reorienting its task to a socio-political accent. Instead at the institution of family, liberal interventions aimed at family members individually. The pivotal individual was the child, since “family starts with the child” (Gerlach, 2004, p. 160). The ministry was further renamed to ministry of youth, family and health. Women’s emancipation was attended to particularly, presumably because all three ministers of this time were women. Various projects aimed at women facilitated entry into the labour market; childminder projects were researched, to extend the care provisions for women in employment, employment counselling centres were built, et cetera (Gerlach, 2004, p.163).
Yet, societal and conceptual changes of the ministry not considered, interventions aimed at women were merely of a formal nature. Various German states refused to follow up with the programs, and the ministers had little backup. Their own parties were sceptical of the ministry’s tasks from the beginning, additionally exhibited a public misogynistic view against the ministers and condemned their emancipation programs (Gerlach, 2004, p. 166). What had changed ultimately was the political more factual understanding of family, and a more broad and individualized attempt to look at family and its members.

The CDU was aware of changes of individualization that had taken place in society and politics when taking office of the family ministry. While the emphasis of former social liberal coalition was the support of employment of women, the Christian Democratic Union predominantly accentuated the importance of familiar activity for society, and thus coined the term “family-work”. The proposition was that family-work is equally as vital for the welfare state Germany as gainful-employment. This served as reason for further financial support of previous familiar payment-free activities, such as more and an extended child-support et cetera. Opposing parties argued that the concept of family-work was to draw women back home, while other voices, such as Irene Gerlach (2004, p.169), view the concept in the light of equating family’s activities and making further interventions regarding family’s tasks possible. On the notion of individualization, various researches on compatibility of employment and family in regards to women have been made, and financial support was now offered to stand alone parents. Nevertheless, the family concept and its Christian ideals still favoured by CDU, became somewhat challenged when in 1989 Germany unified, and East-German politics had been equated with West-German politics.

3.3.1. 1989 - 1998
The wall that divided Germany came down unpredictably, and the government saw itself confronted with two different people that had to be fit with one political framework (Gerlach, 2004). Women in East Germany who didn’t work were regarded as uncompliant with the norm, moreover the matter of compatibility of work and employment was publicly never debated in East-Germany (mdr.de, n.d.). The idea of housewifery in East-Germany was in fact discouraged.
The disparities of East and West though not only limited itself to values placed on family and individuals, the economic differences of families needed to be accounted for as well. Families from East-Germany required more financial assistance. Notwithstanding criticism from East-German Women, they were required to adjust to the West-German picture of the male-breadwinner model, and housewifery (Geisler & Kreyenfeld 2005), it would seem from which throughout the coming years the country paradoxically attempted to disengage from. While demographic decrease was still at great concern for the ministry, and more-children-families were advocated for, Angela Merkel, then minister of Youth and Women 1991- 1994, enforced the second law for equality with special consideration of compatibility for women in work and family (Gerlach, 2004). More Kindergarten places were made available too, hinting a more open idea of family, and its individuals. Considering those tensions, the ministry titled the fifth family report “Family politics in unified Germany- Future of Human resources”.

To sum this liberal Christian time from 1982 till 1998, like any other family political era discussed in this text, this period was prominently concerned with the mother’s place in family and work. An awareness about women’s emancipation came about, as much as a consciousness about the necessity to produce a sort of financial premium for familiar functions.

3.4. Red green coalition (SPD and the Green Party) 1998-2005

The notion of importance of family was consciously carried on by the new coalition elected in 1998. Carried on was furthermore the impulse to extend the definition to other family forms, like the former parties had done so with lone-mothers through covering them with financial support. In 2001, the red-green coalition extended marriage like rights to homosexual partners. Although taxation relief like heterosexual married couples would usually get in Germany, was not included in the civil relationship homosexuals were granted.

However, the fear of the demographic decrease, too little children, prevailed, instead of supporting stay-at-home mothers, kindergarten places and day-care centres were further extended (bmfsj.de, 2016).

The family politics in Germany from 1998 till 2005 can be comprised shortly but nevertheless empathize a shift in the context family and their individuals lived in. The afore private institution of family became gradually public and individualized, evident in
2001 marking a year in which children were granted the rights to a violence free upbringing (Gerlach, 2001).
4.0. Theoretical framework

4.1. Individualization Theory

Before going in depth about the theory I chose, Individualization theory, I would like to mention the salient choice of theory in a study like mine; a Feminist theory. Feminists, throughout time, had a crucial impact on family studies and perspectives on families (Allen, 2016). Feminist theory criticizes the patriarch dynamics in family structures (Allen, 2016) and would hence, without a doubt, be fitting well in this thesis. I will therefore not go out of my way to disparage Feminist theories in family matters but argue ‘why’ I chose Individualization theory instead.

Continuing, this part is too aimed at offering a clue as to what individualization, shortly mentioned afore, signifies.

Ulrich Beck is a world renowned German sociologist, who with his book “Risk Society-Towards a New modernity” from 1986, re-defined the term modernity (Suhrkamp.de). His theory is an account of the individualization of society, and its consequences. In it he talks about how it conveys in family and gender. The theory is in specific fit for this study, as it is an account of the changes that happened in Germany throughout the time the data is retrieved from. Ulrich Beck (1994), a German himself, in his theory, appoints special awareness to the construct of family and gender within it. He is, as a German himself, one might argue, aware of the values placed on families, and ideals that families are met with. The women’s role within this theory are brought into the foreground with the help of the historical background, and method. The method focuses on the women in specific and the role she is ascribed with by the state. I hence argue that the theory serves to focus on both women and families equally.

This part is thus separated in the theory itself, how it’s mirrored in family, what implications individualization has on the employment of women, and finally presents one of his critics, Will Atkinson (2007), to open room for interpretation by the reader.

4.1.1. The Individualization theory

Ulrich Beck’s assertion to individualization depicts people in modernity being set free from traditional “social forms of industrial society” (Beck, 1992, p. 87); class, stratification, family, gender status. ‘Industrial society’ terms the time before new modernity.
The collective consciousness, presumably of for instance class, on which countries in industrial society originally depend on, declines; however, remains stable the construct of social inequality. Instead of the dissolved class and gender, Beck (1992) affirms, social inequality, in modernity is tied to the individual. The individual, once disengaged from traditional social forms that originally led him, is entrusted to create his or her own biography based on his or her individual actions. The notion is that the actions of the individual not only influence its life, but also the social world around it, hence affecting social inequality. More in depth, whatever the individual is, he or she is an echo of other individuals and its own individual choices;

“The individual himself or herself becomes the reproduction unit of the social in the lifeworld” (Beck, 1992, p. 90)

To uphold the material living standard or rise above it through the labor market, individuals, today more autonomous, actively make themselves the center of their life-planning. Thus, surrendering traditional complexes such as family, friends or even regional culture etc., the reflexive individual adapts to the demands of the constant changing labour market.

Evidently however, the liberation from social-classes hardly stands for acquiring total independence, but instead a new reliance on the labour market and its demands for education; an institutionalization of life-forms. The creation of self-sufficiency and strengthened autonomy, according to Beck (1992), means that responsibilities of certain issues, for instance mass unemployment is now attributed to personal- failure in place of a political one. When it comes to for example ‘women’, he explains, that female poverty seems to be in correlation with the individual action of ‘divorce’, instead of their social position in sum (Beck, 1992, p.87-90).

