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Care-Work Arrangements of Parents in the Context of Family Policies and Extra-familial Childcare Provision in Switzerland

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Introduction

In recent years significant transformations and changes in the social and political economy of care have taken place in Switzerland (compare RR1). During the first decades after the Second World War Switzerland had rates of public expenditure for social protection (compared to GDP) similar to those of the United States (see figure 2.3 in RR1). Since the 1980s these rates have approached those of EU-countries (see figure 2.3 in RR1). However compared to EU-countries, Switzerland still has low public expenditure on families with children (see figure 3.1 in RR1). Recently, there has been increased political and public debates on family related issues, such as maternity insurance, public expenditure on childcare, balance of family life with professional careers of women and on the situation of working poor parents and lone parent families. The aim of this study is to examine the specific characteristics and changes in the political and social economy of care with regard to families and childcare in a country with a high standard of living.

In the first part of this report we present a brief overview of family policy on a national level and raise the question of how the perception of childcare and family has shifted in recent years. The intense, and at times conflicting public and political discussion and the introduction of different programmes and measures will be documented. Special attention will be given to the public discourses and political debates that underlie structural and institutional changes and policy shifts. The second part introduces extra-familial facilities (and individual services) that provide childcare. After a brief explanation of the Swiss childcare system (pre- and afterschool facilities compared to educational institutions), it investigates the supply, costs and shortcomings of childcare facilities. Then, it highlights an interesting aspect: current debates and (economic) studies focus mainly on cost-benefit analysis of public expenditure on childcare facilities, while questions of gender equality and social justice are rarely included in these approaches. In the third part, we investigate the work-care arrangements available for parents. It explores the different and multiple ways families and particularly women organise the care of their children. It addresses the question of how gender asymmetries in distribution of paid and unpaid work and gendered care/work biographies – as documented and established in RR2 – can be further explained. We will show that most existing studies investigate the role of family policy and childcare facilities in easing the time burden on families and the decision for paid and/or unpaid work particularly of mothers. Attention will be given to the role of economic and class factors (consequences of financial restrictions for care duties etc.). Other studies focus on gendered norms and negotiation processes within families and/or labour market factors (see also RR2). The third part also briefly discusses whether new paid jobs in the (informal) care sector are created in light of increasing numbers of working mothers (also compare RR2). Finally, care factors are linked to the risk of poverty, which particularly affects lone parents.

The report is based on existing documents, research and statistics, and draws these together into a coherent form. The main objective of this research report is to put the already researched and

documented bits and pieces together in such a way that it can provide a survey about the most important existing studies and compile results which are relevant for the UNRISD research programme on the political and social economy of care¹.

Part I Family Policies

1 General Characteristics of Family Policy

This report is based on the assumption that government policy with regard to families is an important element in shaping care-work arrangements of families with children. Therefore, family policies will be documented and analysed in this first part. In Switzerland, family policies² can be characterized by three crucial features: a) the non-sectoral approach to family issues, b) the federal political system, and c) changing and conflicting discourses on family, gender and care.

In the Swiss Federal Constitution (article 116, para. 1) family³ policy is explicitly defined as a cross-sectional task. The Confederation must consider the needs of the family in all political areas (article 116, para. 1), i.e. for example education policy, labour market policy or welfare policy all include family issues. In consequence, the organisation and competences are distributed within the public administration: there are a total of 19 different federal offices, and a similar number of centres in the seven federal departments that are involved in the establishment and implementation of family policies and programmes. Hence the organisational structure is highly fragmented. Furthermore, there are several expert commissions that are engaged in family issues, such as the Federal Commission for the Coordination of Family Issues (Eidgenössische Koordinationskommission für Familienfragen), the Federal Commission for Women's Issues (Eidgenössische Kommission für Frauenfragen) and the Federal Commission for Youth-Related Issues (Eidgenössische Kommission für Kinder- und Jugendfragen). These commissions are not part of the federal administration, but their secretariats are integrated at this level, and are closely involved due to their advisory role.

Family policy at a national level is defined in the Constitution as a “general supporting task” (generelle Unterstützungskompetenz, Art. 16, para. 1). That means the Confederation defines the general guidelines and backs the development and implementation of measures in the Cantons or institutions, but rarely initiates actions on its own (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004: 68). Thus, family policy is structured by the federal state system of Switzerland, whereby the Cantons and municipalities enforce the majority of legislation adopted at a federal level (see also RR1). Due to its federal nature,

¹[http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/\(httpProjects\)/37BD128E275F1F8BC1257296003210EC?OpenDocument](http://www.unrisd.org/80256B3C005BB128/(httpProjects)/37BD128E275F1F8BC1257296003210EC?OpenDocument)

² In their report, the federal office for social insurances (Sozialversicherungen 2004) defines family policy as „the activities of federal and non-federal institutions that aim at supporting the work and contribution of families, at easing their burden and at reducing structural inconsiderateness“ (translation N.B.).

³ It is important to note that there is no standardised definition of the term family, as Vatter et al (2004: xiii) note: „the Constitution understands ‚family‘ in its widest sense, namely a community of adults with children on the one hand; on the other, it guarantees the right to marriage and the rights to have family. This implicit contradiction is also evident in family policy measures“.

family policy is fragmented and differs according to Cantons and municipalities. It is the latter which usually finance these policies. However, some (additional) subsidies are federal, other costs are paid by the families themselves. The federal system for example explains the distinct differences in public services and benefits for families and the uneven distribution of childcare facilities between Cantons and municipalities, which will be discussed in more detail in part II. Vatter et al.'s (2004) analysis of the current approach to families on the national level highlights significant gaps and inconsistencies and concludes that family policy in Switzerland lacks a comprehensive national framework and a coherent set of objectives.

Another important characteristic of family policy is Switzerland's low public expenditure targeted at families with children compared e.g. to EU countries (see figure 3.1 in RR1). In the year 2005 social protection benefits amounted to 27.1% of the GDP (BFS, Gesamtrechnung der Sozialen Sicherheit; BSV, Schweizerische Sozialversicherungsstatistik, for details see RR1, fig. 3.1). Only a small amount of this expenditure was invested in support of families. We explain the low public spending on families, particularly on childcare facilities such as nurseries and all-day schools (both of which have been requested by some left-wing political forces and feminists since the 1970s), with the prevailing view among influential political forces, such as most of the major political parties, as well as the majority of voters (q.v. Bühler 2004) of the family as a primarily private matter. However, in recent years there has been an increase in at times conflicting political and public debates on issues related to families with children. Discourses on family can be seen as being informed by important changes in family structures, such as the decline of marriages and fertility rates and – although limited in international comparison – an increase in the number of divorces and lone parents (compare RR1 and Bauer, Strub et al. 2004: 3). These social and demographic changes have been accompanied by an increasing poverty of families. In addition, discourses on childcare are informed by the rise of a new generation of women who want to combine children and a career (they form a comparatively larger group than twenty years ago, compare RR1/2).

These changes and debates have led to claims for the expansion of public expenditure on childcare, for actions to fight family poverty – in particular targeting lone parents – and for policies to achieve gender equality. Tangibly, in the last decade central measures, which were discussed at national and cantonal levels include claims for the increase in family allowances (Familienzulagen), a reform of the fiscal system for families (Familienbesteuerung), an increase in family income supplements (Familienergänzungsleistungen), the introduction of a maternity insurance (Mutterschaftsversicherung) and, the expansion of extra-familial childcare facilities (Familienergänzende Kinderbetreuung). These areas of family policy will be presented in more detail in the following sections focussing mainly on the national framework (for an encompassing overview

of communal and cantonal family policies and care models see: Binder 2004; Lucas und Giraud 2006a; b).⁴

2 Central Claims, Policies and Programmes

Vatter et al. (2004: 2) identify four types of government intervention in relation to families: financial, social, pedagogical and family-internal interventions. The first type includes child allowances, income supplements and benefits for families as well as measures that aim at easing the burden of taxes and (health) insurance premiums. These measures form a big part of family-related aid-money (Bauer und Hüttner 2003: 11). The instruments will be discussed below. The second form contains the support of childcare facilities, the encouragement of family-friendly working environments and school systems as well as the integration of immigrant families and family-friendly urban planning. Childcare facilities will be discussed in more detail. The third type includes advisory and educational services for families, whereas the objective of the fourth is child protection and combating domestic violence (for an overview see: Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004). The third and fourth types of intervention will be neglected in this report, as they are not central to care arrangements.

2.1 Financial Support of (poor) Families and the Role of Place of Residency

A central objective of measures such as child allowances is to financially support parents. Child allowances consist of a per child supplement for all employees, irrespective of income. Until recently, implementation took place on a cantonal level⁵, thus resulting in various systems of organisation and financing with monthly benefits varying between 150 and 444 Swiss francs (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004). However, in recent years different actors have urged to reform the child allowance system by defining a standard minimal amount. As a result, a new legislation that aims at harmonising the current system at a national level was accepted by 68% of the Swiss people in a popular vote on 26.11.2006. The new law will be enforced on January 1st in 2009. It guarantees parents 200 Swiss francs for each child below the age of 16 and 250 Swiss francs monthly for a child in education. It applies to both, full-time employees and part-time employees as well as to unemployed parents.⁶ The new law includes low-income parents outside the workforce (these child allowances will be paid by the Cantons). An additional improvement of the new law is the clarification of who is eligible for the allowance, particularly in cases of double income parents. If parents live together, the person working in the Canton of residence will be eligible. If both parents work and live in the same Canton, the allowance will be paid on the higher income. Finally, if parents do not live in the same household, the

⁴ See also study of Dietmar Braun and Olivier Giraud in the frame of the National Research Programme 52. The authors found three different models of care practiced in Swiss cities and Cantons. A summary can be found under: http://www.nfp52.ch/d_die_projekte.cfm?Projects.Command=details&get=6 (26.8.2008).

⁵ Family allowances in the agricultural sector, of government employees and jobless people are regulated at the federal level.

⁶ <http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/20061126/index.html>

allowance will be given to the parent who lives with the children. The allowances are very small compared to the costs for childcare facilities (see next part of this report and also compare RR2 (Tab. 4.5) for amount that people have to work to cover the costs for childcare/care of the elderly).

There are several other benefits, which are of specific importance in relation to poor families. They include among others supplementary benefits according to financial needs (if the income is insufficient to cover the living costs of a family), supplementary maternity/care benefits (implemented in some cantons as a compensation for loss of salary due to care duties) or reduction of health insurance premiums.⁷ Supplementary benefits are guaranteed by the national Constitution (article 12: the right of support in financial emergencies), but enforced by the Cantons. In consequence, cross-cantonal differences can be observed. Similarly, the system of compulsory health insurance is based on legal guidelines of the Confederation, but enforced by the Cantons. The guidelines obligate every citizen to contract insurance. Insurances are private (not public) and consist of a per capita premium for every family member, and are independent of income. Reduced premiums apply to children up to the age of 18 and some insurances give reductions up to the age of 25. Despite these reductions, many families are faced with a high financial burden. Again Cantonal differences can be observed: in 2008 an average health insurance premium for adults in the Canton of Geneva is 418.91 Swiss francs and the reduced premium for children is ca. 99.21 Swiss francs. In contrast, in the Canton of Nidwalden (Central Switzerland) they amount to 218.75 for adults and 53.74 Swiss francs for children respectively (source: Bundesamt für Gesundheit 2008)⁸. The federal law on health insurance compasses public expenditure for reductions in premiums for low-income families.⁹ However, the definition of who counts as a beneficiary, the rate of reductions and the procedures are incumbent on the Cantons.¹⁰ The study by Balthasar et al. (2001) has shown the scope of cantonal differences in the criteria applied. These differences in legal practice were criticized and led to the discussion on the revision of the health law in the national parliament. Most importantly, left-wing politicians suggested premiums according to income and family situations. However, the reform was rejected in parliament in December 2003. The federal government still adheres to the objective of a social reform (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004: 11).

The underlying aim of the above-mentioned financial measures is to alleviate the financial burden on families (Vatter et al. 2004: 61). However, effectiveness of the measures depends on the cantonal implementation. As Knupfer and Wyss (2003) have pointed out, poverty (of families) is mainly a question of place of residence. The study has shown that the remaining household income

⁷ For a comprehensive overview see (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004).

⁸ <http://www.bag.admin.ch/themen/krankenvsicherung/00261/index.html?lang=de>

⁹ Implemented on March 18, 2004 (Bundesgesetz über die Krankenversicherung/federal law on health insurances, KVG, SR 832.10, art.65-66a.).

¹⁰ The costs are shared between the Confederation (two thirds of the total amount) and the Cantons (one third of the total amount).

after the deduction of living costs, health insurance premiums and taxes etc. differs greatly depending on the city/canton of residence.

2.2 Fiscal System and Gender

The fiscal system is one factor in influencing disposable household incomes. The Confederation, the Cantons and the municipalities all charge direct taxes. The current system distinguishes between a collective rating of families, and an individual assessment of unmarried couples. This means that incomes of married couples are added up and assessed as one income, whereas with unmarried couples each person's income is assessed and charged individually. As a consequence, and due to tax progression – whereby higher incomes are charged with higher tax rates – *married couples* pay more than *unmarried couples*, if *both* of the partners have an *income*. Double income *unmarried parents* still pay less taxes than double income *married parents*, despite the fact that the costs of raising children can usually be deducted from only one income. Some corrective measures were introduced, such as a lower tax rate and special deductions from the taxable income for married couples. These measures reduce some of the differences in the amount of taxes charged; however, double income, married couples are in most cases still faced with a higher tax burden than unmarried couples (depending on the amount of income per person).

In contrast, *married couples with a traditional division* of tasks between husband and wife are favoured compared to *unmarried couples* with a traditional division of tasks (in both cases: with or without children). As explained above, the fiscal-policy is based on a “family as institution” approach. The institution of marriage is of central importance here. “These institution-centred measures are inextricably linked to a traditional family model, based on a clear division of responsibilities between women and men” (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004: xiii). An individual-centred system would aim at promoting the individual, based on the assumption that each family member should be equal before the law (as practised in most OECD-countries).¹¹

The fiscal system was criticized for its unequal treatment of people – the equal treatment of persons in similar circumstances is stated in the Swiss Constitution (article 127, para. 2) – and for its gender bias. These predicaments led the national parliament to suggest a reform of the fiscal system on 20.6.2003 (Bundesgesetz über die Änderung von Erlassen im Bereich der Ehe- und Familienbesteuerung, der Wohneigentumsbesteuerung und der Stempelabgaben, BBI 2003: 4498). The reform envisaged easing the tax burden for married couples with two incomes, as well as a deduction of the costs for childcare facilities for economically active parents. The reform was however rejected in popular vote by a vast majority of 66% on 16.5.2004. Interestingly, it was particularly left-wing people who objected the reform, because it would privilege higher incomes.¹² In February 2006

¹¹ Vatter et al. (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004) reveal in their analysis of family policy (up to 2004) that the Confederation has both individual and institution-centred approaches to family-related issues.

