

# 'New Social Risk' Policies for German and Swedish Families

"Childhood, well-being, parenting"

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"Parenting Cultures, parenting determinism and child well-being"

Åsa Lundqvist, Lund University and Ilona Ostner, University of Göttingen

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# Introduction

- A comparative analysis of German and Swedish family and parenting support policies
- Historically two different welfare states: Germany belonged to the 'familialist' group and Sweden to the 'non-familialist' group.
- Recent developments in German family policies has however resulted in a change in direction, towards a social investment approach, including new, also extended, forms of family and parenting support policies
  - while at the same time
- A new layer of policy measures were added to the Swedish family policy plethora, notably the implementation of new parenting support policies

# Introduction

- As a consequence:
  - Swedish and German policies for parents and children have become more similar, important differences in context and timing notwithstanding
- How such similarities should be understood and analysed are the main topic for this presentation

# Main argument

- The main purpose is to explore the emergence and features of 'new social risk' policies in Germany and Sweden.
- The analysis is guided by the following questions:
  - What are the main features of German and Swedish family and parenting support policies?
  - How can the emergence of 'new social risk' policies be understood in the light of **changing German and Swedish families and family arrangements?**

# 'New Social Risk' Policies

- Restructuring of welfare states: austerity policies, 'old' social policy systems in decline, increasing or persistent (longterm) unemployment and poverty
  - in parallel with
- Ageing populations, declining birth rates, new family forms, high numbers of young and young adult immigrants & immigrant families
- Emergence of a 'child-centered social investment' perspective,
- Parents and parenting under scrutiny
- 'Turn to parenting' → 'intense parenting' and 'scientific parenting'

# Current characteristics of family policies: Germany

- Family policies [selected measures, Table 1]
  - ✓ Steadily extended older and newer *universal* cash benefits and services for parents and children
  - ✓ Traditional social insurance entitlements in maternity, health and pension matters for children and parents
  - ✓ New and enlarged old *targeted* cash benefits and services
- Evidence of turn to parenting, e.g. (Table 2)
  - ✓ Remarkable increase in public spending for children and parents 2006-2017
  - ✓ Increase in numbers of children/youth taken into care/custody

Table 1: Selected Family Policies, incl parenting support, in Germany, 2006-2015/6, estimated expenditure (in million €)

Measures		2006	2015	2016
<b>Universal</b> <b>Cash Benefits</b>  <i>and</i> <b>Services</b>	Child benefit [192€ for first child, 225€ per child for second, third ... child]	35,004	35,498	40,348
	<b>New:</b> Parental leave benefit, universal, general tax, min € 300 for non-employed and working poor; 67% of previous market income for paid workers up to max of € 1800; each for 12 months or 14 months if at least two months share by second parent or in case of single parent	1,710 (2007)	5,822	6,097
	Maintenance advancement payment [paid by Youth Welfare Office for children 0-18 after separation & divorce [age-related 154-273€ per child]	853	843	861
	<b>New:</b> Additional tax allowance for single parents	405	545	570
	<b>New:</b> Public funded full-time childcare; statutory for children from the age of 1; municipal tax plus federal subsidy; fees earnings-related, yet, highly affordable in international comparison; no fee for low wage earners or parents with no income	11,097	24,574	n.a.
	Old: Parent Education / Advice	67	79	82
<b>Social Insurance</b> <b>(Old Age, Health)</b>	Enlarged: Federal supplements to parents' future pensions covering periods of 'licensed' family care, universal	11,392	12,149	12,530
	Old: 'Contribution-free' health-care coverage of children and non-employed family members, quasi-universal	13,700	18,599	n.a.
<b>Targeted</b> <b>Cash Benefits</b> <i>and</i> <b>Services</b>	New: Supplement for children of parents who claim jobseeker's benefit, general tax, income-tested, 170€ per child]	138	283	306
	<b>Parenting Support Measures</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
	• "Hilfe zur Erziehung" [since 1991: 'parenting advice' by various professionals and lay people, children & youth 3+]	5,534	7,275	8,384
	• „sozialpädagogische Familienhilfe“ [since 1991: 'in family home' support by social worker, children & youth 3+]	679	839	864
	• <b>Enlarged:</b> Child protection services and related parent training	381	615	650
• <b>New:</b> "Frühe Hilfen" [Early Childhood Intervention, e.g. family-nurse-partnerships, standardized programmes; since 2007/formalized 2012, support for pregnant mothers & their partners and for children after birth up to 3]	51	51	51	