4.1.2. Family and Individualization

Beck (1992) had not left it to the individual’s generalizability of this theory, but applied it himself to the family- scene. He calls it the ‘Negotiated Family’ in which symptoms of individualization are doubled and trebled. In modernity, husband and wife, both aspiring autonomy and a chance at the labor market, bargain for new roles each one plays in family-planning. Women’s consciousness of their unequal positions in life and family further creates tensions between the partners. The institution of marriage and family as
known before, is called into question. Yet, the industrial society is dependent on the
division of gender. For the simplicity of argumentation Beck (1992) illustrates an
equation to demonstrate that. Without the separation of gender, there would be no
traditional nuclear family, without the nuclear family no bourgeois society with its
customary character of work and life gender division. And in sum, without that no one to
uphold the construct *capitalism*. Solutions, Beck (1992) claims, lie in institutional
support, such as day-care, flexible work-times, social protection etc., which enable the
married couple to re-bargain an equal position for both inside the family.

4.1.3. Women and Individualization
Stereotypes of Men and Women, according to Beck (1992), are solely fought on a private
setting, within the framework of a traditional take of family. Accordingly, whilst trying
to keep the institutionalized family complete, role labelling is fought *inside* the
organization that in fact keeps those traditional roles alive. Beck asserts:

> “The equalization of men and women cannot be created in institutional
structures (family) that presuppose their inequality” (Beck, 1994, p. 109)

Women’s occupation position in Germany, Beck (1992) explains, when doing unpaid
family work- further creates dependence on the state for financial assistance. Gradually
women thus attempt to free themselves from housework and gender ascribed roles.
Nevertheless, a labour market dependent completely on both genders would increase the
unemployment rates. Women are consequently not necessarily free to enter the labour
market and lead an equally autonomous life as the men.

4.1.4. Criticism
He is a detractors of Ulrich Beck’s theories and claims, Beck’s theory fails to define what
*individualization* in fact is, and what, besides its demise, the implications for *class* is. This
is vindicated by stating that Beck, when talking about individualization involves his
theory into contradictions, about individualizations end and beginning, and the
implications for class. He says in some parts of his theory Beck explains, class is still
existent, and at other it disappears. Ultimately he discusses the flaws of the motors of
individualization and yet concludes “Beck’s perspective remains one of the most explicit
and sustained efforts to illustrate exactly why and how class is outdated” (Atkinson, 2007, p. 363).

4.1.5.
The criticism directed at the theory developed by Ulrich Beck, seems punitive. Yet, one might assume that criticism exists towards every kind of theory. The reasons nevertheless why I chose the theory for this study, to me seemed crucial to follow; The German context, importance granted to family within this study, and the strong gender implications.
5.0. Methodology

In this section I will shortly summarize the concept of discourse. Then write about the Critical Discourse Analysis, its General principles and theory. The Discourse historical approach conceptualized by Ruth Wodak (Wodak& Meyer 2001; Wodak& Meyer, 2009; Wodak& Reisigl 2008), is the approach chosen for an in-depth analysis, and will be explained afterwards, inclusive its strategies and limitations. Thereafter I will talk about the corpus chosen for the research, and general restrictions I felt throughout doing the study.

5.1. Preliminary understanding

My previous understanding of this study, derived from two constants. One I am German, and two I am a German woman. Throughout my life, I have had many discussions with people why it is justified to pay women less than men. Why it is tolerable to decide not to employ them when they are young, on the vindication they might get pregnant. It is common knowledge in Germany, that women are restricted on those terms. Additionally, most of my friends’ mothers have stayed at home to raise their children and take care of the household. Thus, I am also aware of a current ideal of family in society. I have never taken into consideration to assess the state’s perspectives on family, but having knowledge of the subsidiarity concept (Fleckenstein, 2011), I was aware that families in Germany take a high rank.

5.2. Corpus

The data, German family-reports, used for this study is analyzed based on their definitional aspects of family and women within them. The corpus are state reports formulated to make a situational account of German families, thus incorporating the key concept of family important for this research.

Those reports are not to be undervalued, argues Brigitte Unger-Soyka (2009), and points out their significance in discourse-generating in family politics and other politics.

Family reports consist of two parts; a government- statement on families, and a scientific committee that offers argumentation and cause of thought for change in family politics.
They are groundwork for future family politics, and societal discourse (Unger-soyka, 2009).

Indeed, they are “supplier to family-rhetoric’s” (own translation, Unger Soyka, 2009, p. 65), and are normative-creating as they encourage a definite family-form.

In 1968, the first family report was made public and since then, seven more can be accessed, from which the last one was formulated in 2012. While some family reports, like the ones from 1968, 1994, and 2006, are addressing the main situation families are in in Germany, others are tackling specific issues found in Germany at that time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second Family report</td>
<td>Family and socialization- achievements and achievement-limitations of family in regards of the upbringing- and Education-process of the young Generation</td>
<td>1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Family report</td>
<td>The situation of families in the BRD (German-Federal Republic)</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth family report</td>
<td>The situation of the elder people in the family</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Family report</td>
<td>Family and Family politics in unified Germany- Future of the Human resources</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Family report</td>
<td>Families with foreign backgrounds in Germany, achievements- burdens – challenges</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Family report</td>
<td>Family between flexibility and reliability- perspectives for a biographic related family politics</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth Family report</td>
<td>Time for family- Family-time politics as a Chance for sustainable Family politics</td>
<td>2012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first family report from 1968 illustrates the first attempt in displaying the situation families are perceived in in Germany. It is a short definition, depicted with strongly illustrated opinions. In 1994 the country experiences a great deal of change, unification,
mirrored in the fifth family report. It is the first family report conducted after unification in Germany, in it change is thus most evident. The last family report chosen for this thesis, is from 2006, and defines an overall situation of families in Germany. The report from 2012 although most recent, has not been chosen based on its restricted information for this study.

The statements of the family-reports chosen for this thesis, saliently become longer. Whereas the first family reports statement encompasses 3251 words, the family report from 1994 comprises 3736 words. In 2006 the word count equals to 8917 words, and with that poses the longest of each statement analyzed here. Sub-titles of importance to the subject in specific have been selected to narrow the data of the statements, and stay on point.

Conclusively, family-reports were chosen on the grounds of their discourse-inclusive and generating elements. Those three reports ensure a well-defined account of the general situation of family in Germany, and together illustrate a strong picture of the diachronic change of definition of family and women within them throughout that time. This although one might argue, the data to be ‘outdated’. Yet, the definition of women throughout time appears stable and thus calls for the conclusions of a slow changing system. Further it invites one to understand how the government generates discourse, and its reasons behind certain definitional aspects of such concepts as family and women. Those features are not time-bound, but rather consistent.

**Concept of Discourse**

Each type of discourse analysis contains a unlike philosophical notion to discourse. Discourse is thus defined different depending on the method used for one's research. Various approaches within Critical Discourse Analysis the Discourse historical approach encompassing, view discourse to be semiotic [communication of signs] practices dependent on context. This discourse is situated in a social action; it is at no time stable and always dependent on factors such as the person who makes use of it. ‘Texts’, such as the family report is one, are defined as objectified linguistics and part of discourse. Discourse is further socially constituted and constitutive, signifying that discourse as a social practice produces the social world around one, and is formed by it. Eventually, discourse is tied to claims of truth used by actors in a specific social action; in some instances, it may thus constitute what some people call “reality” (Wodak& Reisigl, 2001).
5.3. Critical Discourse analysis

Pioneers of Critical Discourse Analysis or CDA, on an international sphere, emerged in the beginning of the 1990’s (Wodak& Meyer, 2001), and a time of social inequalities that, Dijk stresses, “demand[ed] urgent attention” (1993, p. 253).