¹² <http://www.gfsbern.ch/pub/041605d.pdf> (29.8.2008).

the national parliament decided on an immediate reform of national taxes (which does not apply to the much higher Cantonal taxes!) (Blättler 2006). Hereon the Federal Council proposed a ruling, which envisages a “combined solution” aiming at diminishing the “marriage penalty” of the 240’000 affected double income, married couples and encouraging both spouses to work. Married couples should now be allowed to deduce 50% of the second income (up to 12’500 sFr.¹³ per annum) and make a general deduction of 2’500 sFr. per annum for tax purposes (applies to all married couples independently of their work/family arrangement) on their joint return. A law according to the ruling was enforced on 1st of January 2008. In addition, a different tax progression (again only for the relatively low national tax) was introduced in 2007 with the result that *one-income married couples* are no longer generally privileged compared to *double income married couples* with comparable combined incomes. In fact, the latter now pay less. *Two-income unmarried couples with children* pay more taxes (if the two partners wages are equal) than *married parents* with the same arrangement (usually 50%/50%) or *married one-income parents*. They also pay more than *unmarried parents* with one person working 30% and the other 70% (which is the most common work-care arrangement nowadays, as demonstrated in RR2 and below).¹⁴

Simultaneously an encompassing reform of the fiscal system with regard to married couples and families was foreseen. However, the national parliament could not come up with a widely approved agreement. In consequence, an encompassing fiscal reform was abolished (such as a “splitting-system”). New attempts aim at relieving families (with children) from the tax burden, while the system of taxing couples is no longer discussed. Currently, a study group is drafting different proposals for the Federal Council based on the claim that “children are the biggest financial burden on couples and lone-parent households” (Leutwyler 2008). At present the fiscal system allows some tax deductions for childcare: firstly parents can deduct 5’600 Swiss francs per year and child, secondly insurance premiums (for example health insurance) and some of the costs in case of illness, disability or accident are deductible. Alimonies are also deductible. Nevertheless, the fiscal system currently does not sufficiently ease the financial burden of families (q.v. Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004). Against the background of these shortcomings the Federal Council is aiming at undertaking reforms (Finanzdepartement 2008).

2.3 Struggles for Maternity Insurance

Compared to other countries, Switzerland implemented maternity leave benefits at a later date; that is to say in 2005.¹⁵ Previously, maternity protection was based on the Swiss code of obligations, important parts of which were wage continuation and protection against dismissal. However, wage

¹³ 12,500 Swiss francs is clearly a wage of a part-time job. Therefore, the reform implicitly assumes that one person (usually the man) is the main breadwinner and the other person (usually the woman) earns an additional income through part-time employment.

¹⁴ <http://www.estv.admin.ch/d/dbst/dokumentation/rundschreiben/2-007-D-2004-d-Beilage2-pdf> (28.8.2008)

¹⁵ The Canton of Geneva established maternity insurance in July 2001.

continuation was only guaranteed for a limited period (depending on the period of service) meaning that often not even all wage losses during the 8 week working ban after childbirth were covered. Despite an explicit mandate in the Constitution (article 116, para. 2, introduced in 1945) to establish maternity insurance, suggestions of new laws that aimed at implementing an insurance were turned down in two plebiscites: the first one in 1984 and the second in 1999. We explain the low support for maternity insurance with the view of family as a primarily private matter, which was widespread among influential political forces, such as the major political parties, as well as the majority of voters for a long time (see above and Bühler 2004; Huber 1994). This point deserves some elaboration. The aim in 1984 was to introduce a parental leave of nine months (for employed mothers and fathers!). The supporters of the initiative - mainly social democrats, women's movements and labour unions - advocated a new family model: the traditional division of tasks between men and women was to be overcome, mothers should be given the choice of family and work and fathers should be given the opportunity to engage in childcare. In addition, the family was no longer seen as an exclusively private responsibility, but as a social task. The opponents to the initiative (liberal, conservative and Christian parties as well as business associations) agreed with the protection of working mothers, but argued against changing gender roles and claimed motherhood and family were a private matter (Huber 1994: 93f). Clearly, the second point of view was predominant; the initiative was turned down by 84.2% of voters. In the following, reforms of the health insurance law (1987) and a new initiative on maternity insurance (1999) brought about debates whether all – meaning also not employed and well-off – mothers should be included (Huber 1994; Wiederkehr 1994). Maternity was seen by some fractions of the women's movement (e.g. social democratic feminists) as a social task that should be rewarded independent of work and class status (Madörin 1999: 150ff). Other women's fractions (e.g. feminists in labour unions) as well as trade associations among others, criticized this approach as what is known in German as “the watering-can principle” (the principle of handing out slices of the budget indiscriminately).

Instead of establishing a separate parental or maternity insurance, the national parliament suggested in 2001 to include maternity (no longer parental!) benefits in the wage compensation insurance (until then this insurance mainly covered the absence of employees during military service). A revision of the law on wage compensation (*Erwerbsersatzgesetz*) was initiated that aimed at compensating the loss in wages that mothers faced during maternity leave; thus, working mothers were to be guaranteed 80% of their wage during 14 weeks after childbirth. Non-working mothers were not considered in this reform and no leave prior to childbirth was included.¹⁶ The costs of maternity leave would be covered by the existing wage compensation insurance, which is funded by employees, self-employed/business people, people outside the workforce and employers: employees pay 0.3% of their income for insurance premiums, half of which has to be covered by their employers; people

¹⁶ Thus, the Swiss system is not fully consistent with the international pact on economic, social and cultural rights (pact I, art. 10 § 2).

outside the workforce and the self-employed pay between 13 and 300 Swiss francs per annum. The revision was accepted in popular vote on 26.9.2004 by a majority of 55.5% and was enforced on 1st of July in 2005.

To date, no thorough study has been carried out on the political and public debates leading up to the revision of the above-mentioned law. Furthermore, little is known about the changes in discourses on family and maternity. A brief analysis of the predominant perception of family in the arguments prior to the plebiscite reveals a shift in perception from the family as a private to the family as a public matter. The statement of the Federal Council to the initiative of the parliament is a case in point:

“With reference to maternity insurance, the Federal Council stated already on June 25th 1997 that maternity is of primary importance to the family as well as to society as a whole. The protection of maternity is an indispensable duty of the national community. It is essential to achieving main objectives of family policy, social policy and equality (...). The financial consequences should not be imposed on mothers and their families only. It (the revision of the law, N.B) is an element in the advancement of the reconciliation of family and work and therefore relevant to gender equality”¹⁷ (Bundesrat 2002: 1114).

In addition, the Federal Council pointed out in its statement prior to the plebiscite in 2004 that every workingwoman has a right to paid maternity leave. It goes on to point out that such a measure corresponds with current social realities, whereby most women remain economically active after childbirth (Recommendation of the Federal Council prior to the popular vote in 2004).

The position of the Federal Council shows that gender equality has in recent years become an often mentioned overarching goal of family policies on a national level (see as well: Stutz 2002).¹⁸ This illustrates a growing awareness that existing gender inequalities can only be overcome with supporting measures and laws. Interestingly, the Federal Council’s concept of gender equality focuses on the individual and not on the family as an institution, i.e. aims at promoting working mothers (see as well: Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004). In addition, gender equality is understood as the engagement in gainful employment of women and the “protection of maternity”, while father’s leave or engagement in care is not an issue. At the same time, the position of the government contains a subtle hint of current care challenges linked to demographic developments. The fact that maternity should be promoted can be linked to the growing awareness of decreasing fertility rates. The argument of “the

¹⁷ Original quote: „Schon in seiner Botschaft zur Mutterschaftsversicherung vom 25. Juni 1997 (BBl 1997 IV 981) hat der Bundesrat auf die vorrangige Bedeutung der Mutterschaft für die Familie und für die ganze Gesellschaft hingewiesen. Der Schutz der Mutterschaft ist eine unverzichtbare Aufgabe der staatlichen Gemeinschaft. Es geht dabei um die Verwirklichung von wichtigen familien-, sozial- und gleichstellungspolitischen Anliegen. (...). Die wirtschaftlichen Folgen dürfen nicht ausschliesslich der Mutter und ihrer Familie auferlegt sein. (...). Ein solcher stellt ein weiteres Element zur besseren Vereinbarkeit von Familie und Berufsarbeit dar und ist deshalb auch gleichstellungspolitisch relevant“ (<http://www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/va/20040926/explic/d-pp2627.pdf>)

¹⁸ Growing gender awareness is also reflected in the introduction of Art. 8, para. 2 and 3 of the Swiss Constitution (1981) and a law on equality (art. 1 and 3) (1996). Both forbid any discrimination based on gender and guarantee legal equality of men and women in family, education and in the labour market.

burden of having children should not be imposed on mothers and their families only” can be seen as a reference to the current discussion of family poverty. And thirdly, the notion of “reconciliation of family and work” as being problematic is a further expression of care challenges. In consequence, not only the Federal government, but also a majority of political actors¹⁹ and a big part of the public are claiming a more comprehensive welfare-system as well as an increase in public expenditures on measures to reconcile family with work.

The argument of the opponents of a paid maternity leave was twofold. First, they claimed that this measure would lead to a “cost explosion” in public expenditure on welfare and would burden employers and the people. Second, they lay claim to the freedom of choice in family arrangements, as the following statement of the Swiss people’s party (SVP) illustrates:

„The government aims indirectly at supporting a specific family model and at restricting the freedom of choice in family arrangements of women and families respectively! Maternity insurance leads once more to a new and unjust redistribution. Double income families profit from the new benefits, while one-income families are left out“²⁰

Without using the term traditional family model, the opponents clearly see the new law as a threat to traditional family structures. According to them one-income families, which correspond with the breadwinner-housewife-model, would be disadvantaged in the revision of the law. In addition, the claim for „freedom of choice in family arrangements“ shows that the family is still conceptualised as a private matter. From this angle no public funding of working mothers and governmental interference is acceptable.

The opposing views illustrate that gender and family arrangements are central to debates on family policy. While the government adheres to the promotion of gender equality, which actually means promoting the labour force activity of mothers, opponents still support a traditional family model and treat most family issues as a private matter. While the first stance has gained an upper hand in recent years, the traditional approach is declining, but still powerful as it is fostered by one of the major political parties (SVP). To sum up, the actual debates are not so much about maternity insurance or other measures *per se*, but about gender norms and the social reality that is to be achieved.

2.4 New Focus on Childcare Policies

According to Vatter et al. (2004: 19-22) the social interventions of the State, not only finance families, but also aim at changing social reality. These measures contain the support of childcare facilities, the

¹⁹ Among these actors are left-wing political parties, but also the influential Swiss Conference of Social Executives (SODK, Schweizerische Konferenz der Sozialdirektoren) and the „Tripartite Agglomerationskonferenz“ (TAK).

²⁰ Original quote: „Der Staat will indirekt ein bestimmtes Familienmodell fördern und die Freiheit der Frauen resp. der Familien beschneiden, eigenständig über die Familiengestaltung zu entscheiden! Die Mutterschaftsversicherung führt einmal mehr zu einer neuen und ungerechten Umverteilung. Doppelverdienerfamilien profitieren von den neuen Leistungen, während Einverdienerhaushalte leer ausgehen.“ (http://www.svp.ch/index.html?page_id=787&l=2)

encouragement of family-friendly working environments²¹ and school systems²² as well as the integration of immigrant families²³ and family-friendly urban planning. Childcare facilities (pre-kindergarden and preschool, resp. afterschool) will be discussed here in more detail. Currently, they are the most noteworthy area of intervention.

In March 2000 national councillor (member of the national parliament) Jaqueline Fehr (member of the Social Democratic Party) initiated a debate in parliament on public support of childcare facilities (see also: Fehr 2003). More precisely, she suggested a new law that requires the national government to financially support municipalities in their effort to establish childcare facilities. This led to the so-called impulse programme for the creation of places in childcare facilities (Impulsprogramm zur Schaffung von Kinderbetreuungsplätzen), which contains a law and a regulation (Bundesrat 2006). The “national law on financial aid for childcare facilities” was accepted in parliament on 4th of October 2002. The law is in force for 8 years. The concomitant regulation, which was released by the Federal Council on 9th of December 2002, allows a credit of 200mio. Swiss francs. Both, the national law and the regulation were enforced on 1st of February 2003. The programme aims at supporting new childcare facilities (such as day-care centres, crèches and childminders) or additional places in existing facilities. A facility can be supported for a maximum period of three years. After this period the municipalities have to assume responsibility for the newly created or enlarged childcare facilities, due to the principle of subsidiarity.

In 2007 an additional pilot measure was introduced within the programme. Municipalities, which aim at changing their subsidy policies – from financing objects to subjects (a rather neoliberal and contested measure that is based on ideas such as transparent markets, consumer sovereignty etc.) – are to be financially supported by the national government. Instead of municipalities subsidising childcare facilities, parents receive childcare vouchers. Parents can redeem the vouchers at the facility of their choice. According to the Federal Government, vouchers would increase the competition among facilities and would therefore enhance quality and create new places (Louis und Stampfli 2008). The growing competition might lead to pressures to reduce costs, which might deteriorate quality (e.g. recruitment of cheaper and therefore often less qualified personnel, cheaper equipment, fewer trainings etc.).

²¹ For an analysis on family policy of firms see: (Prognos 2005). The authors conclude that a family friendly business policy pays off.

²² To date, few measures promote family-friendly school systems. There are for example still few all day schools and lunch time care offers (most children go home for lunch).

²³ The support of the integration of immigrants as a family and the special conditions for their reconciliation of childcare and work is rarely discussed in debates on migration, asylum and integration (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004). For example, to date no programmes have addressed the labour market integration of immigrant women {see for example: \Riaño, 2008 #543}.

The impulse programme for the creation of places in childcare facilities (Impulsprogramm zur Schaffung von Kinderbetreuungsplätzen) was initiated because of the awareness of the lack of childcare places despite high demand (see next part for details on estimated demand). Five specific arguments can be found in the statement of the Federal Council (Bundesrat 2006: 3370):

a) Gender equality and increase in choices of care-work arrangements

The programme aims at increasing gender equality in the labour market and at facilitating the reconciliation of work and family. It is argued that parents, and particularly mothers, will have more choices to combine work and childcare, if there are sufficient places for childcare.

b) Increase in the fertility rate

It is assumed that a sufficient offer of childcare places will ease the decision to have children for women who want to work or who have to work for financial reasons. Thus, an increase in the fertility rate is one of the underlying aims of the programme.

c) Overall economical benefit

A higher labour force activity is seen as a positive outcome of the impulse programme. The facilitation of combining career and family should diminish family poverty, increase consumption and tax revenues. Moreover, it is assumed that the loss of human capital – due to the withdrawal of mothers from the labour market – will be reduced and the demand for highly skilled personnel will be met.

d) Socialization/education of young children

Children who attended childcare facilities are known to have an educational advantage. Childcare in facilities are said to be beneficial in socialising children, for the development of their cognitive skills and their integration, particularly into school.

e) Advantage of location

When young couples decide where to live, municipalities with attractive offers for childcare are said to have a comparative advantage of location.

To date, there is neither any research on debates accompanying the programme, nor on their effectiveness nor on underlying assumptions on gender roles, perception of family and their links to wider socio-economic developments. The official evaluation of the programme by the department of Social insurances (BSV) shows that roughly 13'400 additional places in childcare institutions were created or planned between 2003 and 2006 (Stahelin-Witt und Gmünder 2005). This amounts to a total increase of 6%, which is below expectation. The government explains this with the time limitation (3 years) of the financial help. However, 50% of the new places would not have been created without the additional financial help of the programme. The parents give work or education as the main reason to make use of the new places for their children. A further reason is the social contacts for their children in the institutions. The government report argues that the voucher system should additionally reduce the costs for parents (Stahelin-Witt und Gmünder 2005). As mentioned before, this might be at the price of lower quality.

It can be concluded that the creation of the programme shows a growing awareness of the necessity of public support of childcare facilities and of tackling growing care needs. However, childcare is low in priority at a time of federal budgets that were considered as tight. For the period 2007 to 2011 the credit for the impulse programme was cut (from 200 to 60mio. Swiss francs).

Part II Extra-familial Childcare Provision

3 General Characteristics of Extra-familial Childcare System

In Switzerland, the care of small (pre-kindergarden, -school) children is usually privately organized either in a paid or unpaid, formal or informal arrangement. An informal arrangement includes parents, relatives (usually the grandmother) or friends who look after the children (most often for free), formal arrangements are regulated services delivered by the free market or the state. In the following we focus on the latter. There are different extra-familial facilities and individuals that offer childcare. Most commonly this is a crèche (a formal day care centre for children between the age of 6 month to 6 years, for details see table below) or a childminder (individuals who offer childcare in their private homes for details see table below). Most childminders are members of associations that offer training, but also control quality. Approximately 90% to 95% of all crèches are private not public, but some of them receive subsidies. For example in the city of Zurich, 5% of all childcare facilities outside kindergarden and school are public, nearly 40% are subsidised and the rest is private (Aengenheister, Roos-Suter et al. 2008: 4f). Parents pay fees according to their income and their situation in subsidised and public facilities. In some municipalities fees of childminders, which are generally below the ones in crèches, are subsidised too.