Sources: BMFSFJ 2017: Familienreport 2017, p. 52, [www.bmffjs.de](http://www.bmffjs.de); Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2018, Statistiken der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe, 22.02.2018, p. 29; [www.destatis.de](http://www.destatis.de)



**Table 2: Removal of child/youth from parental home,  
 resp. children/youth taken into care, (Social Code, §42 SGB VIII),  
 selected causes, numbers, Germany, 2010-2017**

<b>Causes for removal (selection)</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
<i>Parental overload</i>	15760	16859	16400	17462	17291
<i>Neglect</i>	4317	4679	4846	5454	5439
<i>Suspected maltreatment</i>	3450	3831	4023	4619	4918
<i>Suspected sexual abuse</i>	710	618	611	607	693
<i>Unaccompanied entry into GER</i>	2822	6548	42309	44935	22492
<b>Total</b>	<b>36343</b>	<b>42123</b>	<b>77645</b>	<b>84230</b>	<b>61383</b>

# Current characteristics of parenting support policies: Germany

- Parenting support policies, largely provided and regularly financed by Länder, municipalities & welfare associations (providers only)
  - Pre- and postnatal maternal and child health care services (health insurance)
  - Targeted measures towards children 'at risk'
  - Old & new, universal and targeted parent education: advice, 'family midwives' (family-nurse-partnerships for under 3s), structured parenting support programmes, counselling, special focus children under 3)
  - Early childhood education (reduce potential harmful parental influence; to foster children's cognitive and social resources early on); income-tested zero-modest fees
  - 'Educational partnerships' between childcare centres, schools and parents

# Current characteristics of family policies: Sweden

- Family policies – departing from the notion of gender equality [selected measures, Table 3]
  - Insurances (parental leave, including pregnancy benefits and temporary parental benefits, child pension, pension rights for children)
  - General benefits (child allowance, benefits for adoption costs)
  - Means-tested benefits (housing benefits, maintenance, benefits for children with disabilities)
  - Publicly funded childcare (all municipalities are obliged to provide publicly funded child care for all children between 1 and 6 years. Maximum fee)

Table 3: Selected Family Policies in Sweden

Measures	
General benefits and services	Child allowance, universal (free of tax), € 130 if you have one child, € 260 two children, € 450 for three children; € 670 for 4 children, 924 for five children and € 1174 for six children
	Benefits for adoption costs
	Public funded childcare; All municipalities are obliged to provide publicly funded child care for all children between 1 and 6 years; Municipal tax plus federal subsidy; fees earnings-related, yet, highly affordable in international comparison (maximum fee for all since 2002 – for one child €120, for second child €90, for third child €40 and forth child is free of charge )
Social Insurance	<p>Parental leave (including pregnancy benefits and temporary parental benefits)            Details: nearly 80 per cent of the income if the parent take out parental benefit 7 days a week, but this is capped at SEK 967 per day.            Parental benefit based on income is called parental benefit at sickness benefit level. To receive it the parent must have had an annual income of at least SEK 82,100 for at least 240 consecutive days before the estimated delivery date.            Fewer work days than 240 consecutive days before the child is born, the parent receive SEK 250 per day at sickness benefit level for the first 180 days. This is equivalent to about SEK 7,500 a month.</p> <p>30 Billion Swedish Kronor in 2015</p>
	Child pension
Means-tested benefits	Housing benefits Maintenance
	Benefits for children with disabilities

# Current characteristics of parenting support policies: Sweden

- Parenting support policies
  - Healthcare
  - Parenting education, structured parenting support programmes, counselling
  - Family counselling
  - Pre-schools/schools = 'educational partnership'
  - Child and youth psychiatry
- Organised by municipalities, NGOs, county councils, religious communities; often universal in scope but targeted measures are prominent, especially within social work activities

Table 4: Parenting support policies  
Source: Lundqvist, 2015

Providers and organizers	Types and modes of services
Antenatal clinics; child health centres, organized by county councils (doctors, nurses, midwives)	Parenting groups/parenting education (föräldragrupper); health controls; various types of counselling/information
Open pre-schools, organized by municipalities and civil society, e.g. churches (pre-school teachers)	Structured parenting support programmes; information; counselling (often integrated in family centres)
Social services, organized by municipalities (social workers, psychologists)	Family counselling; consultation in the area of family law; structured parenting support programmes; counselling via telephone lines and Internet
Pre-schools and schools, organized by municipalities (pre-school teachers and teachers)	Cooperation activities between teachers, parents and pupils, e.g. through information meetings etc.
Family centres = collaboration between antenatal clinics, child health centres, open pre-schools and social services, organized by the municipalities (nurses, midwives, psychologists, pre-school teachers, social workers etc.)	Counselling; parenting groups; telephone counselling; structured parenting support programmes
Child- and youth psychiatry, organized by county councils (psychiatrists, nurses)	Counselling, family therapy, group treatment, counselling via telephone and Internet
NGOs, organized by civil society	Structured parenting support programmes; Counselling via telephone lines and Internet