It is in its broadest sense a linguistic, semiotic and discourse analysis, however with from its pioneers shared theoretical framework.

The over-all notion of this analysis entails that language is a social practice. Through language, power is regulated and created (Wodak& Meyer,2001; Dijk, 1993). Power is neither bad nor good, it defines linguistic means to persuade society, or groups of society, and consequently creates dominance. Nevertheless, those linguistic means are often privilege to elite groups that, with various texts, or discourses, aim to maintain their privileges (1993; Wodak, 2001).

CDA in this context aims to theorize what social processes and structures, create text and how social actors, artefact of their historical and socio-political milieu, make meaning of the text; The formation of dominance and social inequality. Hence, Power, history and ideology constitute main concepts of CDA.

However, this dominance may not be perceived as such; discrimination, social inequality or dominance are at times obscured and apparent as natural to the naked eye. CDA, therefore ‘critical’, unravels the interconnectedness of established power relations displayed in language (Dijk, 1993; Wodak& Meyer, 2001), and conclusively questions reality, partially products of discourse, as a matter of fact (Jorgenson& Phillips, 2002).

“[… ] critique of discourse implies a political critique of those responsible for its perversion in the reproduction of dominance and inequality” (Dijk, 1993, p. 253)

5.3.1. The Historical approach

No approach in discourse analysis can be disentangled from its theoretical perspective. It is for that matter always a theoretical and methodological approach to discourse (Jorgensen& Phillips, 2002).

The method applied in this research adheres to the socio-philosophical critical discourse analysis orientation the discourse historical approach by Ruth Wodak (2000), DHA. It hence follows a general Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) agenda, to study social inequality within language. Significantly, how social inequality is “expressed, signalled,
constituted, legitimized” (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001) in discourse. With support of multiple approaches, a comprehensive historical background, and a theoretical framework a researcher gains the opportunity to critically assess the data from distance.

With help of the historical framework, and socio-political background contextualized in one’s data, the DHA sets itself apart from other related Critical Discourse analysis approaches. It is with the act of that recontextualization that the researcher observes an element, a piece of data, in another context and yields other meaning. Intertextuality is indeed a key concept in the DHA approach (Wodak, Reisigl, 2001; Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Another key concept is Interdiscursivity; here one can observe topics overlapping other topics, creating for instance argumentation. An example is the argumentation of resources in an immigration debate.

Conclusively, the DHA problem oriented approach, is context dependent, not only on the immediate language, but moreover on the intertextual and interdiscursive relationships, the extra-linguistic and institutional frames of a context, and the broader socio-political and historical context (Wodak & Reisigl, 2001).

5.3.2. Analytical Strategies

The term ‘strategies’ in DHA refers to the practises actors use to “achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal” (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 94), it is therefore the linguistic signs in text that indicate sub-conscious or conscious portrayals of the event researched. Those strategies are used to create an in- and out- group; a preferred and less preferred group. Within this research, for the sake of space limitation, I made use of four of the five linguistic strategies, yet focused on two specifically.
Emphasis in this research lays on the *nomination strategies, and predication strategies*, to research how families and women were defined and categorized from the state’s point of view. Moreover, it helped me to shed some light on the positive and negative connotations of family-forms and women in work, which family-forms and ‘types’ of mothers are preferred per linguistic results. Understanding of connotation is further facilitated with the help of the German website, DWDS.de, which, from various databases, offers connotations that are commonly associated with the terms. Additionally, connotations are shown with the help of Bertrand Russell’s original work on denoting phrases from 1919, in which he explains that *definite and indefinite articles* are distinguished by the uniqueness of the object referred to (Msu.edu, n.d.). In this analysis, I am further pointing out various mitigation strategies employed by the Federal government of Germany (Family- report, 1968; Family- report, 1994; Family- report; 2006). For example, concessive utterances. Concession clauses are sentences that begin with, for example, “even though”, and thus suggest a contradictory part to what has been said before (myenglishpages.com).
Lastly I am making use of one of the main argumentation strategy/ use of topoi in the DHA. Topoi are means by which a person justifies the conclusion he or she came to. They are transitioning the argument to the conclusion (Wodak&Meyer, 2001; Wodak&Reisigl, 2001).

“Topoi are not always expressed explicitly, but can always be made explicit as conditional or causal paraphrases such as ‘if x, then y’ or ‘y because x’ “(Wodak&Reisigl, 2001, p. 102).

Ruth Wodak et al. (2001; 2001) have defined several topoi based on her research of an in- and out group creation of racism in Austria in 1992. Throughout the analysis, it became clear that the topoi employed to in her research, are differing only little in regards to the research I did. Justification of othering specific family-forms and ‘types’ of mothers, are therefore equitable to what Wodak identified as justifying racial discrimination.

![Illustration](Wodak&Meyer, 2001, p. 74)

The reasons I chose CDA in my thesis are of general and personal reasons. The CDA and discourse historical approach are multi-faceted. DHA is various context encompassing, thus it is useful in understanding what certain groups in society are preferred over others and helps one understand social processes that have been changing over time, the strategic tools then help understand how those groups have been categorized. The data base for this research is plenty and diachronic from 1968-2006. The technique to access its
underlying meaning in regards to the content is easier to access from a box of tools and context, like such offered by Ruth Wodak (Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak & Resigl 2001). CDA further includes the theory about the privilege of being able to create discourse and access it, which I see lying in a state report and with the state. The personal reasons I refer to above orient themselves mostly toward the notion of ‘critique’.

“There cannot be an aloof, let alone neutral position of critical scholars” (Dijk, 1993, p. 253)

I see value in being critical of the environment around us. It is a relief to have a tool for questioning social issues as they are, and being able to demand change with them. The CDA and DHA offer the tools to question and be critical.

5.4. Mode of procedure

The thesis observes how families and working mothers are illustrated in family reports from 1968-2006. It is a literature review, purely based on corpus and context. This has been chosen for the matter that the content of the research is quite extensive and from a governmental perspective. Interviews, for this framework, would have changed the topic of this research to a more, to interviews, accessible one. The far fetching diachronic point of view would acquire interviewees that can account of the information needed for this study.

The word-search for the previous research has been done in diva and with words such as: family, nuclear-family, historical, family-patterns, mother’s employment, Discourse about family, discourse about mothers, definition of family, definition of mothers.

5.5. Limitations

Like any bachelor thesis, this one as well has its restrictions. It is, though, by the nature of approach ‘Critical Discourse Analysis’, vital to be plainly critical of one’s work, to offer gaps for readers to relate their own interpretations and assessments in the work (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). I thus attempt not to hide, but go in depth about the limitations I met throughout this research.
The *Critical Discourse Analysis* is not only a method but a theory, and one could assume, a notion to understanding of one’s own surrounding. It is broad-encompassing, and thus acquires time to understand and research, and summarize it in my own research. Further, Ruth Wodak is offering an ample tool-set for researchers to work with (Wodak & Meyer, 2001; Wodak & Resigl, 2001). I wish I could have the intellectual tools, and the time and width to use them for my research in its whole. Yet, I have related them to my dissertation as much as I thought was possible.