Kindergardens and schools are both part of the education system, most often public and no fees are charged. Although not yet compulsory every child between 4 and 6 years of age has a right to a place in a public kindergarden, while attendance of 9 years of school is compulsory. Children usually start school at the age of 6 or 7, depending on the Canton of residence. A Swiss peculiarity is that kindergardens and schools generally do not have continuous days. This means that most children go home for lunch and in some Cantons schedules are irregular, which means that children sometimes go to school at 8 and on other days at 10. In consequence, children of different age in the same family come home at different times. Subsequently, one of the parents or a carer has to be present most of the morning and afternoon and has to prepare a meal at lunchtime (which is very time consuming, as pointed out in RR2). As an answer to the small number of day schools (schools with continuous days, including lunchtime and afterschool care) there are additional private or public facilities for school children during lunchtime and after school, although limited in number (after-school care clubs, see table below for details). Similar to crèches, after-school-clubs are most often private and charge fees. Some institutions are subsidised by the state. More details of the different types of extra-familial childcare provision can be taken from the table below.

Type of facility/service		Definition	Age group they cater for	Source of funding
Formal, regulated pre- or afterschool/after kindergarden care (1 and 2 are institutional, 3 individual providers)	1) Nursery/crèche (Krippe, Kindertagesstätte)	The term nursery or crèche is used in this report for the Swiss-German words Krippe/ Kindertagesstätte. These terms refer to day care centres for babies and small children. Professional carers supervise children, offer indoor and outdoor games as well as pedagogical/supporting activities and lunches.	For children aged 6 month-6 years, depending on individual kindergarden/school enrolment and Canton of residence	Most nurseries are private enterprises (approx. 90-95%), only a small number of facilities are public (run by the municipalities). Some of the private facilities are subsidized (however, cross-municipal/Cantonal differences in type and amount of subsidies can be observed). A small number of crèches receive support of churches, funds or companies. In subsidized/ public facilities parents' fees depend on their income, number of children and their situation (lone parent). Fees range from 60-100 sFr./day
	2) After-school club (Hort)	As most kindergardens/schools do not have a continuous day, extra care is offered early morning, during lunchtime, after school and during school holidays by what we will call after-school club (in Swiss German Hort). Most clubs are close to school, but not part of them They usually offer help with homework, recreational activities, catering and education.	Usually for children in the age groups 4/5 to 9 years (in some Cantons/facilities up to 14, 15 or even 16) who are in kindergarden and schools	Private (subsidised or non-subsidised) or public. Fees in public and subsidised facilities depend on income and range between 40 and 80 sFr./day.
	3) Childminder (Tagesfamilie/ Tagesmutter)	Childminders are people – usually women – who care for other parents' children (often with their own) in their private homes half days, at lunchtime or whole days. Most childminders are members of childminder's associations. These associations coordinate supply and demand, set fees, and mediate between parents and childminders if required. They also supervise quality of care and most associations offer training and certificates for childminders. However, a substantial number of childminders work informally.	All age groups	Private, although some municipalities introduced fees according to income and pay the difference to the childminders. Fees range from 3-15 sFr./hour
Formal, regulated institutional care as part of the educational system	4) Kindergarden (Kindergarten)	Most Swiss Cantons constitute every child a legal right for one or two years of kindergarden. Typically, a child is in kindergarden for 6 half days. However, currently continuous days including lunch or core time schedules (same hours	In most Cantons for children between the age of 4 and 6 (in Canton of Ticino above 3). Up to now, most kindergardens can be attended voluntarily. Currently, compulsory attendance of	Every child has the right to go to a public kindergarden where no fees are charged. Most kindergardens are public, only a small number is private.

		for all children for example 9-12 and 2-4 pm) are being discussed and have been introduced in some municipalities/Cantons. These debates and developments run parallel to the ones in the domain of schools.	two years of kindergarden is being discussed. Some Cantons such as Basel have already introduced compulsory kindergarden.	
	5) School/day school (Schule/Tagesschule)	9 years of school are compulsory. Similar to kindergarden, days are not continuous; usually children attend school for 8 or 9 half days. Some Cantons/municipalities have core hours (see kindergarden) and /or day schools. Day schools offer all day school and care. Similar to after school clubs they offer lunch, assistance with homework and recreational activities.	Usually for 7-16 year olds, but in some Cantons they start school at the age of 6 (e.g. Ticino, Geneva)	Every child has the right to go to a public school where no fees are charged. Most schools are public, only a small number is private. In contrast, day schools charge on average 8'000-12'000 sFr./year for catering and care.

Public and private childcare facilities outside kindergarden and schools (crèches, after-school clubs) are subject to the national act on foster children of 1977 (Verordnung über die Aufnahme von Pflegekindern von 1977). Crèches and after-school clubs need a license, have to be based on social pedagogical principles and their personnel needs formal education and training. The government controls institutions. Childminders are subject to the same act (especially certain care standards, protection of children etc.), although they do not need a license (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004: 19). Quality of childcare is only controlled if childminders belong to an association.²⁴

The national framework is detailed, implemented and usually also financed at municipal (in some cases at Cantonal) level. Due to this federal nature, family and education policy is fragmented and differs according to Cantons and cities. This explains the distinct differences in public services and benefits for families (see part I) and the uneven distribution of pre-kindergarden facilities between Cantons and municipalities, as will be specified below. It also explains the different school systems. For example children start school at the age of 6 in some Cantons such as Ticino or Geneva, but at 7 in Cantons like Aargovia. Currently, an initiative of some of the Swiss Cantons, called HarmoS, is strongly being debated. The initiative aims at harmonising the different educational systems of the Cantons. It demands simultaneous school terms, the same number and system of education levels, the same age at enrolment, standardised curriculum etc. In addition, it asks for the expansion of lunchtime and after school care. It is mainly the right wing People's Party that opposes the initiative.

4 Current Situation of Supply, Costs and Shortcomings

4.1 Estimation of Supply

²⁴ <http://www.kinderkrippen-online.ch>

In 2005 a total of 1337 Swiss childcare facilities (here only: crèches and after school-clubs) were counted outside the educational system. As can be seen from table 1 in the annex the number of crèches and after-school clubs varies greatly among the regions and Cantons. Whereas the region of lake of Geneva and the region of Zurich have a relatively high number of institutions, Eastern and Central Switzerland have little to offer. In numbers per 1000 children, the Canton of Geneva has the highest rate (6.64), followed by the Cantons of Basel City (5.42) and Zurich (5.18). Cross-cantonal differences are a result of the federal system of Switzerland, which was described above. Thus, the Cantons have various approaches to family policy. For example in the Canton of Ticino priority is given to educational aspects of childcare. In consequence, childcare is mainly available for children above the age of 3 (kindergarden or public crèches). The OECD study (Bühler 2004: 17f) counted only 6 private, subsidised crèches with 300 places for small children (for 1/2 to 3 or 4 year-olds) in the whole Canton. An additional 450 places can be found in private, unsubsidised crèches. Unlike the Canton of Ticino, the Canton of Zurich aims at facilitating paid employment of mothers. Children of working mothers are given priority, providing that their children visit the crèche for a minimum of five half-days per week. A third approach can be found for example in the Canton of Vaud. Reconciliation of family and work as well as gender equality are explicit political objectives. There is a big choice for children below the age of 3 and many crèches and after-school-clubs have long opening hours, some 10 or 12 hours, seven days a week and all the year round. In contrast to parents of young children living in the Canton of Vaud, parents in the Canton of Zurich, who want to work full-time, have to combine several childcare options (e.g. crèches, childminders, family) due to limited opening hours of facilities.

Some Cantons, such as the Canton of Zurich, collect more detailed data on extra-familial childcare. In 2006 there were 28,000 places in crèches, after-school-clubs, kindergardens and schools during core time in the morning (see table above for explanation), day schools and at childminder's available for the 178,000 children living in the Canton of Zurich. The supply rate²⁵ amounts to 15.7%. If one subtracts the places operating only at morning core time (i.e. between 8a.m. and 12a.m.), the supply rate is merely 9.8% (Bürgi und Littmann-Wernli 2007). A total of 34,929 children are cared for in the mentioned facilities in the Canton of Zurich. Often several children under the age of 6 or 7 (depending on the Canton) share a place as most small children are placed in facilities for 2 to 3 days. 12,461 children below the age of 7 share 7,541 places in crèches, kindergardens etc. (occupancy rate²⁶: 1.65). 21,220 children are in schools (with core time), after-school clubs or lunch care (19,555 places). 1,248 children are cared for by childminders. It is important to note, that supply varies across the municipalities: high-income and densely populated areas are better covered. Differences between urban and rural areas are particularly striking (Bürgi und Littmann-Wernli 2007).

²⁵ The supply rate shows the proportion of places in childcare facilities compared to the total number of children. The higher the supply rate, the more children can be cared for.

²⁶ The occupancy rate indicates how many children share one place. For example a rate of 1.5 means that three children share two places.

Table 2 in the annex shows the number of carers in childcare facilities (here only: crèches and after school-clubs) in each Canton per 1000 children. Again, Cantonal differences can be observed. In 2001 for example the Canton of Basel had almost 40, the Canton of Geneva approx. 32, and all the other Cantons less than 17 carers per 1000 children. More statistics are needed to estimate the total offer and characteristics of private childcare facilities such as crèches and afterschool clubs, as well as services of childminders or nannies.

4.2 Costs for Municipalities and Parents

The table above shows big differences between supply and financing of schools and kindergardens which are part of the educational system, as opposed to care services for younger children (6months to 4 or 5 years) or lunch and after school offers for older children (4 or 5 to max. 16 years old). While education is treated as universal and therefore a big number of 100% tax funded public kindergardens and schools were established (i.e. no fees), pre- and afterschool or -kindergarten care is mostly private (although sometimes subsidized) with rather high fees. Subsidies are paid by municipalities and in the frame of the three years impulse programme (see part I above) by the national government. However, after the three-year period, municipalities have to take over.

For a long time, most municipalities supported the objects, i.e. the childcare facilities. The city of Zurich for example has contracts with most facilities (in 2007 with 147 out of a total of 199 facilities: Aengenheister, Roos-Suter et al. 2008). For example they have to offer a certain number of places on specific terms. In this respect, municipalities have a say in the quality of childcare (e.g. number of carers) and other aspects, such as opening hours (Bühler 2004: 20). Other municipalities set fees for parents and cover the possible deficits of childcare facilities. Thus, a place for a child is fully or partly paid by the parents, depending on parents' income. In the first case municipalities pay the other part. Recently, as shown in part I on family policy, local and national governments increasingly change their system from financing objects to subjects (Louis und Stampfli 2008). That means, instead of childcare facilities being subsidised by municipalities, parents receive childcare vouchers (income related), which they redeem at the facility of their choice (for a critical discussion see part 2.4).

Important legislation is set on Cantonal or national level. For example, in both the object and subject-financed system, it is the Cantons, which set the income-related rates for parents. According to Bütler (2006), this system is unusual in international comparison in that the fees also depend on the paid work decisions and the care-work arrangements within families and therefore the household income). If for example both parents work the fees are higher than if only one works (see below for possible negative incentives for mothers to work. Single-income households therefore have a higher incentive to place their children in facilities. In most other countries, childcare is generally subsidised or tied to paid employment of mothers.

Parents have – in theory – a free choice of childcare facilities. In reality the choice is often constrained by several factors: unavailability of facilities in some regions (particularly in rural areas),

limited opening hours, high fees or difficulties combining different forms of care during the working day or week (Bühler 2004: 22). To give an example of the financial burden parents face, if they have middle to high incomes or cannot find a subsidised place for their child: Full costs for full-time (5 days) childcare in a crèche in the city of Zurich amount to approximately 50,000 Swiss francs for two children per year (Bütler 2006). In the entire country, full costs vary between 60-100 Swiss francs/day for crèches. After school-clubs charge 40-80 Swiss francs. To compare: childminders cost 24-100 Swiss francs (3-12 Swiss francs/hour) and nannies 240-320 Swiss francs a day (at least if hired through a childminders association or a nanny agency). If children attend day schools (compare table for further explanation), it costs an additional 8'000 to 12'000 Swiss francs for lunches and afterschool care.²⁷

Public expenditure on childcare can be illustrated with statistics of the Canton of Zurich (Bürgi und Littmann-Wernli 2007). In 2006 the Canton of Zurich spent roughly 130 mio. Swiss francs on all childcare facilities (47,570,796 Swiss francs on facilities for children below 7; 77,871,124 Swiss francs on schools and afterschool clubs; and 3,628,761 sFr. on childminders). This amounts to an average of 725 Swiss francs per child and year. However, we have to bear in mind that many facilities such as crèches are not fully subsidized. A study on the City of Berne (Fritschi, Strub et al. 2007) shows that 64% of the costs for crèches and afterschool clubs are publicly funded, whereas parents only pay 28% of the costs (sponsors, employers etc. make up the rest). However, this result has to be read carefully, as a study in the region of north-western Switzerland (Aargau, Solothurn, Basel) points out: some places or institutions are subsidised, while others are not publicly supported (Aargau und Nordwestschweiz 2007). While almost 100% of subsidised places and institutions in north-western Switzerland are occupied, most of the vacant places are not subsidised. This means that some parents pay more than others, often irrespective of their financial situation (the unequal treatment of parents in comparable situations is also shown in the study of Stutzer und Dürsteler 2005). The study in north-western Switzerland estimates that 70% of all parents cannot carry the full costs which means they have to organise the care of their children otherwise (grandmothers, childminders etc.).

4.3 Quality

The before-mentioned national act (Verordnung über die Aufnahme von Pflegekindern von 1977) regulates not only licensing and controlling of private and public childcare providers, but also includes minimal quality standards. According to the study of OECD (Bühler 2004: 21), quality of childcare facility encompasses hygiene, security, carer to children ratio, group size and educational standards. Interestingly, the question of whether the facilities meet the needs of parents, particularly with respect to their engagement in paid work, is not considered a quality criterion. Cantons and municipalities have the option to regulate quality standards in more detail. As a result, Cantonal

²⁷ [Http:\\www.kinderkrippen-online.ch](http://www.kinderkrippen-online.ch)

differences can be observed. The overarching Swiss Nurseries' Organisation (Schweizerischer Krippenverband) plays an important role in diminishing these differences and in improving quality with its sensitizing and information campaigns (Bühler 2004: 21). Childminders do not need a licence, but are also subject to this law. The "centre of competence" (Fachstelle Tagesfamilien) of Pro Juventute (a private organisation for youth issues) offers standard working contracts for childminders. In addition, it offers directions for fees and training.

4.4 Conclusion: Some Shortcomings of Current Supply

The study of Mecop/Infras (2007: 5f, 52f) identified several shortcomings in the current situation of childcare provisioning, as indicated by parents in the SAKE survey 2005. Most often the high fees for extra-familial childcare were mentioned: ca. 40% of mothers who feel restricted in their labour market participation indicated this problem. The total absence of facilities in some regions was also criticized. 30% of mothers (again those who felt restricted in their labour market participation) mentioned that they had no access to existing facilities. In addition, most mothers (54%) missed offers that are compatible with working hours, i.e. opening hours from 7 am to 6 pm. Approx. 25% mentioned the lack of care offers during school holidays. The school system, whereby children have irregular schedules and go home for lunch, further complicates reconciling work and caring duties. In conclusion, the current supply does not cover demand in quantitative and qualitative terms. The shortages and the long queues may be part of the reason why most parents engage grandmothers in childcare (on average one day a week, if they have a place in a crèche for 2 days), as will be discussed in the following part III. Some parents resort to hiring private carers on an unregulated and informal basis. However, so far we know little about the scope and characteristics of this trend and more research is needed.