# Trends in family arrangements

- Germany
  - Low fertility rates (marginal increase since 2015, mostly foreign born mothers, declining again in this group)
  - Comparatively low rates of non-marital birth rates (East vs West GER)
  - Married parents have more children than non-married ones: 41 per cent versus 28 per cent of non-married
  - Nearly 75 per cent of children below the age of 18 lived with married parents
  - 16 per cent of West German, and 23 per cent of (minor age), children lived with a single parent in 2016; poverty risk for 44 percent of lone parent families (11% for two-parent-family with 1-2 children)
  - Divorce rates have slightly but steadily decreased during the 2000s
  - Increased immigration of younger single men and families with young children (Diagram 1)

# Diagram 1: People seeking protection / asylum seekers in Germany by age and gender

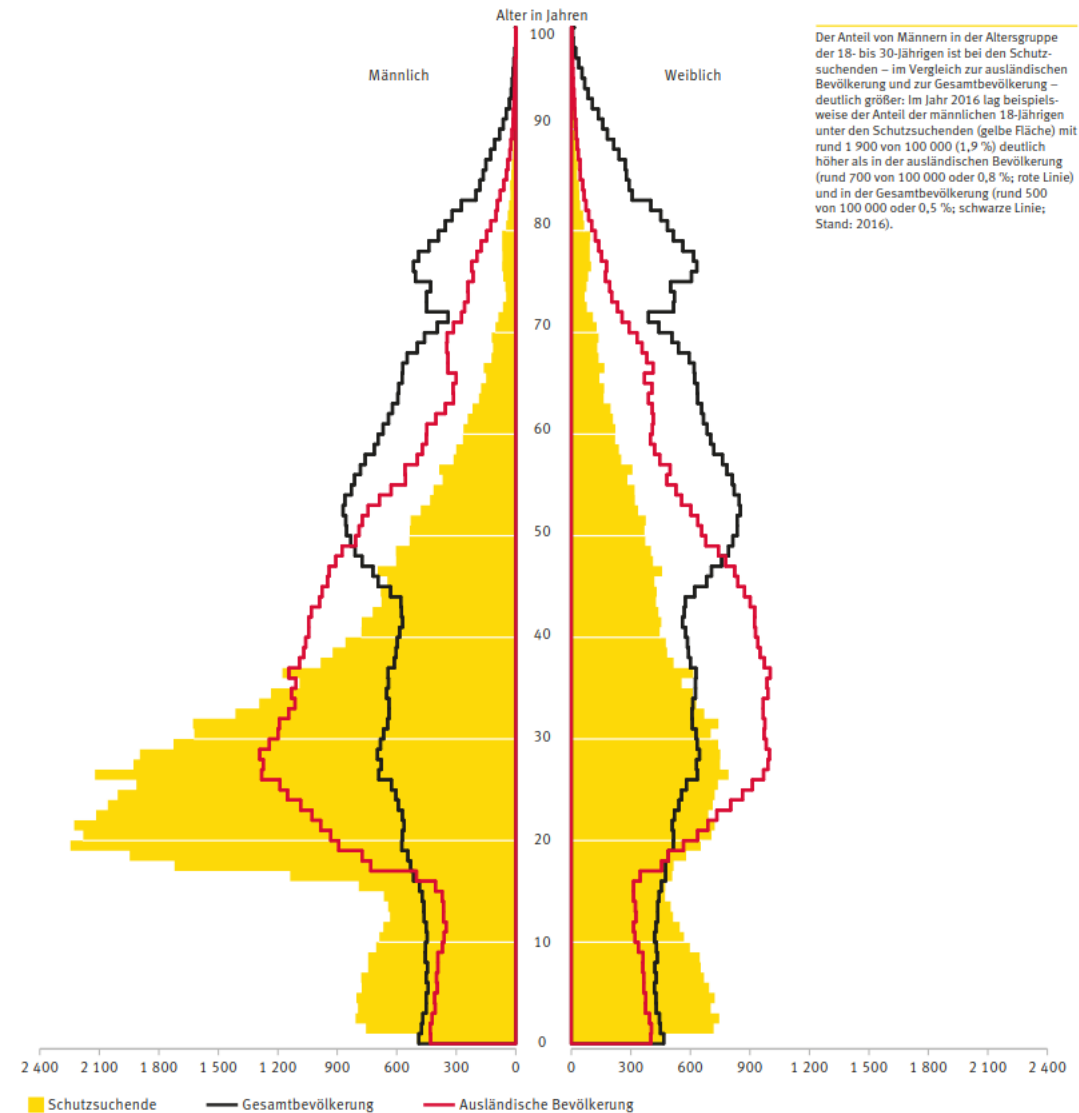
Yellow: men & women 'seeking protection'