The topic of this research is comprehensive as well, covered by a bachelor thesis framework. To go in depth regarding all notions in the family report, the thesis framework may not be enough. This I have been made aware of mostly by the numerous pages that needed to be analysed, the various key elements of the family report, and possible quotes I could have worked in my thesis. Many facets and rhetorical means were applied when writing the reports to define families and women within them, that I felt like I could not cover all in my dissertation. Nevertheless, with the tools given, I have made the attempt to grasp the nature of definitions and provide the reader with an idea of what being within a family or outside of it means in Germany.

Those limitations, and the pressure of time, made apparent the lack of partner. I worked alone with this topic and from time to time needed a person to elaborate the subject with. To write all themes alone, and analyse each report was challenging. Nevertheless, I have my family in Germany with their own interpretations of what my research and the family reports meant to them.

### 5.6. Validity and reliability

When one analyzes rhetoric signs and linguistic signals, questions occur on the reliability and validity of the research. In the DHA approach in specific, one makes use of various means to validity. With the help of triangulation, through the historical and theoretical context of the data, and topoi acknowledgment (Interdiscursivity), one has a way to relate and draw own interpretations. Within this research I have made use of those means to create relative validity and reliability. It is, though, also true that total ‘objectivity’ with a discourse analysis is hardly achievable. The discourse analysis itself must be questioned and examined on the basic belief that the analysist peculiar ideology made a way through to his work (Wodak & Meyer, 2001, p. 29; p.154).
5.7. Generalizability

Nevertheless, it is vital to keep in mind that this study in specific incorporates only limited data due to the limited time frame. Hence one must be cautious when claiming studies like this one appear generalizable. This holds true when recognizing that an analyst adhering to the discourse analytical method, questions claims of truth as said above (Wodak & Meyer, 2001), thus one appears inept when claiming to create truths that are generalizable.

Besides, it is not inter-national generalizable, as it is framed by the, to German specific, historical context.

Ultimately, generalizability hardly applies as the data is from the year 2006. Although I will draw no conclusions on what has, and has not changed in Germany since then.
6.0. Results

The federal government’s (FGG) statements from 1968, 1994, 2012

With the discourse-historical approach in mind, I will frame each analysis of the chosen family reports Vis-à-vis its respective historical context.

Moreover, the perspective from this research, mother’s employment through a diachronic lens, invites initially an analysis of the illustrated definition of family within each text and their timeline, and then the interpretation of the mother’s employment within family. Each analysis displays quotes that mirror the statement of that time, in regards to its corresponding content.

6.1. Federal government’s statement 1968 “Concerning the situation on the families in Germany” (own translation)

1968 was a year of transformations. It is the 68-movement, led by university students, that questioned most things contemporary at that time, people think about when reminded of that year. Fundamental critique was levelled, against the static state that resisted second World War resolution, the economic inequalities in Germany, and the exploitation of underprivileged countries (Bpb.de, 2008). It is thus in a time, of enlightenment and plea for change that the first family-report was formulated. The definition of family and women within this statement is comprised in on sub-title: ‘The assignment of the report and its significance’.

a) Definition of ‘family’

To understand the illustration of the ideal family in the statements, the analyses is parted in what family ‘is’ per statement, and what it is not.

The statement of the government of the first family report limits itself to a specific definition of ‘family’;

“This pure parents-children-union (‘nuclear family’) displays a social group of exceptional kind, defined by its biological-social dual nature and a, in this scope in other groups non-existent, ‘totality’ of social relationships.” (own translation, p.7)
The nuclear family, as a social group, within this text seems not only favourable over ‘other groups’ but it stands out from them as it is equipped with positive connoted and intensified terms such as ‘total’, and ‘exceptional’, ‘social’, ‘pure’. That is also deductible from the singular form and definite article, ‘the’, the nuclear family is equipped with throughout the text. It displays a favourable uniqueness in regards to the nuclear family. Furthermore, this social entity is described as an innocent group free from artificiality; thus, natural, pure and biological; “pure”. Accumulative to those positive connotations to family, follow positive word associations such as “Security, intimacy, and solidarity” and “an interest in order” (own translation, p.7) in regards to the satisfaction that a family-unit can offer to individual needs. The nuclear family is thus described as a warm and comfortable place, in which one’s needs are met sufficiently, not surpassable by other social groups similar.

The claim of truth regarding their definition on the terminology ‘family’ and their functions for the individual rely on the topoi of definition manifested in the above statement. The author of the statement deduced the pivotal role of the nuclear family, from the word ‘nuclear’ or more direct translated ‘core’- family. No further proof of their functions for the individual was deemed necessary.

The federal Government of Germany (FGG), displays awareness of the other mentioned family-forms, which they label as ‘incomplete families’. It is thus those family-forms that are not equitable to the nature of nuclear family.

“It is often appropriate, for the purpose of this report, to elaborate [...], on the mentioned family-term. So are especially those families regarded, in which one part of the parents is missing, - ordinarily referred to as incomplete families; [...] or the lifelong child-less married couples, should, if possible, be included in the presentation [of this report]. This is deductible from their numerical weight and the importance of their economic situation, which are approached questions in this report.” (own translation, p.7)
necessary. It is moreover not certain whether that definition signified outside of the report framework.

The author of the statement makes use of the definite article “those”, but in its pluralistic form when talking about ‘incomplete’ family-forms. “Those” in that context is a rhetorical means to create an outgroup experience; it is a nomination strategy and contrary to the pronoun “we”. The nomination itself is a mitigation “incomplete families”, and thus further predicate those family forms as imperfect, and lacking; less.

Conclusively, and by justification of the FGG, no family form concurs with the nuclear-family. It is the totality of their relationship, that authorises such favouritism. The salient support of one group and disapproval of another, is a means to create an in-group (Nuclear family) and out-group (incomplete families). Not only through Predication strategies, but the terms themselves, nuclear and incomplete, seemingly validate their judgment.

b) Mother’s employment as illustrated

In the context of family, according to this text ‘nuclear family’, the term ‘mother’ as a social actor is only once mentioned, and tied to ‘assistance’ and ‘social care’ within her family.

This is evident when the author of the statement, federal government of Germany, illustrates the importance of a coinciding household and family. (Household here defined as any other cohabitation striving from the in text understood term of ‘family’, when the children move out of their parents’ house, or relatives reside in the house for instance.)

“In how far family and household coincide – [...] – is of significance for the economic situation of the family members, who live together in said household, and are included in the familiar maintenance and ministration, or the strain of the mother.” (Own translation, p.7)

The quote illustrates, depending on the number of family members that are involved in the nurture and care of the family, the mother will then experience a high or low in terms of stress; in sum, the more parties involved the higher the stress for the mother. Two actors important for this research become apparent here. The family earlier described as the ‘satisfaction bringer’ of security, intimacy, and solidarity, and the mother, who is primarily described as the nurturer of familiar social care. The predicative employed to
describe the mother is ‘strained’. The notion, initially, points towards a mother who is principally occupied within her family, since ‘strain’ is mentioned in the context of the nurture for family. Secondly, a strained social actor, is a weakened thus more sensitive one. The terms ‘family’ and ‘mother’, with all their richness in characteristics and values, pose a harsh contrast to the sobering *predications* used to describe ‘work’.