5 Main Area of Research: Economic Significance of Childcare Facilities

Extrapolation of data in the study of Mecop/Infras (2007: 5, 62-65) suggests that approx. 21,000 women (in the entire country) are currently not working due to childcare restrictions. In addition, 54,000 working mothers would increase their work volume, if they found places for their children. Based on this information, Mecop/Infras estimate that this potential work volume amounts to 44.7 Mio. hours per year. This equates to 20,500 full-time jobs. Thus, the limited offer of places in childcare facilities has negative effects on the political economy, i.e. lower work volume and GDP. More precisely, they argue that the human capital of parents and particularly of mothers is not effectively used in the labour market and higher poverty rates of families can be observed.

One of the reasons for the lack of childcare facilities that is mentioned in studies is the high cost for municipalities (Bühler 2004). However, some studies demonstrate that returns are a lot higher than public investment. Müller and Bauer (2001) estimate a return of 3 to 4 Swiss francs for each invested franc. A study of the City of Berne in 2007 (Fritschi, Strub et al. 2007) shows a similar result:

in the long-term between 2.5 and 3.5 Swiss francs return for each invested franc. According to the authors of both studies, additional personnel of childcare facilities would pay direct and indirect taxes, thus increasing tax revenues. Parents would be more likely to work or work higher volumes and in consequence tax revenues and social insurance contributions would increase, parents and particularly mothers would no longer face the problem of a career break. In consequence, their wages would be higher, and again tax revenues would increase. If parents have more options to combine family and work, the poverty risk and social benefit expenditure would decrease. As children profit from visiting childcare facilities – they are usually said to be better integrated and have higher school achievements – again fewer public measures on integration are needed. Companies, and the economy as a whole, would profit from a larger choice of qualified personnel. The balance would nevertheless be negative for the City of Zurich, because a big part of the mentioned returns go to Cantons and the Confederation (as explained earlier, municipalities pay subsidies for private childcare facilities). The above-mentioned impulse programme for the creation of additional places in childcare facilities of the Confederation (see part I) alleviates some of these negative effects on municipalities. However, the programme's subsidies are only for a limited period (see part I). The Social-Democratic Party wants to abolish these time limits.

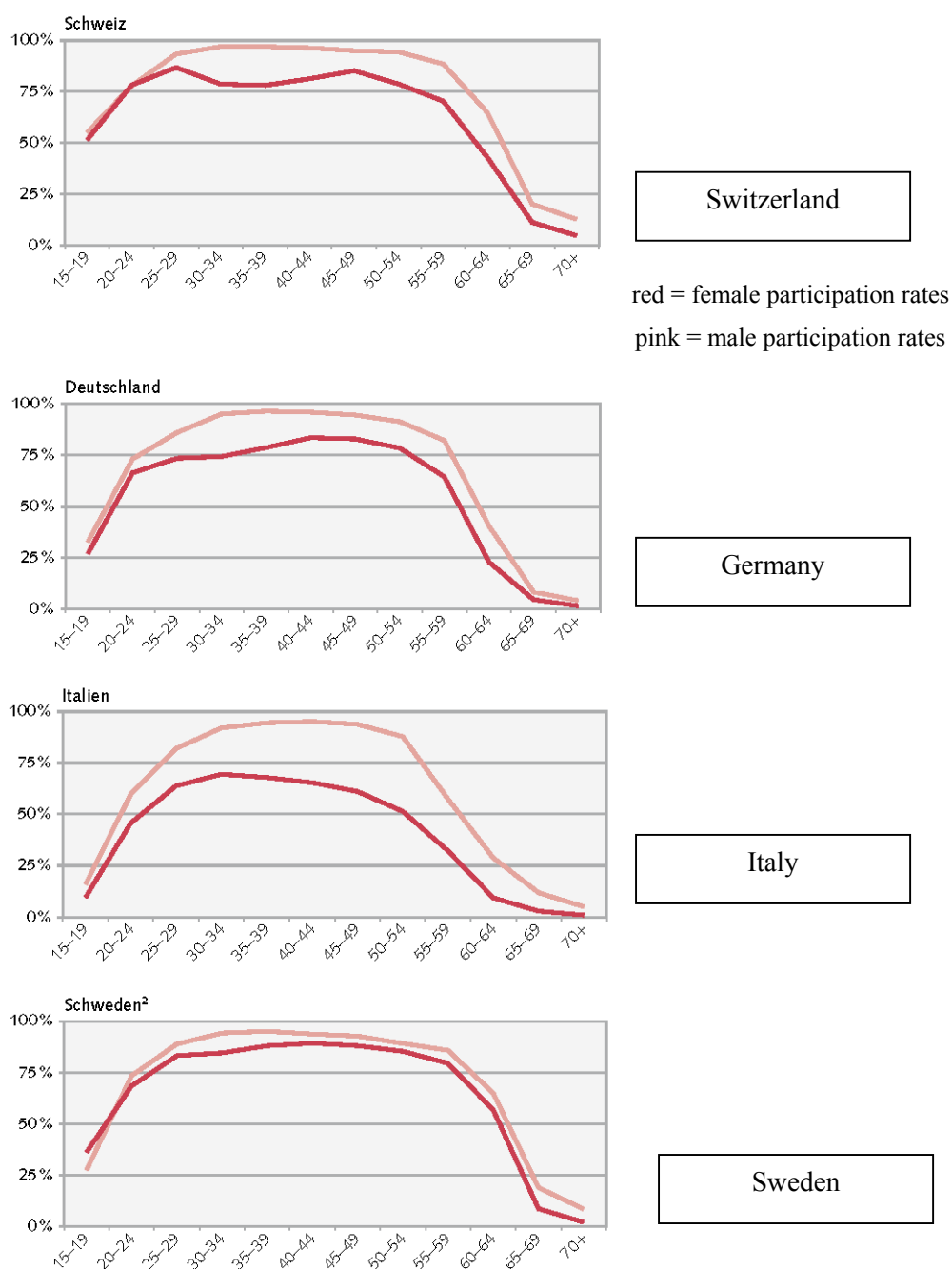
Similarly, most studies, such as the OECD study “Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life: New Zealand, Portugal and Switzerland” (Bühler 2004), therefore recommend more public expenditure on childcare facilities. The reasons indicated are: a) the advancement of the social and cognitive development of children; b) the facilitation of reconciling family and career; c) gender equality and d) from a macroeconomic perspective to counter the loss of human-capital, due to retreat of mothers from the labour market. Referring to this last point, the OECD report (Bühler 2004: 55) estimates that in the next 50 years the GDP could be raised by 15%, if the labour force participation rate as well as the work volume of women reaches that of men. The report concludes that investment in family-friendly working conditions pays off for the labour market and the economy as a whole (Bühler 2004: 56). However, the question remains whether enough jobs are available and particularly, whether those jobs would be compatible with childcare. What type of framework do these women need to work the desired amount? Finally, we assume that support of childcare facilities does not unburden households enough, given the long working hours in Switzerland and the high number of hours spent by households on housework and care of people (compare RR2). It has to be suspected that most care and housework would not be compensated by the mentioned benefits and services, even if increased.

Part III Care-Work Arrangements of Parents

6 General Characteristics of (gendered) Work and Care Biographies

As shown in RR2 and as will be summarised in this section, distribution of paid and unpaid work is highly gendered. Men and women's careers take different courses, as the graphs below illustrate (see also table 3 in the annex). The specific gendered characteristics of paid work biographies in Switzerland can be highlighted using a comparison with other European countries.

Graphs 1-4: Labour market participation rates of women and men in different European countries, according to age groups



Source: Branger 2008: 16f

As can be seen from the graphs in all the countries, the labour force activity of women is generally lower than that of men (see also detailed data in the table in the appendix). However, interesting differences among the chosen European countries can be observed: Whereas Switzerland (59,3% of women and 75,1% of men are in the labour market), Germany (51,1% of women and 66,2% of men are in the labour market) and Sweden (59,1% of women and 67,5% of men are in the labour market) have a relatively high female labour market participation rate, countries such as Italy (37,9% of women and 61,2% of men are in the labour market) have a much lower rate and a wider gender gap (Branger 2008: 34). According to Branger, the high percentage of women working part-time has to be taken into account when interpreting the data. In Switzerland, two thirds of all women (58,8%) in the labour force work part-time (Branger 2008: 18). However, as demonstrated in RR2 participation rates of women calculated in full-time equivalent are relatively (i.e. in European comparison) high (RR2, Tab. 4.2 “Employment rates by gender in headcount and full-time equivalents in Switzerland and EU-countries 2003). More research is needed to understand the ambiguous results concerning the gender gap.

What is interesting in this data are the significant differences in the development of women's and men's careers. Different patterns appear in the compared countries. In Switzerland, the female labour force participation rate varies between age groups, whereas the rate for men remains relatively stable, independent of age. From the graph above we can see that women's participation rate shows a decline or rather a break in the age group of 30-40 year olds. This can be attributed to motherhood: care of children is disproportionately done by women in this age group and they therefore reduce their volume of paid work or stop working altogether (see RR2). In Germany, women are less likely than in Switzerland to withdraw from the labour force when they have children. Women's participation rate does not decline, but rather stagnates for women in their 30s. In contrast, women's participation rate in Italy shows a steady decline after the age of 30. In Sweden, the development of women's and men's participation rates run parallel and is fairly stable throughout all age groups. Thus, the impact of having children remains small for women. We have to take into account that the data shows “collective” biographies and not individual biographies. In consequence, little can be said for example about differences within the same age group or about generational changes.

Looking at the unpaid work by gender, again significant differences can be observed. While men invest more of their time in paid work (on average 30 hours per week) than in unpaid work (on average 19 hours per week), the opposite is true for women in Switzerland. On average, women do 15 hours of paid work and 32 hours of unpaid work (Branger 2008: 26). Similar to the development of paid work in the life course of women, women's unpaid workload fluctuates very strongly, depending on their age – or, on whether they have children or not (RR2, T 2.3). In contrast, the amount of time invested in housework by men aged between 25 and 74 is remarkably constant, similar to their paid work biographies. RR2 also shows that women do significantly more housework, whilst men tend to

do even less housework when children live in their households (RR2, T 6.1). However, men take on about one third of the additional working hours that result from looking after children (RR2, T6.2).

How can gender asymmetries in distribution of paid and unpaid work and gendered care/work biographies be explained? Most studies in Switzerland emphasize the influence of labour market characteristics (e.g. gender wage gaps and long working hours, compare RR2); work-care arrangements, norms and negotiations in families; as well as the role of family policy and the availability/accessibility of childcare facilities on (women's) decision for paid and/or unpaid work. The division of work in families and its influencing factors will be discussed in more detail in the next two sections. In the third section care factors are linked to the risk of poverty, using the example of lone parents.

7 Arranging Family and Career and Explanations

The labour force survey (SAKE) in 2005 included a special module on the reconciliation of work and family life. The data includes paid work, forms of chosen childcare, reasons of choice, desired amounts of paid work and ideal childcare situations. Mecop/Infras (2007) analysed this data thoroughly. Based on this study, we will have a closer look at the division of paid and unpaid work of parents. Data on actual and desired forms of childcare will be analysed in section 8.

5.1 Division of Work in Families

As can be seen from the table below, 32.6% of mothers with children below the age of 15 and 42.4% of mothers with children below the age of 5 are not in the labour force. Thus, the above-mentioned effect of motherhood on women's labour force activity has to be differentiated, depending on the age of the children: when children grow older, many mothers resume paid work. In contrast, the age of children does not significantly influence men's careers: only 6.2% of fathers with children below the age of 15 and 5.7% of fathers with children below the age of 5 do not engage in paid work.

Tab. 4 Labour market participation of parents with children aged below 5 and aged below 15

	Parents of children aged under 15		Parents of children aged under 5	
	Mothers (N=747'000)	Fathers (N=697'000)	Mothers (N=302'000)	Fathers (N=285'000)
Not in the labour market	32.6%	6.2%	42.4%	5.7%
In the labour market	67.4%	93.8%	57.6%	94.3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Mecop/Infras 2007: 37, source: BFS 2005, SAKE

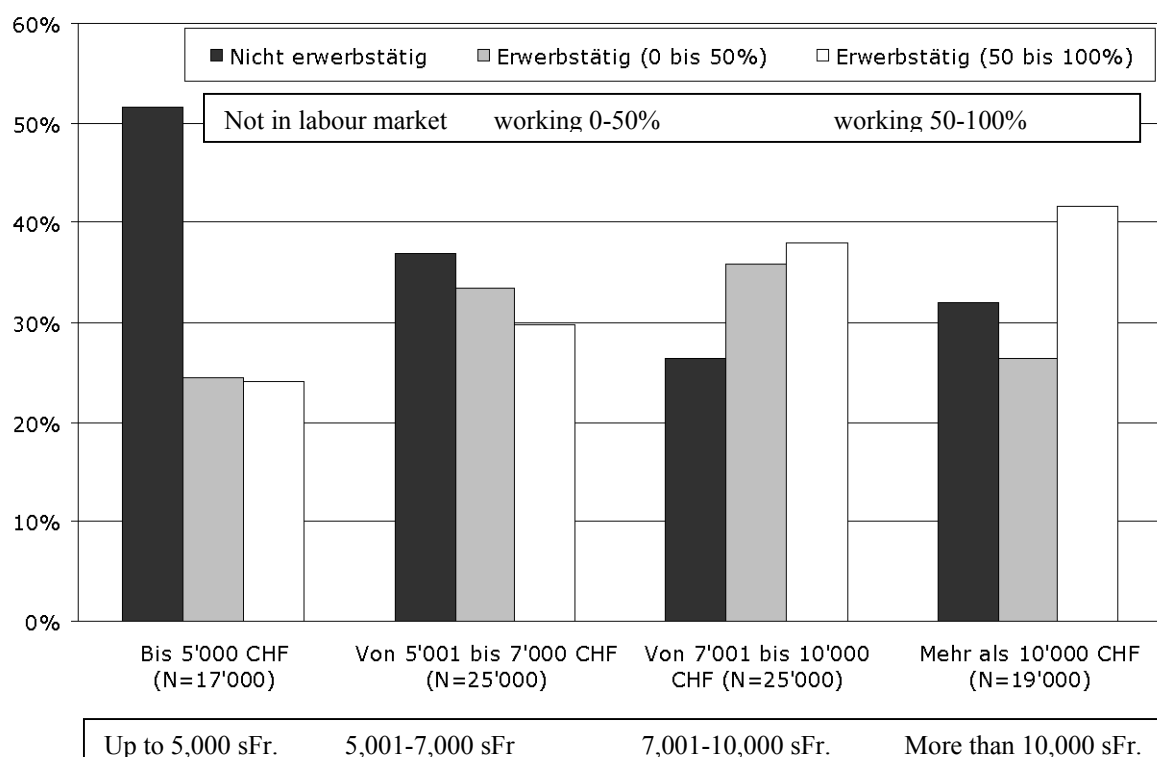
A closer look at the volume of work reveals that 90% of working fathers with children below the age of 15 work full-time (i.e. 90-100%). The opposite is true for working mothers: only 19.1% of mothers

work full-time. The majority of mothers (59.8%) in the labour market work less than half-time (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 38f).

The rate and amount of paid work of mothers however varies by region (between urban and rural areas and between the regions, defined in linguistic terms in Switzerland, as mentioned before). In rural areas 34.5% of mothers work part-time (up to half-time) and 32.1% work more than half-time or even full-time. In urban regions a larger number of mothers have higher work volumes: 38.7% work more than half-time (up to full-time) while “only” 30% work part-time (less than half-time). Mothers from the French-speaking part of Switzerland work significantly more than mothers in the German-speaking part: Almost 50% of mothers work more than half-time in the French region, compared with only 30% in the German part (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 41). Women in the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland, generally have a lower labour market participation rate than women in the German- and French-speaking parts (Losa und Origoni 2004: 16f). In addition, as demonstrated in part II of this report, the Italian-speaking region has an underdeveloped offer of care facilities for children below the age of three. However, it remains an open question, whether the low female labour market participation rate can be explained with cultural or institutional factors.

