

Extended Abstract

Distrust in Day Care? Why German Mothers remain in Part Time

Kerstin Ruckdeschel and Sabine Diabaté

Introduction

Looking at family lives and guiding role models of motherhood in Europe over the past decades, change is visible: gender equality inside the parental dyad rose. But at the same time we observe continuity for example in the prioritising of paid work by fathers and of childcare by mothers. What defines a "good" or "ideal" mother today – going back to fulltime employment or choosing a part-time job in order to earn some additional money? The opportunity of having her child looked after in professional day care is an important instrument of family policy to promote gender equality. However, in Germany, where there is a statutory entitlement on a place for children under three since 2013 this possibility is not always used and there is a huge difference in the usage between East- and West-Germany. So for policy makers it is necessary to get a deeper understanding on this phenomenon. The reasons might be complex and are so far not clearly identified. Possible barriers are:

- Distrust in the quality of professional childcare
- Individual role models or leitbilder (i.e. guiding role models of motherhood, which are orientated at the "one-and-a-half-earner" model)
- Social norms about motherhood, i.e. mothers fulltime employment is culturally not accepted and working mothers (especially in West Germany) fear social stigmatization

So far, little research has been done on the impact of trust in childcare infrastructure on actual infant care in Germany. This should be especially interesting because there are still different parental cultures in the former divided eastern and western part of the country.

The *family leitbild* survey (see below) allows us for the first time to investigate the extent to which this trust in the various forms of childcare is present and to what extent it affects the actual

design of childcare for families and mothers' employment. We assume that, in addition to economic opportunities, this trust (as well as one's own ideas about a "good mother") is also decisive in taking up an employment for mothers. The aim of the paper is a new approach on family policy and motherhood by analyzing the linkage between the attitudes towards the maternal role and childcare infrastructure on the one hand and part-/fulltime employment on the other hand. Our research questions are:

- How great is the distrust in the different forms of care: public daycare, daycare mother, grandparents in wave 1?
- How stable are the attitudes over the survey period?
- What influence does a birth have?
- To what extent can this trust (and possibly also the idea of a "good mother") explain why mothers fall back into the traditional gender role and remain in part-time employment?

The family leitbild survey

In order to test our assumptions and to describe how contemporary concepts of the family look like in Germany, we have carried out a *family leitbild survey* (FLB 2012)¹ in 2012. The target population were German residents, aged 20 to 39. Among them, a representative sample of n=5.000 was drawn and interviewed, based on a standardised questionnaire. The respondent's personal *leitbild* (concept of the family) was measured by asking his or her (dis)agreement to a number of statements. The statements formulated conceptions of what is normal, partly rather in the form of an attitude (e.g. do you personally agree that mothers ought to have time to help their children with their schoolwork in the afternoons.), partly rather in the form of an assumption about what is common (e.g. and how does the general public think about it? Mothers ought to have time to help their children with their schoolwork in the afternoons). This allows us to include the respondents perception of social norms.