“[…] the function of the Family is it to pose a counterbalance to the factual relationships, as can be seen in the world of work” (own translation, p.8).

Within this quote, appreciation is shown to the “*functions of family*”, highlighting their worth and value once more. ‘The world of work’ is illustrated as an independent relationship, which cannot be combined with the characteristics of family, but instead poses an opposite. It is described as “factual”, thus objective. Thus, in the same sense and although only implicitly expressed, it poses an opposite to the mother characterized as weakened and preoccupied with her involvement in the family. The statement is thus displaying a woman naturally incompatible with “the world of work”.


The fifth family report, 1994, is enclosed within the unification of East- and West-Germany in 1989. After the second World War, global powers separated Germany mainly into East and West (planet-schule.de, n.d.). Unification thus meant, a unification of varying ideas about family and Women. Whereas it was desired, due to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, of women to work in the DDR (east of Germany), preferred was a home-bound mother in the West of Germany (uni-muenster.de, n.d.). The report was hence titled “*families and family politics in unified Germany*”. The statement is a total of 32 Pages, and for this analysis of value are in fact two of the statements sub-titles, “1. Significance and function of the family”, and “3.5. Compatibility of family and gainful employment”, both roughly two and a half pages.
a) Definition of the Family “Significance and function of the family”  
(own translation)

The concept of family within this statement, at first glance, appears vague. To facilitate an understanding of how the Federal Government of Germany frames the definition of family within their statement, this analysis of the definition is split two-fold. The family-form ‘reality of life’ as accepted by society and to an extent by the government, and finally the preferred and narrowed definition of family by the government. The federal government of Germany states the “starting point” of an understanding of family to be:

“within the reality of life, with varying Family-forms. She (The federal government of Germany/ in German feminine article) grasps family as a dynamic form human coexistence, which is subjected to alterations and coined by cultural perceptions and value-stances as much as it is coined by social and economic circumstances from a society.”  (Own translation, p. IV)

The excerpt illustrates a fluid and fluctuating definition of family; varying forms, dynamic, alternated, and understands that definition to be the contemporaneous reality (‘reality of life’). Therefore, it is a construct of family which is mirrored in society, as the authors of the government saw it. All in all, a broad-encompassing idea of family, whose forms are solely homogenous in the factors of coexistence, and in the adherence to the values and cultural ideas present in that society; a by the society accepted family-form. Nevertheless, the concept of ‘family’ is presented with indefinite articles, written in its plural form or missing the article all together. The analysis of the earlier statement showed that they had frequently used indefinite articles when talking about forms of family, ‘less functional to society’. Supporting this, as above quoted, “starting point”, the federal government of Germany (FGG) views this broad definition as an undeveloped definition, and latter affirms:

“The point is not to determine specific guiding principles for the life planning of individual people, prescribe specific allocation of responsibilities between genders, nor discriminate specific lifeforms. However, the Federal Government of Germany as much as the Family report, views it as a grant obligation to promote and protect those life forms that not solely yield for the individuals
themselves, but also for the society important and necessary benefits.” (Own translation, p. IV)

At this point, the author first disassociates the FGG from the ideas of being in favor of any lifeform, stipulate gender roles, and in sum intrude within the life choices of individuals in families; (not, nor) determine, prescribe, discriminate. Thus, conveying a position in understanding with the afore mentioned broad definition of family-forms. Contrary yet, the following adverb “however” (“allerdings”) displays opposition, or a contrast to what has been written previously; the word “however” mitigates. The definition of family as a broad-encompassing construct is in fact not present in the subsequent sentence, in which the statement efforts to narrow the definition of family to “those” life forms that produce societal revenues. Here the statement, contrary to the beginning, makes use of the definite article “those”, and uses positive connoted words such as “important” and “necessary”. Hence, implicitly approving of’ those” specific family forms more than others, declaring it to be a unit of value. The author further claims those forms’ need to be safeguarded and encouraged, on the foundation of both the topos of advantage (revenue for society), and the topos of danger (the need of such family forms to be protected). And indirectly claims at the same time other family forms need no such help, on the topos of disadvantage (no revenue for society). To understand what “those forms” define, one must simply look at the revenues for society connected with family. Societal gains yielded from “The family” is indeed soon after brought in correlation with “parenthood”, and “continuation of our society”, “The taking over of responsibility for the security of provision, care, upbringing and education of people” (p, IV). Thus, implying the favored form of family to be a set of parents, woman and man, who reproduce. They are responsible for the care or maintenance of people, take responsibility and provide security. Those chosen use of words to describe “the family” or “those lifeforms”, is in strong coherence with the afore analyzed statement of 1968 and the term “nuclear-family”, which in the 1968 statement is brought into connection with the same vocabulary.

The two oppositional definitions of family visible in the 1994 statement show a discrepancy of ideas of what family is, one seen by and represented in society, another seen by the federal Government of Germany. Both quotes show, that the FGG is aware of that. The FGG moreover predicates itself a discourse-creating or norm-establishing
entity, able to “discriminate”, “prescribe”, etc., but claims to have no interest in steering individuals to aspire to a specific idea of family. Nevertheless, they rhetorically navigate the reader of this statement to see the value in the nuclear-family. That is done on various levels, some examples mentioned here: one through emotional-bound words (responsibility, security, care), two, through implying selfish reasons to pursue other lifeforms (“[...] solely (“nur”) yield for the individuals themselves [...]”), and three, creating an in-group sentiment when talking about the continuation of “our” society and thus a feeling of “obligation” for society.

b) Women’s employment as illustrated in text “Compatibility of family and gainful employment” (own translation)

“Women” or “mothers” play a moderately big part in this statement; namely 31 times within the two sub-titles analyzed in this research. This is approximately six times per page. To compare, “men” or “fathers” are mentioned ten times. This is important to be aware of as it hints to what was deemed essential in this statement. Both sub-titles, although one deals with the functions families serve, are preoccupied with defining the role women play in both the family and the “world of work”. There are two means by which the government sees the mothers’ involvement in work; family-work (Familienarbeit) and part-time-employment (Teilzeitarbeit).

“The federal Government of Germany sees, as much as the report, the danger that in a society, in which social status and social chances are essentially grounded in gainful-employment, the activities of a family are undervalued. She (The FGG) assigns the family-work and gainful-employment the same ranking.” (Own translation, p. X VII)

The FGG appear troubled in regards to an apparent shift in society, in which less attention is payed to the family (“undervalued”) and more to gainful-employment. What this danger represents, is not further explained. Deducted from the functions family serve to society, it possibly refers to a demographic decrease (reproduction) and decline in societal solidarity: care, security, provision. Through the topos of danger (society at risk), the excerpt thus exclaims family-work to be of the same value for social status and social chances as gainful-employment. Once more, the FGG predicates itself a norm-creating role when “assigning” family-work and gainful-employment the same value. Family-
work is a term not often used in German. It is a synonym to the word *Housework*, which is associated with first and foremost ‘*Hausfrauen*’ (House-women), ‘frustration’, ‘boredom, ‘desperation’ and ‘separation’ (dwds.de). This leads to believe the author of the statement attempted to use an unbiased alternative to the term Housework; (“*activities of a family*”). The strongly gendered association nevertheless stays the same, the FGG is aware:

“The norm-biography of men still applies as before, a one without disruption full-time gainfully employed man, who cedes housekeeping and parenting to the feminine part.” (Own translation, p. IV)

Here, the predicative employed to describe men is “full-time-employed” and “giving”. “Cede” (“überlassen”) describes an act of giving or surrendering to something, but also portrays a man who is qualified to assign roles. The woman, feminine part, is thus at the receiving- and passive- end, and the one doing the family-work. Nevertheless, “this” is later clarified as creating “apparent difficulties” in regards to “daily management”.