Furthermore, the amount of paid work of mothers depends on socio-economic status – measured in terms of household income. As can be seen from the diagram below, there is a significant difference between the groups. The majority of mothers with low household incomes (51.6%) are not in the labour market (see also RR2, Tab. 5.2), compared to mothers with high household incomes (above 7000 SFR.) who are more likely to work. However, if mothers in low-income families work, they tend to work full-time, due to financial need.

Tab. 5 Labour force participation of mothers with children aged below 15, according to household income



The next table gives a more detailed overview of different work-care arrangements in families with and without children. Again, the impact of motherhood and age of children on work-care arrangements is evident. Nearly every second family with children below the age of 15 has a father who works full-time and a mother who works part-time. If the youngest child is between 0 and 6 years old though, roughly 35% of families have a father with full-time employment and a mother who is not in the labour market. When children grow older, the number of mothers without paid work decreases and employed mothers have higher work-volumes (50-89%). Only in close to 10% of households with children below the age of 15 do both parents work full-time, and in 4% of households paid work is equally distributed among parents (e.g. both work 30 hours weekly). Interestingly, an equal paid work arrangement is independent of children or children's age (source: SAKE 2007)²⁸.

Tab. 6 Paid work arrangements of parents with and without children

Household types/ couple with...	Man full-time, woman not in labour market	Man full-time, woman part- time (up to 49%)	Man full-time, woman part- time 50-89%	Both full-time	Both part- time	Both not in labour market	Other arrangement
Youngest child 0-6 years	34.9%	30.6%	16.9%	8.2%	4.1%	1.2%	4.1%
Youngest child 7-14 years	24.2%	34.9%	20.1%	11.2%	3.7%	1.3%	4.6%
Youngest child 15-24 years	19.3%	26.7%	26.1%	13.9%	(3.1%)	2.9%	7.3%
Add. household member, without children	24.0%	18.6%	18.2%	18.5%	(2.7%)	8.0%	10.1%
No add. household member/children	13.8%	10.9%	18.9%	35.9%	3.8%	5.4%	11.2%
Total	22.3%	22.8%	19.5%	20.8%	3.7%	3.3%	7.6%

Source: BFS 2007 SAKE²⁹

In conclusion, the most common paid work arrangement in families with children is that fathers are employed full-time and mothers work less than 2.5 days a week (see also: Bühler 2004). Definition and division of roles is in the focus of further questions in the labour force survey (Sake 2007). 81.2% of couples with children below the age of 15 indicate that fathers carry the main responsibility for generating the household income, and that women are mainly responsible for care and housework.

²⁸ <http://www.bfs.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/20/05/blank/key/Vereinbarkeit/03.htm>

²⁹ <http://www.bfs.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/20/05/blank/key/Vereinbarkeit/03.htm>

14.2% say they share responsibility and only in 1.9% of the interviewed cases it is the father who carries the main responsibility for housework and care of children (SAKE 2007)³⁰.

Qualitative studies (e.g. Koppetsch und Burkart 1999) show that even in cases where egalitarian distribution of tasks is indicated by couples, women survey household organisation. In addition, the division of household tasks is clearly gendered. Nowadays more men go shopping, prepare meals and help washing up. All other activities are carried out more often under the direction and/or pressure of women (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 24). Household tasks done by women and those done by men are additionally divided into inside-outside, light-heavy, precise-rough, wet-dry and daily-extraordinary (Wetterer 2005). In that sense, men tend to do the gardening, cart heavy drink crates, roughly clean the kitchen and dry the dishes. Overall, women take over every-day tasks, while men do housework more sporadically and on extraordinary occasions (e.g. cooking for guests) (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 25). It is important to note, however, that men are increasingly getting involved in childcare (see RR2). However, SAKE data suggests that 20% of mothers would welcome more care engagement from their partners (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 51). It is also important to note that one third of not employed mothers would like to work and one third of employed mothers would like to increase their work volume (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 47). The most desired volume of paid work of the first group (i.e. mothers who are not employed, but wish to be employed) is ca. 24 hours per week (39.6% of this group). 26.3% would like to work ca. 16 hours a week and 10% would prefer to work one day a week. 12.4% would like to work full-time.

7.2 The Role of Changing (Gender) Norms and Roles

So far, we have noted persistence in the division of work and care along gender lines, but also important changes. As discussed in RR1 and RR2 more women than ever are gainfully employed, and men increasingly participate in childcare, although women remain disproportionately responsible for childcare and particularly for housework. How can we explain these changes and persistence? The first set of explanations in the literature focuses on changing norms regarding family. Over the past fifty years there has been an increase in divorce rates, a decline in marriages and a significant drop in fertility rates as well as an increase of non-familial households (for example couples without children, non-married couples etc.). There is a broad consensus among researchers that forms of family, meanings that individuals attribute to family as well as familial and gendered norms have been changing over the last decades (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 1). These changes imply for example that social norms regarding division of work within families (also referred to as the *petit bourgeois* family model) have become less binding, whereas individual choices have gained more importance.

The *petit bourgeois* family model emanates from the idea of a married couple (of opposite sex) that lives in the same household with at least one child (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 14f). Thus,

³⁰ <http://www.bfs.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/20/05/blank/key/Vereinbarkeit/03.htm>

children were central to marriage: people married to have children. The modern bourgeois division between the world of paid work and the private sphere shaped the traditional family structure. This came along with a gendered division of tasks: ideally the husband was the sole breadwinner who spent most of his time at work outside home, while his wife remained at home as a housewife and mother. For a long time, paid work for mothers was socially only acceptable as a second income for financial relief. As a housewife she was seen as responsible for creating a homely atmosphere in which her husband could recuperate after work. In addition, she was expected to devote herself to her children's socialization.

However, many people did or could not live according to this idealised bourgeois family model, as research from the 1970s has shown (Kontos und Walser 1979). For example, working-class families often depended on two incomes and mothers could – contrary to the norms – not exclusively devote their lives to their children. These ambiguities explain, why the gendered division of tasks was not accepted or considered ideal by all social classes (especially in a country that is strongly rural and where women in farming households must have assumed a significant share of the farm work, albeit as “family labour”). In consequence, normative constraints were being put into question, and forms and organisation of families have become more pluralized (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 16).³¹ Marriage and parenthood are no longer a given institution, but part of individual decision-making and negotiations between partners (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 17). Moreover, sexuality and reproduction are no longer seen as a unity: the aim of having children is no longer a prerequisite for sexual relationships. Love and marriage are no longer seen as a unity, meaning that marriage is no longer the only legitimate form of a love-relationship. Even marriage and parenthood are no longer seen as a unity, as it is acceptable that women and men abstain from having children or have children without being married. However, despite these changes, in Switzerland most couples marry shortly before or after having children, only 11% of children born in 2001 were from unmarried parents (Branger, Gazareth et al. 2003).³² Similarly, an egalitarian distribution of tasks has become socially acceptable and has gained some popularity among young couples (particularly before they have children), as shown above. Yet, it is not widespread among parents. The most common unpaid/paid work arrangement in families with children is that fathers work full-time and mothers no longer exclusively do housework, but also work part-time. Thus, changing gender and familial norms are not fully reflected in everyday practice of care-work arrangements, and therefore might not be held by all social classes, milieus and individuals.

³¹ The widespread sociological notion of increasingly pluralized forms and organisation of family is commonly explicitly or implicitly based on the theory of individualisation (a prominent advocate of which is Ulrich Beck). The increasing significance of individual autonomy in conjunction with decreasing normative standards is seen as characteristic of modernity (civic rights, expansion of education, modern welfare state). In this context, individualisation refers to the process of developing capabilities to make necessary biographical choices and define one's own *Lebensentwurf* (conception of life). This development does not simply increase the freedom of choice, but actually necessitates making biographical choices. These depend on the available resources, which vary among different social groups and persons (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 11f).

³² 11% of children from unmarried parents is a low rate in international comparison (see RR1).

7.3 The Role of Labour Market Factors

Another set of explanation focuses on (gendered) structures of the labour market. According to some authors (Bauer 2000; Matzner 1998), many families are not willing to do or cannot do without the husband's income. As we have seen in RR2, men still earn significantly more than women. This implies that men remain in the labour market because of gender specific advantages, while women do more unpaid care work. This division of tasks further reduces women's career opportunities; gender inequalities in the labour market as well as in families are thus reinforced.

Bauer (2000) shows that gender specific differences in incomes are relatively small for single people (5%), whereas they increase for married people with children (40%). Bauer argues that these differences cannot be explained in terms of human capital (because women with children do not have lower educational qualifications than single women). Therefore, the widening gender gaps in earnings have to be seen as a result of discriminatory practises in rewarding the human capital of mothers. Analysing different sectors of the labour market, Bauer found that sectors dominated by women (care sectors!) are characterised by higher levels of gender pay gaps. However, the lower wages of women in care sectors cannot exclusively be explained as gender discriminatory practice since men in care sectors face the same "care penalty" (although they earn more than women on average in the care sectors, they earn less than men in other sectors). So the lower wages of women have to be explained with the sectors they are in and are therefore not purely gender discriminatory. As pointed out in RR1 and RR2, there is pressure on the wages in the care sectors due to unbalanced growth, different costs, productivities and possibilities to work more "efficiently" in the different sectors (Baumol's theory). Bauer also shows that the position of women in the labour market who leave paid employment for more than four years deteriorates greatly and irrevocably and that therefore the income gap increases for this group. For men on the other hand, marriage and having children seem to enhance their labour market chances: they earn more than single men and more often have higher positions. As pointed out in RR2 it is not clear how the pay differential comes about, and it is also not clear why (particularly married) men are more successful than women in the labour market and than unmarried men. The research of Wirz (2004: 21) based on the theory of François (1998) indicates that the division of labour between men and women in households cannot be explained exclusively by the labour market situation or by the rational division of labour on the basis of existing labour market conditions. Instead, this empirical research shows that "the work effort of a husband is higher than the work effort of a single male, because having a good job not only allows him to earn a high wage but in addition improves his bargaining position within the household." (Wirz 3). Thus, the work motivation of a husband is increased by his gains from within-household trade (compare RR2). However, it could also be argued that having children increases financial pressures on men to do well in paid work. Thus, further research is needed to test these results.

7.4 The Role of Individual Orientation, Class and Milieu

Finally, a third set of explanation is based on individual orientation and attitudes as well as class differences. Steffen's research (2007) points to the importance of including educational background: she shows that care-work arrangements are significantly influenced by educational level of women and socio-economic status of their husbands/partners. Highly educated women are generally more likely to be integrated in the labour market than less educated women. This is explained with the higher investment of highly educated women into their own human capital. A high socio-economic status of husband/partner on the other hand reduces the probability of labour market integration particularly of women with an average educational level, as an additional income is not financially necessary. Women of low-educational background living in households with small incomes often have to work for financial reasons.

Other authors (Stein-Hilbers 1991) argue that men generally identify more with their career and are therefore less willing to reduce their work volume, which would lead to a career setback. The above-described differences among women are explained in terms of their different attitudes towards family and work. These studies argue that some women are more family-oriented, others more career-oriented and others focus equally on both aspects. However, as Meihöfer et al (2001: 27) criticise, these typologies are inaccurate. Meihöfer et al. point out for example that women with a double orientation can either continue work and care for children at the same time or divide both activities into phases. In addition, more recent studies indicate that caring for children has, for an increasing number of fathers, become a matter of emotional significance (Fthenakis 1999). As shown above (see also RR2), men are in fact increasingly involved in the care of children. Apparently, children and childcare has become an important realm for self-realisation. Thus, the notion of fatherhood seems to be undergoing significant changes. According to Sauter (1991 in: Meihöfer, Böhnisch et al. 2001) active fatherhood is not only a result of female pressure and employment of mothers, but also a result of confrontation with social norms and negotiations within partnerships. Also a changing conception of motherhood seems to be taking place with the increasing (part-time) involvement in paid work of mothers (Nave-Herz 1997). However, more studies are needed to investigate these new concepts of parenthood.³³

In terms of engagement in unpaid work, existing research suggests that a father's engagement depends foremost on his attitude: while family-oriented men do more, men who prioritise recreational activities are less engaged (Rosenkranz, Rost et al. 1998). Other studies (Meuser 1998) suggest generational differences (older men tend to be less involved in housework/childcare compared to younger men) or class and milieu-specific differences in self-perception and orientation (Koppetsch und Burkart 1999). In their study Koppetsch and Burkart examined division of work in conjunction

³³ Examples of ongoing studies: Schwitter, Karin. Lifeplans: http://www.gendercampus.ch/projects/graduierntenkolleg2/Lists/Projektdatenbank_extern/ViewD.aspx?ID=78, Baumgarten, Diana. Die Vater-Kind-Beziehung (father-child relationship): http://www.gendercampus.ch/projects/graduierntenkolleg2/Lists/Projektdatenbank_extern/ViewD.aspx?ID=50

with orientations among bourgeois and academic middle-class families. They identified three milieus: a traditional, a family-oriented and an individualistic milieu. According to the authors, only families in the individualistic milieu question traditional gender roles and explicitly claim gender equality. In these families household and children are perceived as a joint project. However, ideals and practice are often not congruent: despite their ideals of gender equality, in most couples it is the men who remain mainly responsible for generating income, whereas women are responsible for housework and childcare. Thus, gendered practices are reproduced. Koppetsch and Burkart characterise this practice as an “illusion of emancipation” and stress that holding the idea of an equal distribution actually hides practised inequalities. Wetterer (2005) uses the term “rhetoric modernisation” in this context. In her study she shows how professional young women systematically overestimate the housework done by their husbands or partners and construe an equal division of tasks. The interviewed women gave a different (idealised) interpretation of existing inequalities in the division of housework. As mentioned in RR2, studies, which compare time-use and qualitative interviews, show that women usually underestimate their volume of unpaid work and simultaneously overestimate their partner’s contribution. According to Wetterer, the “rhetoric of equality” is a relatively new phenomenon and pre-dominant in individualised, well-educated, urban social milieus. Thus, while traditional gender norms have lost their legitimacy, they are still effective in everyday practise: Gendered norms and division of tasks are reproduced in social practise, but concealed in speech or silenced. This makes inequality even more powerful.

When looking at class differences it is important to note that division of work is not only practised, but also perceived differently. Studies of upper-class housewives and mothers (e.g. Böhnisch 1999) highlight such differences. When they delegate housework and childcare their objective is different: delegation does not aim at enabling both partners to work, but to mark their class positioning. It demonstrates that upper-class women “do not need to clean” and it expresses the wish to engage in “meaningful” activities. Apart from cultural and prestigious activities (theatre, music or unpaid social engagement) those women are seen as responsible for managing the household and the network of the family. These activities offer social recognition. Similarly, the class-specific socialisation of children is a realm for identification.

7.5 Cultural Influences?

Finally, individual as well as classed preferences and practices have to be put into a wider geographical context. As the example of Switzerland shows, different care-work-patterns can be seen in each cultural/language region (there are three main regions: the northern German-speaking part, the south-western French-speaking part and the southern Italian-speaking part). Losa and Origoni (2004: 16f) for example explain the lower labour market participation rate of women in the Italian-speaking part with the prevailing traditional family model in this particular region. Women seem to value work less than family obligations as mothers, wives, members of the extended family etc. On the other

hand, specific conditions of the labour market in the Italian-speaking part could be a more significant reason for the lower labour market participation rates of women (e.g. smaller regional market, difficulties for re-entry after career break), as well as the clear lack of childcare facilities which could facilitate paid work engagement of women with small children. If married women, or mothers respectively, work, they tend to prefer full-time employment, unlike German-speaking married women/mothers who more often work part-time. Losa and Origoni conclude that women in the Latin-speaking parts of Switzerland seem to make a decision for paid work *or* unpaid work, while German-speaking women try to combine *both* (with a short career break and re-entry into the labour market or by reducing the amount of paid work when having children).