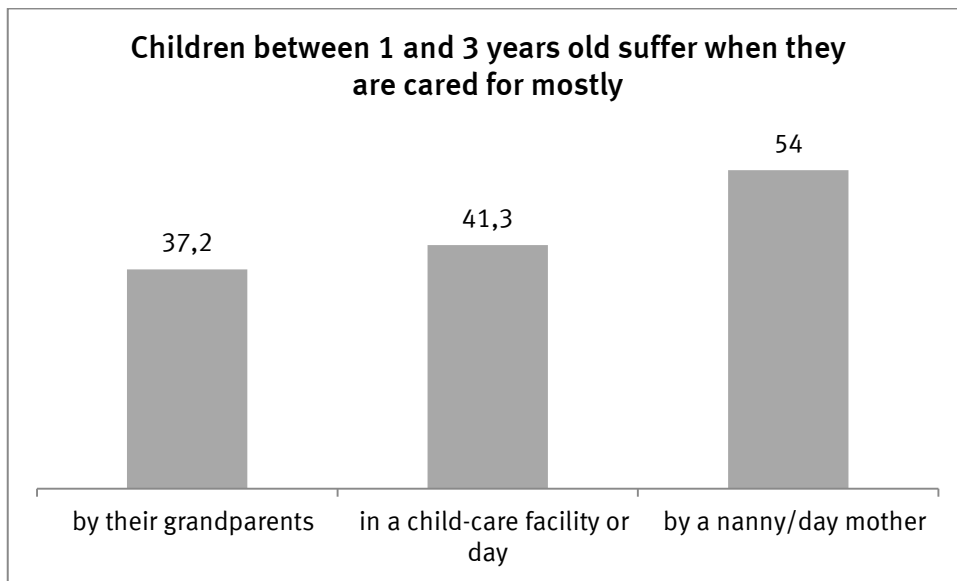
First results for distrust in childcare

Analyses of the *family leitbild survey* support the assumption that leitbilder exist and that the survey is a suitable tool for measuring them (cp. Schneider/Diabaté/Ruckdeschel 2015).

First results show that it is assumed that children suffer if they are not cared for by their mothers. Already grandparents, although relatives, do not seem to be able to replace the mother in the eyes of the respondents even less so public child-care facilities or day care mothers (fig. 1).

¹ For a detailed documentation in German compare Lück et al. 2013.

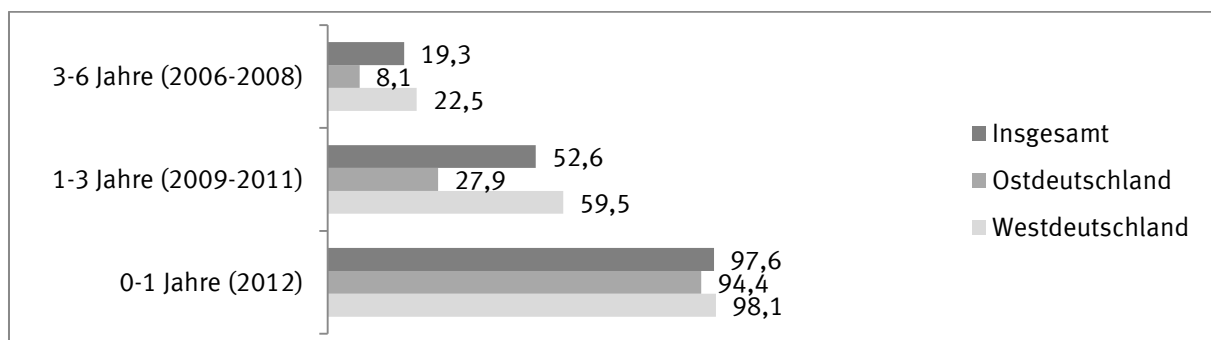
Figure 1: Agreement to the statement children between 1 and 3 years suffer when they are cared for mostly ... (in %)



Source: Leitbildsurvey (FLB 2012), weighted data, own calculation.

This attitude is reflected in the actual care arrangement of the respondents which depends essentially on the child's age (Fig. 2). The older the child, the less it is cared for by its own mother on weekdays. In particular, children before the age of two are looked after and cared for by their mothers.

Figure 2: Main caregiver for (non-school) children on a normal working day. Mention: "By the mother"; mothers by age of (youngest) child and place of residence (in %)



Source: Leitbildsurvey (FLB 2012), weighted data, own calculation.
translation: Jahre = years; insgesamt = all; Ostdeutschland=East Germany; Westdeutschland=West Germany

The next steps include connecting attitudes to mothers' employment and look for changes in the attitudes after the birth of a child.

Publications related to the survey

Leitbildsurvey FLB (2012). Studie "Familienleitbilder in Deutschland". Bundesinstitut für Bevölkerungsforschung. www.bib-demografie.de/leitbild

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Diabaté, Sabine; Beringer, Samira (2018). Simply the Best!? - Kulturelle Einflussfaktoren zum ‚intensive mothering‘ bei jungen Müttern in Deutschland Zeitschrift für Familienforschung / Journal of Family Research, 3-2018, S. 293-315.

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Schneider, N. F.; Diabaté, S.; Ruckdeschel, K. (2015): Familienleitbilder in Deutschland. Kulturelle Vorstellungen zu Partnerschaft, Elternschaft und Familienleben. Beiträge zur Bevölkerungswissenschaft Vol. 48, Opladen: Barbara Budrich.