The norm-biography that applies to men, as a full-time employee, by no means describes women. Essentially, the FGG displays three “facts”:

“- The number of women grows, who simultaneously want to be working and raise children.
- Still women want to interrupt the gainful-employment.
- But there is a slowly increasing amount of men who are willing, because of the children, to limit their gainful-employment for a time. “(Own translation, p. XVIII)

The “facts” display a woman who, in relative to men in this text, has yet to adopt her role in society. The biographies women decide between are either of a part-time-employee (working and raising children), or a stay-at-home mother (interrupt gainful-employment). Not mentioned are the women aiming at a life comparable to men’s full-time-employee biography. Additionally, women are implicitly predicated as demanding “wanting”, while men, like “cede”, are illustrated as the active, giving role in the relationship. They are

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1 DWDS is a “German word information system of present day and past” (own translation). It deduces word associations from newspapers, dictionaries, and other corpuses from over time. English equivalent visuwords.com
willing and able to limit themselves, for the sake of their children, if the mothers would leave home to work. The men’s willingness to limit themselves is time-bound; however long that is or whatever happens after they return to their norm-biography of full-time employment is not revealed. Part-time-employment is illustrated as “many times the only possibility to connect family tasks with employment-activities” because of an increasing number of people depending on care. Nonetheless, the Government agrees that work and family compatibility-issues can as well be traced back to the “inadequate offerings of childcare” (own translation, p.XVIII).

6.3. The federal government’s statement from 2006- “Family between flexibility and dependability” (own translation)
The sub-titles analysed and deemed valuable for this study are two: “Policy-change towards sustainable Family-politics” and “Time within family – Time for family/ Re-organisation of time”. This family report is dealing with, as claimed by the FGG, the demographic shift in Germany. Further, a change within World-of-work and economy, as well as of gender roles and solidarity in society (Family-report, 2006, p. XXIII).

a) Framework of family definition
The definition of family, within the last statement in this section, approaches with an extended comprehension of family, as stated by the Federal Government of Germany. It yet carries likewise certain limitations. Those limitations are presumably vital to point out when words, here family, seem indefinite or ambiguous; they are themselves predications tied to the term. Accordingly, this first fragment of the analysis is parted in what family ‘is’, per statement, and ultimately what it is not. In depth, what objections are connected to the term ‘family’, like it was done in the other two analysis. When defining ‘family’, the statement points out what it partially is, and what it is prolonged to;

“He [the family report/ in German male article] extends the understanding of family to a community with strong connections in which various generations care for one another.” (own translations, p. XXIV)

The FGG evidently agrees to define family generation-bound, and, strongly connected. They assert that families that are connected through generations produce care. Both
“strong” and “care” are positive connoted words connected with family, characterizing it as a secure and durable unit (DWDS.com). Yet, this predicated ‘care’ is first and foremost, limited to generation-bound families. This reference to generation-bound families is visible, too, in the next excerpt, which declares:

“Family is in the truest sense of word the primordial place, where every-day-solidarities are lived. A part of the generation-relationships are gradually taking place outside of the traditional family-structures. Even when family becomes smaller, more colourful, and more mobile, we cannot renounce the giving and taking of every-day-solidarity. For this we must create new nets, to translate the former benefits of the extended-family into the modern social structures” (own translation, p.XXIV).

The full extract in short, to the understanding of the researcher, defines what families characterize, and sees a shift (“family becomes”) in family-patterns towards smaller built families. By means of the shift, the concept of solidarity is threatened they exclaim, and argue extended-families to be a solution. Family is, in this quote, predicated as a solidarity-carrying entity, thus a positive connoted word closely related to the term care, and synonym to harmony, and unison. Family is further designated as the epiphany of primality, nature, authenticity, free of artificiality (DWDS.de, n.d.,) which one can deduct from the word “primordial”. Both solidarity and primality are intensified terms.

This quote, when characterizing family, refers to generation-bound families or large-families directly translated. This becomes apparent upon observing that “every-day-solidarity”, “primordial” et cetera, is perceived as a benefit yearned from merely extended-, thus generation-bound- families; in sum solidarity is a concept “we” cannot give up and the solution to its decline is the extended family which inhibits solidarity, in regards to this statement. The justification to define family as such is by the Topos of definition; “[...] in the truest sense of word [...]”. Yet, what “the truest sense of words” refers to is cryptic, considering the term family displays no predications.

Other family-forms, and the limitations to the favoured definition of family, are mentioned shortly as “smaller, more colourful, and more mobile”, and lastly predicated as unable to provide solidarity; in other words, incapable to create unison.
However, the quote does show awareness of the existence of varying family-forms striving from the extended families. They are by their definition, and the DWDS German profile “colourful”, exotic, many-fold, and dissimilar. “Mobile” likewise in German is equate to dynamic, and adaptable; which are neither positive nor negative connoted words (DWDS, n.d.).

A token of discouragement nonetheless is the concession clause “even” at the beginning of the sentence, mitigated in this sense. This clause, “even”, is equitable to the word ‘although’ analysed in the statement before. It poses an opposition, and prepares the reader for a stronger following argument; In this excerpt this equates to, even though smaller families remit some benefits, they do not compare with extended families.

Conclusively, the favoured family-form, when looking thoroughly, is the generation-bound or extended family; children, and parents or grandparents. They are throughout positively characterized, and brought in opposition to other family-forms that remit less solidarity. The thesis, or claim, states that those other family-forms are unable to generate solidarity, because they don’t care for other generations. They hereby refer to families that both live with children and grandparents. With assistance of the pronoun “we” the FGG breeds a group-feeling, and a following feeling of responsibility; “we cannot”, “For this we must […]”. Though at this point, it’s not clear whether “we” refers to a collective we or ‘us’ or the FGG itself.

The topoi of advantage (Advantage of values such as solidarity) thus demands the encouragement of extended families, and conversely by the topoi of disadvantage the discouragement of other family-forms.

b) Employment of mothers as illustrated in text

The Federal Government of Germany prizes their ideal family-structure with terms of appreciation. Whereas, it seems prominent, that when specifically talking about the women’s role and their problems on the labour market, the FGG merely refers to the notions formulated by the expert commission. “The commission” defines the entity responsible for the research segment in the family report; “The commission assesses […]”.

It is consequently challenging to deduce the states’ own stance towards working mothers. Yet, partial and implicit agreement to the commission is expressed when referring to the general concept of compatibility of family and work.
To understand what those partial compatibilities are the FGG admits to, or implicitly doesn’t agree to, it is important to split this analysis in: 1st the commissions’ illustrations of the mother’s employment as summarized in the statement itself, and 2nd the response of the FGG.