8 Recent Research on the Decision for Paid (or Unpaid) Work (of Women)

Steffen (Steffen 2007) criticises that most studies focus on individual and labour market factors to explain gender care-work arrangements (e.g. Buchmann, Kriesi et al. 2002). She argues that these arrangements are not only subject to individual choice, negotiations within families and effects of the labour market structure, but also a result of political and institutional conditions. The effects of these conditions, for example on organising and substituting childcare and homework, have rarely been analysed. Other studies (Bühler 2004) perceive the Swiss tax system as a main factor in shaping care-work arrangements of parents. These factors will be explored hereafter in more detail, following a brief description of how families and particularly mothers organise the care of their children.

8.1 Impact of Constraints of Organising and Substituting Childcare

SAKE data suggests that in 2005 88.9% of the interviewed parents look after their children themselves or have private, i.e. informal, childcare (this statistical category is used by Mecop and INFRAS, which includes grandparents, friends, neighbours or nannies etc.) (Mecop und INFRAS 2007. 53) No data is available, on whether the latter (informal assistance) is done on a paid basis. Interesting regional differences can be observed, as the table below illustrates. In the German-speaking part of Switzerland 60.2% of those parents using fee-based, formal childcare services place their children in crèches or day schools (some are private, some are public, see part II), 31.3% have a childminder and 8.5% make use of lunch-time or after-school offers. In the French and Italian-speaking parts of Switzerland 52.9% of families who use childcare services have a childminder to look after their children, 41.7% place their children in crèches or day schools and 5.4% use lunch-time or after-school offers. Only 3.2% of parents combine two different forms of childcare provision.

Tab. 7 Used form of childcare of parents with children aged below 15, according to language region

	German-speaking part (N=1,007,000)	Italian- and French-speaking part (N=436,000)
Private, informal care	90.1%	86.3%

(parents, relatives, neighbours, etc.)		
Crèche/day school	6.0%	5.7%
Childminder	3.1%	7.3%
Lunch-time or after-school club	0.8%	0.7%
Total	100%	100%

Mecop/Infras 2007: 54, source: BFS 2005 SAKE

If we only look at working mothers with children below the age of 5, the use of formal, fee-based childcare services is higher. Again regional differences can be seen from the table below. In addition, working mothers who make use of such childcare services live mainly in urban areas. Mothers in rural areas frequently organise the care of their children on a private, informal basis (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 57).

Tab. 8 Used form of childcare of working mothers with children aged below 5, according to language region

	German-speaking part (N=116,000)	Italian- and French-speaking part (N=58,000)
Private, informal care (parents, relatives, neighbours, etc.)	78.2%	65.3%
Crèche/daykindergarden	14.3%	15.6%
Childminder	7.5%	19.1%
Total	100%	100%

Mecop/Infras 2007: 56, source: BFS 2005 SAKE

Mecop/Infras (2007: 46) also show interesting differences in the use of childcare facilities according to household income. Children of non-working mothers with relatively low incomes are exclusively privately, i.e. informally, cared for (by their parents, grandmothers etc.). Even if mothers in this group have a paid job, they organise the care of their children on a private, most often unpaid, basis (86%) more frequently than mothers with higher incomes. The authors conclude that the costs of childcare facilities are – despite subsidies – too high for these families. Mothers with middle to high household incomes (7,000 sFr. and higher) have their children placed in childcare facilities (crèches or all-day kindergardens/schools) more often than other groups (around 15% of this group). This applies particularly to working mothers with a household income between 7,000 and 10,000 sFr. and non-working mothers with household incomes above 10,000 sFr.

There are also cantonal differences in the organisation of childcare. The study of OECD (Bühler 2004: 19) interprets the differences in the use of childcare facilities across the Cantons not only as a result of a lack of places, but also as a result of different strategies or rather socially expected strategies of parents. In the Canton of Ticino for example the few possibilities to place a child under 3

in a crèche could be a result of the norm that mothers should look after young children. Not so in the Canton of Vaud: Here, mothers are expected to remain in the labour market, even when they have young children.

Several studies show that the overall supply does not cover demand. In the city of Zurich the number of children on waiting lists for crèches and after-school-clubs equals that of already occupied places. Thus, the offer only covers close to 50% of actual demand. In this context, a study mentioned in the OECD report (Bühler 2004: 23) is interesting in that it shows the reasons why parents do not choose a childcare facility: 32% of the interviewed parents prefer to raise their children on their own, 20% have alternative solutions for the care of their children, 15% could not find a place for their child in a crèche and for 10% the costs are too high. Thus, for 25% of parents the offer of childcare facilities does not correspond with their needs. However, the study of Stebler (1999) found that the decision for paid work is not significantly influenced by the costs of childcare services. The lack of childcare places is more influential, i.e. mothers do or cannot work the preferred volume for this reason. As this study of labour market participation of mothers and the situation/choice of childcare is based on SAKE data of 1995, the results might no longer be valid 13 years on. The more recent study of Mecop/Infras (2007) also investigated the correlation of childcare options and the working decisions of parents (actually mothers) based on statistical data of 2005 (SAKE and NFP 52 study on childcare facilities). Additionally, they analysed how many women would like to work, if they could place their children in a crèche/after-school-club. The authors found a significant correlation between the current institutional framework and the decision to work. The probability that a mother works *and* has her children in a care facility (crèche/after-school-club) depends on certain variables. The higher the educational level, age and income and the more urban the environment, the more likely a working mother is to have her child in a care facility. Non-Swiss citizens also use childcare facilities more often. In addition, the lower the fees and the nearer the local childcare facilities, the more likely it is that a mother is integrated in the labour market (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 95). In contrast, having more than one child aged below 5 or several children in different age groups has a negative effect on the demand of childcare facilities *and* on the decision for paid work. According to the authors (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 96) this could be an effect of the difficulty to combine the schedules of schools and crèches. The authors show that 30% of mothers with children below the age of 15 have to limit their participation in the labour market due to care duties (ibid: 50). In this group, 41.2% are not in the labour market and 58.8% are employed. In contrast, only 7.1% of fathers indicate that their career is limited as a consequence of insufficient childcare facilities.

Extrapolation of the data suggests that approx. 21,000 women are currently not working due to childcare restrictions (MecoP und INFRAS 2007: 62). This equates to 8.8% of all non-working mothers. In addition 54,000 working mothers would like to increase their work volume. The

interviewed mothers who feel limited in their labour force activity would ideally want to work 2 to 3 days a week. Only a small minority of mothers would prefer to work full-time.

Steffen (2007) shows in her analysis of SAKE data of 2003 in relation to Cantonal family policies that class is an important factor. The aim of the study was to estimate the effect of family policy on the paid work decision of women. She shows in similarity to the studies of Mecop/Infras and Stern that the offer of childcare facilities influences a mother's paid work decision: The more places there are in childcare facilities, the more mothers work. More importantly, Steffen highlights that family policy and support of childcare facilities are influential only for certain groups of mothers: particularly middle-class mothers make their decision for paid employment dependent on the political and institutional framework. First, she uses education as an indicator of class. Highly educated mothers have an above-average integration into the labour market, independent of political and institutional conditions. Mothers of low educational background are generally less likely to participate in the labour market, but if they work, they tend to work full-time (see above). As these mothers work for financial necessity, again political and institutional frameworks have little influence on their decisions. In contrast, political and institutional frameworks greatly influence the work-care arrangements of mothers with a solid education. The labour market participation of this group is only significant in Cantons with many childcare facilities. Second, Steffen demonstrates that the income of the husband/partner has a similar effect as the educational background. Mothers who do not have to work because the household income is sufficient are more likely to make their decisions dependent on the political and institutional frameworks. Thus, family policy and institutional framework favour middle class families, while low-income households seem to be excluded by the public and private (market) childcare services.

The study of Stern et al. (2006) compares the actual situation of childcare with an ideal, hypothetical choice, using a choice experiment. It is based on a survey from 2005 with a representative sample of 599 families with children below 7 of age. They also examined whether an increase in childcare facilities would substitute private childcare and whether parents would increase their volume of work. The experiment's hypothetical fees for childcare are based on income. The comparison between actual and hypothetical choice shows that parents would generally use formal childcare more often if available (and affordable?), whereas informal, often unpaid, care would decrease from currently 87% to 45%.

The table below shows the actual and hypothetical choices of working as compared to non-working parents. Currently, working parents would reduce the private, informal childcare from 45% to 24%. The number of working parents who place their children in a crèche or at childminder's would increase from currently 55.4% to 70.2%. The percentage of parents who do not participate in the labour market and who care for their children on a private, informal basis would be reduced from 41.8% to 21.3%. The percentage of children of non-working parents in crèches would be slightly

higher in the hypothetical situation (from 2.8% to 8.4%). 14% of parents who work half-time or less and currently have private, informal childcare would change to institutional forms of childcare. 50% of the parents who work full-time or less would prefer formal over informal childcare.

Tab. 9 Actual and hypothetical form of childcare of parents with children aged below 7, according to working situation

	Not participating in labour market		Working up to half-time		Working half- to full-time	
	Actual choice	Hypothetical choice	Actual choice	Hypothetical choice	Actual choice	Hypothetical choice
Private, informal care (parents, relatives, neighbours, etc.)	41.8%	21.3%	31.6%	17.1%	12.5%	6.9%
Crèche	2.7%	12.2%	3.3%	11.4%	2.8%	6.4%
Childminder	0.1%	11.1%	2.4%	8.8%	1.7%	4.7%
Total	44.6%		37.3%		18.1%	
	100%					

Mecop/Infras 2007: 76, source: BFS 2005 SAKE

The study of Stern et al. (2006) also investigated whether parents would work more given the ideal, hypothetical childcare situation. The table below indicates that 37.9% of all parents with children aged below 7 would increase their work volume, as opposed to 62.1% who would retain the current situation. The average demand for childcare services (crèche or childminder) is 2 days per week. Stern et al. (2006) also found that Swiss nationals are generally less likely to work *and* place their children in care facilities than foreigners, given the hypothetical scenario.

Tab. 10 Impact of hypothetical choice of parents with children below 7 on work volume

Chosen, hypothetical childcare	Change of work volume?			
	Yes	In %	No	In % Actual choice Hypothetical choice
Crèche	307	54.4	514	55.6
Childminder	257	45.6	410	44.4
Total	564	100	924	100

Mecop/Infras 2007: 77, source: BFS 2005 SAKE

In conclusion, Stern et al. (2006) estimate a potential demand of 84,000 places for 170,000 children below the age of 7 (given a price of 37.50 sFr. per half a day for low income families and 50 sFr. for middle to high income families). Based on the assumption that the offer (in 2002) was 30,000 places, the authors conclude that 50,000 places for 120,000 children were missing.

8.2 Impact of Constraints of Substituting Housework

On average 13% of all households in Switzerland have support for their housework, which is narrowly defined and does not include care work (Branger, Gazareth et al. 2003: 80). One-person households in particular make use of this support (18%) and within this group it is mostly the elderly who rely on help for housework. In contrast, only 8% of family households with children below the age of 15 and 11% of single parents make use of support. In most cases specialised services (in the survey cleaning personnel is given as an example, however it is not clear, if cleaners are sent by companies, or what the proportion of au-pair agencies/girls is etc.) do housework in private homes (78%), the help of relatives amounts to 11%, that of neighbours and friends to 9%. From the data it is not clear, whether relatives, neighbours, friends etc. are paid for their support in housework. But we know, that an average household demands services for 4 hours per week, a family household for 6 hours. The average household spends 280 Swiss francs monthly on external services (one-person-households 210sFr.; family-households 360 sFr.). Employers (households) are required to pay accident insurance for their cleaners. This amounts to 100 Swiss francs a year, independent of the work volume. These costs can burden households. In this context, as studies in Basel and Geneva (ArbeiterInnen 2007; Sans-Papiers und GBI 2004) show, we have to take illegal household work into consideration, which might not appear in National Statistics. Most often it is immigrant women who work in private households, particularly in urban areas. These studies demonstrate that more and more households rely on the help of a cleaner (in some cases babysitter or carer). In the 1990s there was an exponential growth of the household economy.

8.2.2 Excursion: Working Conditions of Cleaners

Studies of the city of Basel (ArbeiterInnen 2007; Sans-Papiers und GBI 2004) point out the precarious working conditions of many cleaners. The authors estimate that only 39% of all household services are what they call “legal”, while 1,300 cleaners work “illegally” in Basel’s households. In other words, every second cleaning woman in the City of Basel is an immigrant without stay- and work permit. According to the study in Geneva (Flueckiger und Pasche 2005) 6,500 persons work in the private household sector; 5,000 without stay- and work permit. This amounts to a work volume of 9,000 full-time jobs. For the whole of Switzerland the labour union SIT (Syndicat interprofessionnel des travailleurs) estimates that approximately 50,000 “sans-papiers” (people without documents, i.e. without stay- and work permit) work in private households.³⁴ Most often they are hired a few hours a week to clean and in fewer cases to care for the elderly, and rarely for children. More research is needed to explore the kind of work immigrants are asked to do and to estimate the size of this sector compared to the regulated sector (Tschannen 2003).

In consequence, the workers are often not insured (retirement provision; health and accident insurance; unemployment insurance, maternity and sick leave etc.) and their wages are very low. The

³⁴ Information found on: <http://www.sans-papiers.ch/site/index.php?id=55>

study of Basel (ArbeiterInnen 2007) estimates an average salary of 20 Swiss Francs an hour, which without insurances is very low. The undocumented cleaners work a total of 38,800 hours a week.

To sum up, the private sector of households provides new jobs – albeit under precarious conditions – which cannot or would not be covered by the Swiss workforce. According to Flueckiger and Pasche (2005) in the Canton of Geneva private households are the fifth largest economic sector. However, most households can only substitute housework at a low price. This results in a situation of precariousness, poverty and no social and health protection for immigrant women who help to unburden Swiss working women (and men!) from the double burden.

8.3 Impact of Tax-system

As demonstrated above, the Swiss tax system favours one-income-families (see part I). In combination with the costs for childcare (crèches, after-school-clubs, day schools) it has a negative effect on the labour market participation of one of the parents, usually the mother. The OECD study (Bühler 2004: 30ff) analysed marginal tax rates on so-called “second” incomes, taking into account the costs of childcare. It is important that these costs are included as they are not or only to a certain extent tax-deductible. The analysis is based on a household, in which the “first” (full-time) income is equivalent to an average yearly wage of an employee in the industrial sector (Average Production Worker, APW). In Switzerland the APW in the year 2003 amounts to 55'085 Swiss francs (34'710 US-Dollars at the time). Three cases of second incomes were examined: a second income in the amount of one third of the first income (APW), a second income in the amount of two thirds of the APW and finally the case of equal incomes. Marginal tax rates (on the second income) were calculated for all these scenarios. A marginal tax rate indicates how many percentage points of the second income would be consumed by taxes and social security. The table below compares two big Cities in different language regions: Zurich and Lausanne (also compare RR2, Tab. 4.5 “Costs of day care of children and of homes of the aged, compared with gross-incomes 2004”).³⁵

Tab 11: Average marginal tax rate on second income in a double-income family (with an average APW-income and two children), including and excluding costs for childcare facilities in Zurich and Lausanne						
	Lausanne			Zurich		
1 st income 2 nd income	APW 1/3 of APW (100-33)	APW 2/3 of APW (100-67)	APW APW (100-100)	APW 1/3 of APW (100-33)	APW 2/3 of APW (100-67)	APW APW (100-100)
Household with a 1-year old and a 4-year old child						
PTC-costs in % of APW	8%	13%	17%	10%	17%	29%
FTC-costs in % of APW	16%	26%	35%	22%	35%	60%
AMTR, excluding costs for childcare	17%	21%	24%	17%	21%	24%
AMTR, including PTC-costs	41%	40%	41%	48%	46%	53%

³⁵ The fees include all tax deductions for childcare facilities.