Red: foreign born population

Black: total population

Männlich = left-side male

Weiblich = right-side female



Der Anteil von Männern in der Altersgruppe der 18- bis 30-jährigen ist bei den Schutzsuchenden – im Vergleich zur ausländischen Bevölkerung und zur Gesamtbevölkerung – deutlich größer: Im Jahr 2016 lag beispielsweise der Anteil der männlichen 18-Jährigen unter den Schutzsuchenden (gelbe Fläche) mit rund 1 900 von 100 000 (1,9 %) deutlich höher als in der ausländischen Bevölkerung (rund 700 von 100 000 oder 0,8 %; rote Linie) und in der Gesamtbevölkerung (rund 500 von 100 000 oder 0,5 %; schwarze Linie; Stand: 2016).

Die unterschiedlich großen Populationen der Bevölkerung insgesamt, der ausländischen Bevölkerung und der Schutzsuchenden wurden auf eine einheitliche Referenzpopulation von 100 000 Personen skaliert, um die Altersstruktur besser vergleichen zu können. Aus der Grafik können damit keine Rückschlüsse auf zugrundeliegende Fallzahlen getroffen werden. Der Altersaufbau insgesamt bezieht sich auf den Stand zum 31.12.2016.

Quelle: Ausländerzentralregister

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# Trends in family arrangements

- Sweden

- Comparatively high fertility rates (except by the end of the 1990s)
- The average age among first-time mothers varies, in the 70s, 24 years old and today 29
- Separation and divorces increased dramatically in the 1970s but have been stable since then (between 20 000 and 24 000 per year)
- Today, almost 67 per cent of all families are nuclear families
- 17 per cent of all families are lone mothers (5,1 per cent are lone fathers)
- About 25 per cent of all children under 18 years old in Sweden have separated or divorced parents, to be compared with 15 per cent in the 1970s.

# The emergence and features of 'new social risk' policies in Germany

- Germany
  - Long history of parenting support; since 2000s emulation of Swedish style family policies, above all, child care & parental leave (GER as latecomer); gender-equal parenting not a salient issue, instead newly emphasised focus on child's best interest
  - Important driver → shortage of qualified workforce; call for preventive measures due to increasing volatility in families and the neglect of young children
  - 2005 → new rules and procedures, targeting (failing) parents, framed as a 'social investment'
  - National Centre for Early Intervention (since 2006); child health; child protection etc.
  - Focus on improving parental competence; special emphasis on pregnancy, children under 3, also on new migrant parents & children; emphasis on prevention; monitoring role for childcare centres and schools; measures to improve cooperation and coordination among providers; evaluation
  - Recently a new turn (back to) to refined cash policies as children's right; also indicators of turn (back?) to older children and youth

# The emergence and features of 'new social risk' policies in Sweden

- Sweden

- Long history of parenting support interventions, part of the expansion of the welfare state, including gender equality ambitions
- Important driver → increasing ill-health among children and youth in the aftermath of the crisis in the 1990s; critique of the 'paternalistic' welfare state
- Framed as a social investment
- *National Strategy for a Developed Parenting Support: A Win for All (2009)*
- The return of the family! Gender blindness
- Childright perspectives
- Challenging the dual earner model? (the main problem for parents was assumed to be the limited time for family life: there was no time for children and good parenting)
- Since 2015 – increasing focus on migrants

# Conclusions

- Shift towards social investment policies
  - In Germany – strengthened 'role of the state' as 'guardian' & 'investor'
  - In Sweden – a new layer of policies
- Important drivers of change:
  - The financial and economic crisis (including increasing divisions/income gaps), dualisation of labor market and workforce
  - Germany: call for preventive measures due to increasing volatility in families & dualised workforce, Sweden: call for preventive parenting support due to increasing ill-health among youth
- In both countries:
  - Targeting children 'at risk' (increasingly so also in Sweden), in both countries also of migrant children and youth ('inclusive' social policies and social services)
  - We see a risk that such development result in a divide between work-life balance policies for the better-off, and preventive parenting support services for the poor, unemployed or vulnerable.