According to FGG’s account, the commission in its research clearly states:

“[...], that the lifeform in Germany, more than in most European and North-American countries, follows an institutionalized pattern of sequence, that is tied to rules of social placing, and concentrates an entry to education and pension on gainful-employment. The career-pattern hitherto places reliance on the existential safeguarding of family through a single-earner and a partner [in original female partner/ “Partnerin”] who [she] to the benefit of the family – temporarily or fully – bows out of gainful-employment and offsets familiar time-shortage. With this constellation, it is prompted that family-formation for the biographic time is set after the labour-market-establishment. That causes that families in Germany will gradually be formed later and that family-formation still signifies the differentiation of a typical man and a typical female résumé.” (Own translation, p. XXX)

The commission claims the social environment of society has changed. It is gradually institutionalizing and for this one’s access to education and pension is dependent on one’s access to the labour market. Through the traditional bread-winner model, the commission claims, women abandon their anticipation of entry into the labour market and give up independent access to pension. Instead, they stay at home for the benefit of the family, and hence live a “typical female” biography.

Concisely, as the commissions judgement is not my primal concern, the commission’s depiction of a contemporary woman is one bound to work at home, a from the system dependent made house-wife. She is predicated as responsible and caring for she prioritizes her family’s life-planning and time-management above her own.

The FGG only refers to women in specific once, and affirms:

“Having no time for children, is one of the most important reasons for women and men, to not realise their desire for children. [...]. Obsolete leading concepts [of gender] influence family-founding as much as the factual deficiencies of the compatibility does [of work and family]. Especially well-educated women fear
employment issues through a child. The wish of most fathers of involvement in the care and upbringing of their children are still met with obstacles. [...] Gradually men view the economic and societal predefined role as a breadwinner only as one, subordinate aspect to good fatherhood. A family friendly work-time politics and operational child-care can approach the fathers’ wishes and encourage the realisation of men’s’ child-wishes.” (Own translation, p. XXX)

The state in fact agrees on both aspects, that compatibility of work and family, and gender concepts, both influence the family-founding. Pertain though, the incompatibility of women with work and family only to educated women. By using the word “fear”, the state mitigates the issue described by the commission, and designates a subjective feeling, rather than an objective issue. They mitigate the issue further by limiting that subjective feeling to part of the gender, “educated women”, excluding the rest of the gender.

The actual burden of gender concepts, within this statement, is purely addressed in regards to the “father” and his obstacles of not being able to bring up their children. “Obstacles” here refer to an actual object standing in the way, conversely a feeling of “fear” women meet when wanting to work again. He is predicated as caring, as wanting to care for their children, and as limited through having to work. FGG claims work for men to be subsidiary in being a good father; they are here active in being able to define what good “fatherhood” means. Their breadwinner role, though, is “societal predefined”, accordingly the man in this instance defines a passive actor. The government concludes thus to approach the fathers’ wishes, through interventions of institutionalized child-care, and flexible work-time.

The incompatibility of work and family is conclusively seen as factual by the FGG and the commission. Yet the perspectives have changed; from women that need to be equated to men in the commissions quote, and men in the FGG statement, that want to approach the role of women. The issue of women’s incompatibility, in the statement of the FGG, with “the world of work” is mitigated, and merely acknowledged once in the FGG’s own words.

7.0. Analysis

This research is aimed at analyzing political discourse surrounding the concept of family and working mothers, from a diachronic view. Throughout this study, each concept has
been meticulously divided as their own sub-title; definition of family, and the working mother. Pivotal to the in-depth analysis has been the predication-, and nomination strategies used to describe family, working mothers and their responsibilities. And how, through mitigation and intensification, issues have been illustrated within each of the three state reports.

It is by now apparent to the reader, that what was unearthed within this study is by no means one discourse on outlining family from a state’s perspective, neither one leading concept of a gender role. It is the ambiguity of discourse surrounding both concepts that were specifically unveiled, overshadowed by societal change and the ostensible will, of the state, to adjust. It would be, therefore, questionable to generalize one concept of each term.

Yet, the diachronic lens allows the researcher to identify a definitional constant, which the state, adheres to, to outline family and women. Thus, are those constants the key results deducted from this study.

One, a by the Government adhered family-form, characteristic in reproduction and reliance on subsidiarity; nuclear- or extended- family. And two, a notion on women as attributed with parental responsibilities.

I have hence parted the conclusion in those overall constants, which the state reflected throughout the family reports of 1968, 1994, and 2006. Within, findings will be shortly summarized and contextualized.

a) The by the Government adhered family-form

The state’s claim to have extended the understanding of family (Family-report, 1968; Family- report 1994; Family- report, 2006) appears obscured in the light of this analysis. Although family in specific is termed different in different reports, nuclear-, and extended family (Family- report, 1968; Family- report, 2006), the functions tied to them endure through time; namely provision of solidarity, and reproduction. Those are hence the focal concepts, which the government ties to family, per analysis of this study.

While ‘solidarity’ is explicitly mentioned in all three family reports, the idea of ‘reproduction’ is only visible in the constructs of family itself. That is, both nuclear- and extended family only come into existence with the birthing or adoption of a child; hence, the concept of reproduction.

Solidarity, considering the family-report which states that care is generated through being in contact with other generations, is seemingly equitable with subsidiarity; the
conventional notion to take care of one’s family, before interventions of the state do so (Fleckenstein, 2011). Mentioning *solidarity*, in the context of functions yielded from families, accordingly refers to an economically important concept the German state historically relies upon (Fleckenstein, 2011). Alike, Kpoor (*previous research*, 2015) characterizes merely Ghanaian *extended* families as “*caring*” for their generations in his literature review, and controversially considered nuclear- families as a symptom of individualism; individualistic.

Nevertheless, familiar tasks in Germany, *reproduction and solidarity*, are so blatantly conveyed, that one can assume those to be the key *definitions* the state outlines the family with.

The in-depth analysis of all three reports, contextualized in history and theory, uncover the motives of why the FGG felt compelled to re-term the original concept of family from nuclear- to extended family. That, even though both concepts appear to be defined alike in the statements with *subsidiarity* and *reproduction*.

In the beginning of 1968, the nuclear-family is shortly outlined including its functions for society (1968, p.7). Moreover, the terms *Nuclear-family* and in opposition, *incomplete families*, have been used to display obvious judgement towards the latter.

Correspondingly critical is Kpoor (2015) yet towards nuclear- families, and defines that specific family- form as individualistic.

First three decades later, FGG recognises a divergent “*reality of life*”, vis-à-vis the valued family-forms (Family-report, 1994, p. IV). People freed themselves from traditional ideals of family, and pursued their individual concepts of it. It is the individualization theory, by Beck (1992), mirrored in the family report 1994, embodied in the terms “*dynamic form human coexistence*” (p. IV).