AMTR, including FTC-costs	66%	60%	58%	83%	73%	84%
Household with children in school (7- and 9-year old)						
ASC-costs in % of APW	6%	10%	13%	8%	8%	8%
AMTR, excluding ASC-costs	17%	21%	24%	17%	21%	24%
AMTR, including ASC-costs	36%	36%	37%	41%	33%	32%

Bühler 2004: 31, Source: OECD

APW: Average Production Worker-Wage

PTC: Part-time care

FTC: Full-time care

ASC: Afterschool care

AMTR: Average marginal tax rate on second income

The table clearly demonstrates that a second income pays off for families with an average income, as long as childcare is informally organised and free (grandparents, neighbours etc.). When children are placed in childcare facilities that charge fees (crèches, after-school-clubs, day schools), a second income is profitable in most cases only as a part-time employment, but not as full-time employment. This is particularly the case for parents of very young children. Thus, the tax system and the fees of childcare facilities explain, according to the OECD-study (Bühler 2004), why most mothers “choose”, to work part-time as opposed to full-time. This is the only “rational” choice given the institutional setting and fiscal system. With the norm being that mothers of young children stay at home, further influences are the insufficient offer of places in childcare facilities, a lack of day schools (most children go home for lunch) as well as a difficult labour market structure (long working hours etc., compare RR2).

Bütler (2006) also shows with the example of the city of Zurich that it does not pay for mothers to work full-time (in her calculation it does not pay to work more than one or two days a week). Though her explanation is different from the OECD-study: she argues that any increase in working hours leads not only to higher marginal tax rates, but to a more than proportional rise in childcare costs (for middle to high incomes!). For more than one child, the effective total marginal tax rate, including childcare expenditures, can well exceed 100%. She explains this effect with the pricing of childcare facilities implied by the subsidy scheme in Switzerland. According to Bütler the progressive taxation has a less significant influence. For example if full-time working fathers and mothers earn middle incomes (each 60,000 to 80,000 Swiss francs net) the family has to pay full rates as subsidies do not apply for middle to high incomes. A family with two children has to pay approx. 50,000 Swiss francs for full-time childcare services per year. Bütler shows that if both partners work full-time and have the same income, it is particularly a second child that reduces the income after deduction of taxes and costs for childcare. Bütler also shows that for well-qualified women with middle incomes, the income of the partner is decisive: if the income of the man is low, a second income is worthwhile (as subsidies still apply), but after a certain amount (80,000 Swiss francs and more) a second income does

not pay off. According to Bütler negative incentives of the subsidy and tax-system can influence the work decision of mothers. The fact that particularly women with very low and very high incomes show the highest labour force rates (see above) can be interpreted as an indicator of this influence. The high number of mothers who work part-time can be seen according to Bütler as a further indicator that they consider higher work volumes as being not worthwhile. However, we suggest to include further factors: for mothers with middle incomes for example we should take into account whether they like their work and what career prospects they have. The situation of low-income mothers is slightly different as they often need to work more hours to achieve the same salary as other groups (the total amount of paid/unpaid work for low-income households is higher than for others, compare RR2). Thus, they do not only lack money, but also time. For this group, care duties can turn into a risk for poverty.

9 Care as a Risk for Poverty

Care duties can turn into a risk for poverty particularly for lone parent-households. Since the 1970s studies have investigated the situation of lone-parent-households (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 30). In Switzerland the total number of lone-parent-households has increased from 10% (of all parents-households) in 1970 to 15% in 2000 (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 11ff). For a long time, studies focused on women, as they form the bigger part of lone-parent-households. In 2000, 85% of lone-parent-households consisted of mothers and only 15% of fathers with their children. The older the children, the more fathers could be found raising on their own. Fathers who hold the main responsibility for children under the age of 7 amount to 10%, whereas they amount to 12% for children in the age group 7-18 years old, and to 20% for children over the age of 18.

Reconciliation of family and work is a bigger challenge for lone-parents than for couples: they have more financial pressure to work and therefore depend more on childcare facilities (or extra family support) and at home they are solely responsible for the care of their children and housework (compare time-use data in RR2). Not surprisingly, single or divorced mothers show the highest employment rates, compared to women with no children and married mothers. In 2004 86.1% of lone-parent-mothers were working or looking for work (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 23). As in the case of women with no children and married mothers, educational background is a decisive factor: the higher the education, the higher the employment rate (Losa und Origoni 2004: 8). Only 13.7% of lone-parent-mothers were not integrated into the labour market. However, due to challenges of reconciling family and work, the work volume of single mothers is below that of women without children, but above that of married mothers. The following table shows a comparison between the work situation of single and married mothers.

Tab. 12 comparison of work situation of single and married mothers

Work situation/employment level	Lone-parent-mothers	Mothers with partner and one child
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Not-employed	13.9%	28.7%
Part-time employed (up to 50%)	16.8%	24.0%
Part-time employed (50%-90%)	39.9%	28.3%
Full-time employed (over 90%)	24.4%	18.9%

Arnold 2007: 23, source: BFS SAKE 2004

As can be seen from the table, lone-parent mothers work more than mothers with a partner. While 86% of mothers in the first group are employed, only 71% of mothers of the second group are working (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 24). More importantly, lone mothers have higher work volumes than mothers with a partner: Twice as many lone mothers than mothers living in a couple-household work over 50%. Strikingly, lone fathers tend to work full-time: Four out of five lone fathers work full-time, even if the children are young, whereas only one in five has part-time employment or is not engaged in paid work (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 33). Thus, the above-mentioned, gendered patterns in employment – fathers work full-time and mothers part-time – can also be found among lone fathers and mothers. To date, there are no studies available to explain this difference. Possible reasons are gendered roles and expectations towards work, high fees of childcare facilities (which fathers can more easily pay, due to higher incomes), options for part-time work (mothers might have more options for part-time work than fathers), and support of family and friends (fathers might receive more support, because of the “pity”-factor) (compare Arnold und Knöpfel 2007). However, these are presumptions, which need to be scrutinized in future studies.

The average salary of lone-parents is 3,922 Swiss francs a month. How much can they afford with this money? The equivalence wage gives a rough estimate (this value indicates how much a lone parent can afford compared to the average population). The table below shows that lone parents can afford approximately half of the average population. Even compared to other parents lone parents have less money at their disposal: A couple with one child has more than double an equivalence wage than a lone parent. Even couples with more than three children have more money than lone parents. To sum up, lone-parent-households can afford much less with their income than any other types of households.

Tab. 13 equivalence wage (average)

Groups/household types	Equivalence wage
Total of Population	100%
Person living in household as a couple with 1 child	118%
Person living in household as a couple with 2 children	103%
Person living in household as a couple with 3 and more children	83%
Person living in lone-parent household with one ore more children	55%

Arnold 2007: 31, source: BFS EVE 2002, 2003, 2004

One reason for the relatively small salary of lone parents is that women – who form the biggest part of lone-parent-households – earn on average 20% less than men in comparable work situations (Arnold

und Knöpfel 2007: 32). Lone fathers earn almost double the income of lone mothers. This can be explained not only with the generally higher salary of men, but also with their full-time employment (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 33).

Another reason for the relatively small salary of lone mothers is the high costs of having children in Switzerland. These costs are higher for lone parents (mothers and fathers) than for parents living as a couple. The table below shows direct and indirect costs for a couple and for a lone-parent with one child. Direct costs include food, clothing, rent, education etc. and indirect costs arise from loss in income due to childcare and a career break (looking after children instead of pursuing additional paid work and not assuming higher positions for example due to part-time work). Unfortunately, Arnold and Knöpfel do not further explain the methodology of the calculation of indirect costs. For example it remains unclear, how these costs vary over time (when children go to school or grow up).

Tab. 14 Direct and indirect costs of having children per month

	Direct costs of having children	Indirect costs of having children	Total costs
Lone-parent, 1 child	1,800 Swiss francs	3,100 Swiss francs	4,900 Swiss francs
Married couple, 1 child	1,400 Swiss francs	2,000 Swiss francs	3,400 Swiss francs

Arnold 2007: 36, source: BSV 1998

The table shows that direct costs of having children amount to 1,400 Swiss francs for a couple and to 1,800 Swiss francs for lone-parents. The higher direct costs for lone-parents can for example be explained with the higher per capita costs of rent. Indirect costs are significantly higher for lone parents compared to parents living as a couple. Within couples the loss of income due to childcare and the career break of one partner – usually the mother – is frequently counterbalanced by the higher salaries of the fathers. Marriage and children generally lead to an increase in men's wages. In contrast, lone mothers carry the whole burden of salary loss alone. Thus, having children is a potential risk for poverty, particularly for lone mothers. Despite alimonies and social benefits lone mother's incomes remain low. Alimonies often do not cover the effective child's costs and often are not even paid: estimations assume that approximately 45,000 of the 220,000 children in lone-parent-households do not receive alimonies (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 41f). Social aid benefits (reduction in health insurance premiums, supplementary benefits, child allowances etc., see description in part I) amount to 40% of the total income of an average lone-parent (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 44). Therefore, the average gross income of a lone mother increases up to 6,959 Swiss francs, the disposable income after reduction of taxes, social insurances etc. is 5,489 Swiss francs a month (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 45). However, they can still afford less than other families. One-parent households only have three quarters of the equivalence gross income of the whole population. Though family-related aid money

and alimonies reduce differences between different household types (the equivalence gross income is higher than the equivalence salary, compare table 13 above), they are not entirely removed.

According to the labour force survey (SAKE) of 2002 lone parents are two to three times as likely to be poor as the average population (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 48). The poverty rate for lone parents amounts to 23.6%³⁶ that of the average population is 9.3%. This means that one in four lone-parent-households has an income below the poverty line. As a consequence, 2.6 persons per household are affected by poverty (given the average of 1.6 children and 1 adult per household). This amounts to a total of 100,000 poor. A big part of poor mothers (27,000) are among the working poor (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 49). The working-poor rate of lone-parents is 29% (the average working poor quota in Switzerland is 7.5%). Who is particularly prone to poverty within the group of lone parents? Most importantly, mothers are more often affected than fathers. However, differences can also be observed among mothers (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 51). Single, divorced and separated mothers are more affected by poverty than widowed mothers, because the latter receive more social benefits than the first group. Further factors are professional qualifications and age of the mother: both factors reduce the risk of being poor. In contrast, having more than one child increases the risk of poverty. As pointed out above, poverty of families, including lone-parent-households, is also a question of place of residence. Due to differences in policies among municipalities and Cantons, the disposable household income after the deduction of living costs, health insurance premiums and taxes etc. varies greatly.

Arnold and Knöpfel (2007: 57) conclude that increasing employment is the most efficient way to overcome poverty.³⁷ The OECD-study (Bühler 2004) on the other hand illustrates that additional wages do not necessarily lead to higher disposable incomes, as higher tax rates apply and costs for childcare facilities have to be considered. The OECD-study (Bühler 2004) calculated marginal tax rates for additional incomes (increase in income) for one-parent-households, as shown above for double-income households. Three levels of income were compared: one third of the APW-wage, two thirds of APW and a full APW. Again Zurich and Lausanne served as a comparison.

Tab 15: Average marginal tax rate on additional (=higher) income in a one-parent-households (with two children), including and excluding costs for childcare facilities in Zurich and Lausanne

	Lausanne			Zurich		
Income	1/3 of APW (33)	2/3 of APW (67)	APW (100)	1/3 of APW (33)	2/3 of APW (67)	APW (100)
Household with a 1-year old and a 4-year old child						

³⁶ When comparing the poverty rate (23.6%) to their rate of social aid receivers (13.4%) amongst lone parents, it can be concluded that only half of the poor households apply for social aid money (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007: 50).

³⁷ The norm of a high level of employment also influences the practice of Swiss social services. Even though the Swiss Conference for Social Benefits (Schweizerische Konferenz für Sozialhilfe SKOS) recommends social services not to pressure single mothers with children below the age of 3 to take up paid work, in practice they are expected to take up at least a paid part-time work one year after childbirth. For the unemployment insurance, childcare duties are not an acceptable reason not to look for a job (Bühler 2004: 32).

PTC-costs in % of APW	0%	1%	4%	9%	8%	9%
FTC-costs in % of APW	10%	3%	9%	18%	17%	18%
AMTR, excluding costs for childcare		11%	20%		9%	24%
AMTR, including PTC-costs		15%	33%		34%	49%
AMTR, including FTC-costs		20%	48%		61%	79%

Bühler 2004: 33, Source: OECD

APW: Average Production Worker-Wage

PTC: Part-time care

FTC: Full-time care

ASC: Afterschool care

AMTR: Average marginal tax rate on second income

The table illustrates that a higher income pays off in case of privately organised childcare (free). As opposed to married couples, lone parents are taxed with a flatter progression. Even when childcare costs are included, an additional wage is profitable. However, if full-time childcare is required, marginal tax rates increase particularly in the City of Zurich. The OECD report assumes that this could be one of the reasons for the high number of lone-parents working part-time. In contrast, in the Canton of Vaud, childcare is more highly subsidised, therefore marginal tax rates remain below the 50% mark.

Arnold and Knöpfel (2007: 74) point out class differences: an increase in income is only worthwhile up to 70,000 Swiss francs an year. If a lone-parent earns more, the costs for an additional day in a childcare facility and the higher taxes can exceed the additional gain. The hours worked by a mother to achieve a certain amount of income is also crucial: as fees in childcare facilities are charged per day, a mother with a low salary per hour is disadvantaged, as she needs to work more hours than a mother with a higher salary per hour and therefore has to place her child/ren in a facility more often.

Studies of lone-parent households often conclude with political claims, for example an expansion of subsidised childcare facilities (Arnold und Knöpfel 2007; Bühler 2004). However, this is not the only challenge: As demonstrated above, lone-parents are confronted with financial challenges and the burden of both, paid and unpaid work. Currently, demanding norms of childcare are an additional strain. The assumed ideal in which children develop best when they receive a lot of affection and “quality time”, but also individual encouragement and material goods (such as sports equipment, the “right” cloths etc.) is difficult to achieve for lone-parents (Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001: 32).

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine the specific characteristics and changes in the political and social economy of care with regard to families and childcare. To achieve this, we first analysed family policy on a national level, i.e. we illustrated the general characteristics of family policy in Switzerland (federal system with big Cantonal and municipal differences, low public expenditure targeted at families with children compared e.g. to EU countries) and then explored central claims, policies and programmes in more detail. The following three main conclusions can be drawn from the current family policy in Switzerland.

1. Family Policies reflect changing and competing notions of family and state's function

Different understandings of the term „family“ could be identified in the legislations and measures discussed in part I. On the one hand, there is a traditional understanding inherent in some policies and legislations, whereby the family is put on a level with marriage and a gendered division of tasks. On the other hand, a wider definition is used in which parent-child-relationships neither assume marriage, nor biological parenthood nor a conjoint household³⁸ (Vatter, Ledermann et al. 2004). As exemplified above, fiscal-policy is, despite of all reforms, still based on the traditional approach and the idea of the male as the breadwinner and female carer (or more recently female carer/part-time worker), whereas measures such as maternity insurance focus on individual, working mothers (but not fathers). Vatter et al. (2004) conclude their analysis by stating that there are conflicts between the different approaches and a lack of a coherent definition of family. While we agree with Vatter's analysis we suggest interpreting the mentioned inconsistencies and incoherencies as a manifestation of a change – although contested – in the prevailing perception of family and gender-relations. Whereas family policies (fiscal system, social insurances etc.) up to the 1990s were mainly based on a traditional understanding of family, the reforms and reform attempts in recent years (for example initiated reform of fiscal system or the introduction of maternity insurance) illustrate a shift to person-centred approaches and a wider definition of family. We interpret this trend as an expression of the changes in family structures since the 1960s (see RR1 and Maihofer, Böhnisch et al. 2001). In addition, policies have been informed by the growing employment rate of women (RR1) as well as by the feminist movement and their claim for gender equality. However, a wider definition of family and overcoming traditional gender roles are not advocated by all political parties, as the above-mentioned example of the debates in relation to maternity insurance showed. Furthermore, as the rejection of reforms (e.g. of maternity insurance before 2004 or of the reform of the fiscal-system etc.) illustrates, until recently a majority of Swiss citizens preferred a traditional approach to family issues. We conclude that debates on family policies do not only focus on the effectiveness of measures, but more importantly on the family model that is

³⁸ Most frequently, the household is taken as a base. For example conjointly living couples are considered as the basis for the calculation of social benefits.

considered as ideal. Thus, the inconsistencies in family policy reflect competing family models, different answers to the difficulty to reconcile family and work, as well as differing ideas about the state's function held by different public and political forces (for example traditional, neo-liberal or sociodemocratic). However, more research is needed to explore these changes and ideals and additional factors that influence family policies in-depth.