*Individualization*, considering the historical context, is further accelerated by the differing, and already more individualized family-forms that over years formed in the East and had to be re-integrated into the West of Germany (Gerlach, 2004); for one the dual-earner model, in which both women and men of the family worked. This existence of East- German women that were used to an extend of independence, assumingly generated the FGG’s reaction to say that family must be “*coined by cultural perceptions*
and value-stances” (Family-report, 1994, p. IV). One can clearly see that divergent family forms create pressure to react; take a stance, and shift meaning. The implicit representation of societal individualization, which is displayed in the first family report “incomplete families” (1968, p.7), becomes through unification more detectible and more pressuring for the state to dismiss and dismay of in the fifth family report in 1994. One can therefore asses a more careful interpretation of the norm striving family; more positively described as fluid and dynamic (Family-report, 1994, p. IV), in contrary to the obvious disapproving term “incomplete” (Family-report, 1968, p.7). Yet, no actual terming of family has been made in this report in 1994. It is only through the functions and conveyed ideal set-up of the family one can grasp the favoured nuclear-family embodied in the fifth family report (1994). Their functions are described as solidarity-providing and tied in reproduction (Family-report, 1994, p. IV). The term was ultimately changed a decade later, into the “extended family” (Family-report, 2006, p. XXXIV). Deviational family forms are described as more mobile, and more colourful (Family-report, 2006, p. XXXIV). And the vindication to support extended family was the “fact” that solidarity is decreasing; “generation-relationships are gradually taking place outside the traditional family-structure” (p. XXXIV). The original role of care-taking, lied with women, who in the context of institutionalization and new dependence on the labour market, themselves strive to work (Beck, 1992; Fleckenstein, 2011). It is therefore no revelation to see external institutions take care of younger or older generations; from Kindergartens or hospices e.g.

Conclusively, the threat and pressure of individualization, and the individualized people, and thus the dismantling of traditional family forms, according to Ulrich Beck (1992), generated a shift; A shift of definition. That shift is the reason ‘why’ family was termed different in the family reports (1968, 1994, 2006). By no means a shift in the perception of family by the state, but a shift in how those forms are conveyed, and termed. That same shift that Kpoor (2015) refers to in his research as the “nuclearization” of family, and actively ties individualization with.

In any case, the nuclear family within individualization theory, is a construct industrial Germany cannot be without (Beck, 1992); as capitalism is built on bourgeois families. Because society changed vastly, the FGG only carefully conveys the favoured and traditional family forms in the family reports (1968; 1994; 2006). It is the deviational
definition of family in society and conventional use that John F. Peters (previous research, 1999) refers to, that becomes apparent especially in the years 1994, and 2006. Thus, solution, according to Peters (1999), lies in redefining family in accordance to the individual needs and personal definition. Question remains whether with continuous change, the state remains to its, according to Beck (1992), obsolete definition, or in fact adapts the system and its stance to family.

b) Women and Family

While the ideal surrounding family, although presented obscured, stays constant, the illustration of working mothers in the statement is nothing but apprehensive. Throughout this analysis one can be an observer of women’s appeal to emancipation, too from family, and the states plea to bargain.

The husband and father is illustrated as both a giving and empathetic individual (“cede”, family-report, 1994; “caring”, family-report, 2006), who works and wants to be in a position of house-carer. Whereas the mother and wife, already in said position, is pronounced demanding (“wants”, family-report, 1994) or incompatible (family-report, 1968) in regards to work. Hence, women’s individualization is in antagonism with the parental responsibilities ascribed to them; parental responsibilities being mirrored in, Family-work, part-time job, or home responsibilities (Family-report, 1968; 1994; 2006).

Beck (1992) entitles that tension, or antagonism, the “negotiated family” in which both men and women aspire to work, and require thus more flexibility in work and home. This is most evident in the beginning, where women are mentioned in connection to the familiar’s well-being, and care. The discussion, as far as it is one, limits itself to an emotional ground, ergo the caring and soft mother against the factual, objective “world of work” (Family-report, 1968).

The FGG’s interest in women’s role within society gradually increases subsequently. In 1994, women have been assigned to either a stay at home-résumé and do family-work, or to do part-time-work. The term “Family-work” (Family-report, 1994, p. XVII) is used for the first time in family reports at that point, and presumably introduced to appease the East-German women who hoped to work as much as they had before unification. Joining the term work with family likely draws attention to “whom” the effort is for, yet it draws attention from the negative connoted term ‘house-wife’.
In 2006 eventually, women have been acknowledged as being in the quandary of a “typical female resume” (p. XXX). However, this is only done through a quote from the commission, which invites to reflect that FGG avoids respective statements in that matter. Instead they have highlighted, through an explicit statement, the dilemma they fear fathers to be in (Family-report, 2006, p.XXX), indicating man favouritism in the family-reports.

In sum, the primary illustration of mothers is first and foremost their motherhood. Whether it is family-work (family-report, 1994), or part-time employment (1994). Whether it is the explicitly perceived incompatibility with work in 1968 (Family-report, p. 7-8), or an implicit avoidance to a respective statement to incorporate women with work in 2006. Women are thus, positioned at the only places left, ‘home’ and ‘family’. Nevertheless, individualization creates tension between what the state intents for mothers and what society mirrors. Beck (1992) highlights, mothers too aspire to work.

Yet, there is no actual freeing from gender ascribed roles in the last fragment of the analysis from the state’s perspective, but it seems like the liberation is still happening (Family-report, 1994). Women are gradually accepted to be in a dilemma of a “typical” female biography, but an insecurity is shown in what part women in fact play. This can be seen by the state explicitly declaring to initiate interventions for the man’s wishes.

The magnitude of this kind of discourse on mothers in contemporary society is described by Vincent et al. (previous research, 2010). That is, a woman wedged between the decisions to be a “good citizen” (a worker) or “good mother”.

7.1. Conclusion

It is odd to see a state, that is surrounded by a relatively modern society, as stuck in archaic ideals as Germany is. Families are always tied in reproduction (biological) and solidarity, which only families with children or parents are characterized with. Family forms striving from the norm are perceived as a disadvantage, for the sole reasons of “absent” subsidiarity for instance. To claim that couples, such as homosexuals, who do not reproduce are unable to generate care, and solidarity is archaic and rootless.

The illustration of women, within the statements, is always within her own family. On the other hand, fathers have the independent choice to be part of their family; men are willing to adapt to women by limiting their working hours (Family-report, 1994).

The explicit perception from a man’s point of view in as late as 2006 in the state report is astonishing. There is no denying that men do meet obstacles, yet women and men are
treated imbalanced through only partially accepting the women’s dilemma in contemporary society (Family-report, 2006).

Instead of analyzing family and women in one part, I am pleased to observe that dividing family and women in their individual fragments, generates results in which one must look at it from the women’s perspective. It highlights that women, even though individualization has long taken place for men, are left behind and pulled back to their respective family (Beck, 1992). This study emphasized the family-reports statement from 1968, 1994, and 2006 from a discernible women’s point of view. Yet, it is backed up by its historical and theoretical framework. There are two anticipations I have for this study. One, to the reader, I hope to have created an understanding of what, in a modern society, it could mean to be a woman and a mother; to have highlighted the tensions in between both ‘women’ and ‘mother’. I have accentuated one possible conclusion, and hope to have left room for diverging conclusions and interpretations. Two, I have hopefully deciphered a complicated state report, in purpose of broadening the reader’s knowledge about a discourse generating state. Additionally, I aimed at stressing how a country may navigate its citizen to ‘believe’ in what it deems important; here the nuclear-family, and to an extent from the family dependent woman.

7.2. Future research

The questioning of normative institutions from different perspectives, is an intriguing subject. I am aware the perspective generates specific results, but that is what was planned for this research. The hope was to create access to discriminative patterns that are otherwise obscured, hidden in bureaucratic language. Thus, are rhetoric means, applied by the state, emphasized and brought into the foreground. There are various possibilities for further inspection. One could, for instance, observe the family reports and discourse about children’s rights and needs diachronically, or analyze illustrated parental duties by the state. Ultimately since the new family report will be published this upcoming years, it would be interesting to see the results yielded from the same kind of analysis.
8.0. References


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