2. Family is increasingly – but not uncontested – seen as a public matter

A second trend is a shift in the prevailing perception of family from a private to a public matter. A majority of political actors (including the government) claim a more comprehensive welfare-system, which should include increases in public expenditure on measures to reconcile family with work and to ease the financial burden on families. In particular, there is an increasing demand for more support of childcare facilities. The outcomes of recent polls and plebiscites are evidence of growing acceptance of public family-related measures among Swiss citizens. We interpret this trend as an expression of growing perception of care needs: Children are increasingly seen as a financial burden to families and the challenge of reconciling family and work as well as female employment is discussed in relation to all the analysed measures. In addition, this trend can be interpreted as being informed by the feminist movement and growing gender awareness.³⁹ Despite recent efforts, public expenditure on families remains low and for example the fiscal system does not include substantial deductions of childcare costs.

3. Focus on increasing women's employment, neglect of childcare options for men

Strikingly, women and/or mothers are in the focus of most debates and measures, whereas men/fathers are rarely mentioned. Most of the measures discussed in part I aim at achieving equality between men and women by focussing on increasing women's employment rates. In contrast, an improved reconciliation of family and work for men as well as the overall working time burden caused by the high volume of paid and unpaid work of families (see RR2), is rarely addressed. For example, an improvement in labour market structures and campaigns to promote the option of part-time work for men is not a central objective in family policies and programmes. Similarly, paternity leave is rarely brought up. On the contrary, the Council of States (Ständerat) as well as the Federal Council rejected a motion brought up by a member of parliament to consider a paid paternity leave in December 2007. The argument presented was that this measure would be financially unsustainable (NZZ online, 12. November 2007 and 19. December 2007)⁴⁰. However, it must be mentioned that a five-day-paternity leave (instead of two) for government employees (in national bodies) was introduced at the beginning of 2008. Thus, gender equality in political discourses and measures is understood as full or part-time

³⁹ An increase in gender mainstreaming programmes in government bodies and sensitizing campaigns can be observed. For example “fairplay at work/fairplay at home” (<http://www.fairplay-at-home.ch/>).

⁴⁰ http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/schweiz/staenderatskommission_gegen_vaterschaftsurlaub_1.582636.html, http://www.nzz.ch/nachrichten/schweiz/staenderat_vaterschaftsurlaub_ablehnung_1.601286.html

employment of women. Public support for example of childcare facilities is considered necessary to achieve this aim. We conclude from this approach that childcare policies act on the assumption that childcare responsibilities are predominantly women's responsibilities. It remains an open question, whether these discourses and measures reflect the current care diamonds (see RR2) or, whether they in effect foster the current care diamonds.⁴¹ The policies and measures that are currently in place suggest a contradictory effect on care arrangements of families. On one hand, policies such as maternity insurance aim at enhancing women's employment rates as part of fostering gender equality. On the other hand, policies – such as the fiscal system – may have a negative effect on women's employment decision as they privilege one-income households (the traditional breadwinner-housewife-model).

The aim of part II was to examine the specific Swiss system of extra-familial childcare. From the analysis of the Swiss childcare system (pre- and afterschool facilities compared to educational institutions), from the investigation of supply, costs and shortcomings as well as from the examination of academic discourse on childcare facilities we can conclude another two points.

4. Extra-familial childcare provision: an unreliable basis for parents' care-work arrangements

For several reasons the institutional structure of childcare has to be described as an unreliable basis for parents' care-work arrangements. Due to its federal structure in family and education policy, financing, distribution and subsidy schemes of pre-kindergarden facilities are fragmented and differ according to municipalities (for example more offers in urban and less in conservative areas). It was also demonstrated in part II that overall the current supply does not cover demand in quantitative and qualitative terms. There are not enough places for children in crèches and, unlike countries such as France, most crèches (for pre-kindergarden children) in Switzerland are private with rather high fees. As there are not enough subsidised places and subsidies are rather low, the current system has only limited redistributive effects. Besides financial pressure on parents, time issues are relevant, which should be included in discussions on quality. As explained above, a Swiss peculiarity is that kindergardens and schools generally do not have continuous days. This means that most children go home for lunch and children's school schedules can differ, which requires parents to stay home or organise the care of their children privately. In addition, maternity leave, which was implemented only recently, is rather short in international comparison (16 weeks for mothers, 2 days for fathers). In consequence, there is a care gap between the time of maternity leave (16 weeks) and the minimal age that most crèches have for children (6 months). Finally, the growing competition among private providers (as a consequence of new subsidy schemes) and demands to lower costs might lead to deterioration of quality.

⁴¹ However, Travail.suisse quotes a representative, quantitative study by the daily newspaper "l'hebdo" which shows that 79% of the Swiss population demand a paternity leave of several weeks (Pressedients, Nr.12, 10.September 2007, www.travailsuisse.ch/de/system/files/PD+Vaterschaftsurlaub+2007.doc).

5. *“Human investment”, demographic change and gender equality as new paradigms*

Most studies discuss the limited offer of places in childcare facilities in terms of their negative effects on the political economy, i.e. lower work volume and GDP, as parents and particularly mothers cannot effectively use their human capital in the labour market. The studies usually conclude that more childcare facilities are needed and their public financial support would be economically beneficial. This indicates that demands for childcare support are similarly framed in most academic discourses as in public and political ones: “Human investment” (availability of qualified female workers and early learning programs for children) is one recurrent paradigm, besides demographic change (decreasing fertility rates etc.) and gender equality. Besides studying underlying norms, usefulness and implication of these paradigms, more studies are needed to answer for example the question whether enough jobs are available and particularly, whether those jobs would be compatible with childcare. What type of framework would these women need to work the desired amount? It also has to be evaluated whether support of childcare facilities do actually unburden households enough, given the long working hours in Switzerland and the high number of hours spent by households on housework (besides direct care for children! Compare also RR2). One suspects that the mentioned benefits and services, even if increased, would not cover most care and housework.

In part III we examined the different and multiple ways families and particularly women organise care and paid work in the context of the analysed family policy and extra-familial childcare services. As shown above and in RR2 the most common paid-unpaid work mix in families with children below the age of 15 is that the father works full-time and the mother part-time. Part-time means on average 2.5 days a week. The opposite gendered pattern can be found with unpaid work: women do 2/3 of the house- and care work and men 1/3. When a couple has children, men take over some care work, but do not do more housework than before. Roughly every second family in Switzerland lives by such a model. We raised the question of how these gender asymmetries in the distribution of paid and unpaid work and gendered care/work biographies – as documented and established in RR2 – could be further explained.

6. *Fathers work full-time, mothers part-time: an increasingly popular coping strategy*

We suggest interpreting the gendered care-work-model as a coping strategy in the light of the institutional and structural framework as well as a result of gender norms. Difficulties in making care arrangements arise due to the mentioned shortages of places in childcare institutions, long waiting lists and high fees. These shortages in offers and the long waiting lists may be part of the reasons why most parents engage grandmothers in childcare (on average one day a week, if they have a place in a crèche for 2 days). However, organising childcare informally is not sufficient. As the studies described in part III point out, 30% of all mothers do not work or limit their paid work because they cannot find a place

in a pre- or afterschool facility for their children. Additional reasons for mothers to limit their engagement in paid work are the fiscal system (only small deductions for childcare on tax return, „marriage penalty“, i.e. tax system favours traditional arrangements) and the labour market structure (long working hours, gender wage gap etc.). The question remains why it is mothers and not fathers who reduce their amount of work. Different factors were described in part III, the most important one seems to be that childcare is still implicitly seen as women's work – a gender norm internalised by themselves and their families as well as inherent in policy measures. In consequence it is them (and not men) who have to arrange care work with paid employment. In case of limited options for childcare, mothers (and not fathers) tend to reduce their amount of paid work. However, recent attempts in family policy aim at increasing women's paid employment rate by granting paid maternity leave, increasing expenditure on childcare facilities etc. We can conclude that the structural framework sets ambivalent incentives for mothers to work and fathers to care and still harbours gendered, unequal social positions.

7. Different strategies in childcare arrangements used by different social classes

While the structural framework is undoubtedly important, the analysis of existing data indicates important class differences in childcare arrangements as well as in care-work arrangements of parents and the meaning they attribute to care and work. For example, while parents of all social classes organise part of the care of small (pre-kindergarden, -school) children on an unpaid, informal (themselves, relatives) basis, the rate is particularly high among low-income families. In contrast, most of the 10-20% of children who attend crèches, after-school care clubs or have a childminder come from middle class families. It is especially middle class mothers with a solid education and/or mothers with a well-off husband, who make their decision to work dependent on available childcare facilities. Women from low-income households tend not to work and if they do so, they organise, as mentioned, their care informally. We have also seen that care duties can be a high risk for poverty, particularly in the case of lone mothers who often fall into the category of working poor. The different use of childcare facilities by different social classes indicates that the subsidy scheme and additional benefits are not sufficient to purchase care on the market. Thus, class differences should be studied in more detail, especially the effects of family policy on different classes.

8. New jobs for (immigrant) women in the private household sector?

We have illustrated that delegation of care and housework is very expensive in Switzerland, particularly home-based carers and cleaners. The few available studies/statistics have shown that only a small number of families can hire support, in most cases a paid cleaner. Even fewer families can afford qualified nannies. In the case of cleaners we found a few studies that indicate that only one third of the cleaning work is done with a formal contract, the rest might therefore not appear in National statistics. A growing number of households employ women on an informal basis – studies on the city

of Geneva and Basel show that the private sector of households provides new jobs for mostly immigrant women. They thereby relieve Swiss workingwomen and men (!) from their double burden. As most households can only pay little to substitute housework, immigrant women are in a vulnerable and precarious position. In conclusion, the care diamonds in Switzerland seem to be highly influenced not only by the institutional framework, but also by the intersection of class, gender and nationality. However, more research is needed to estimate the size of the private household sector: So far we know little about the scope of informal cleaners (for example Tschannen 2003) and whether parents resort to hiring private carers on an unregulated and informal basis (mostly undocumented immigrants).

9. Point for future discussion: right to spend time on care

Lastly, we raise the question why care is so time-consuming in a well-off country like Switzerland. We seem to spend more time on care as part of producing our standard of living than people in other countries. The reason might be that our demands regarding the quality of care have increased. Current debates around issues of childcare provide an indication of the change in understanding care. For example “human investment” has become a key term, which leads to increased care duties such as doing homework with children. Changing neighbourhoods in cities (fewer parks, traffic etc. makes accompanying children to school, sports clubs etc. a necessity) and changing family structures (less relatives who are available to help out with looking after children) might be additional reasons for a growing care burden. Thus, changing notions of care and larger conditions should be included in future studies. For some people a shortage of time might be more central than the financial burden of care duties. In relation to social policy, the right to spend time on care could be a future point for discussion.

Annex: Tables

Tab 1, RR3/4 children

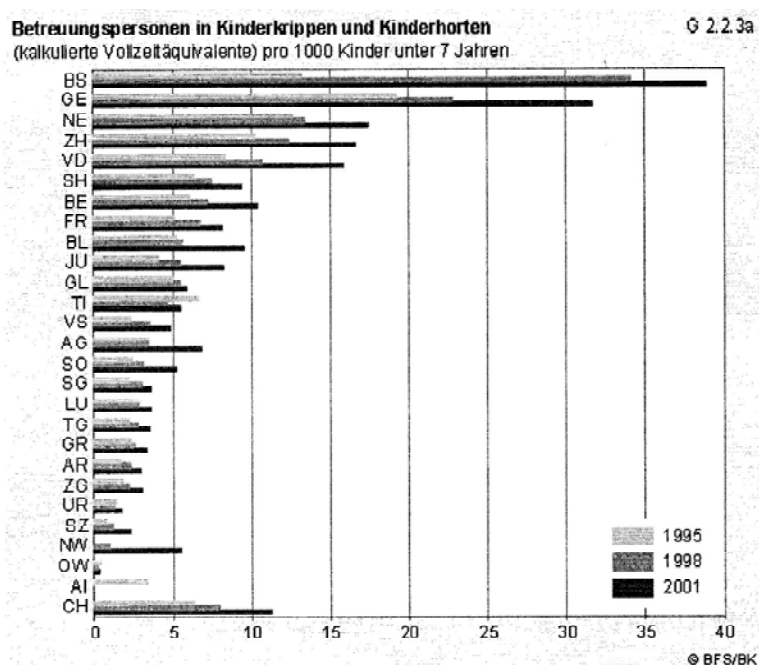
2005: childcare facilities by Cantons and per 1000 children below the age of 7

	Number of childcare institutions			Number of institutions per 1000 children		
	1985	1995	2005	1985	1995	2005
Switzerland	478	706	1337	0.93	1.19	2.58
Region of Lake Geneva	82	169	350	0.98	1.52	3.42
Canton of Geneva	31	79	216	1.29	2.42	6.64
Canton of Vaud	50	74	102	1.27	1.39	2.03
Canton of Valais	1	16	32	0.05	0.64	1.62
Region "Mittelland"	81	141	239	0.66	1.03	2.09
Canton of Berne	41	65	130	0.57	0.87	2.14
Canton of Fribourg	3	18	27	0.18	0.82	1.34
Canton of Jura	4	5	13	0.73	0.81	2.51
Canton of Neuchâtel	26	40	44	2.41	2.86	3.55
Canton of Solothurn	7	13	25	0.39	0.65	1.55
Region of Northwestern-switzerland	65	62	135	0.93	0.79	2.00
Canton of Aargau	22	25	54	0.53	0.54	1.35
Canton of Basel-Landschaft (country)	9	16	24	0.51	0.83	1.41
Canton of Basel-Stadt (city)	34	21	57	3.20	1.69	5.42
Region of Zurich	192	235	457	2.32	2.63	5.18
Eastern Switzerland	32	49	85	0.38	0.51	1.16
Canton of Appenzell AR	1	1	6	0.21	0.19	1.71
Canton of Appenzell IR	0	1	1	0	0.61	0.86
Canton of Glarus	3	3	3	0.89	0.85	1.20
Canton of Graubünden (Grisons)	3	6	11	0.21	0.38	0.91
Canton of St.Gallen (St.Gall)	11	22	34	0.30	0.53	1.03
Canton of Schaffhausen (Schaffhouse)	5	7	10	0.94	1.17	2.22
Canton of Thurgau (Thurgovia)	9	9	20	0.50	0.41	1.22
Central Switzerland	21	30	50	0.40	0.49	0.97
Canton of Lucerne	10	15	28	0.37	0.47	1.11

Canton of Nidwalden (Nidwald)	0	0	1	0	0	0.37
Canton of Obwalden (Obwald)	0	2	2	0	0.66	0.82
Canton of Schwyz	4	4	9	0.41	0.33	0.86
Canton of Uri	2	1	0	0.64	0.31	0
Canton of Zug	5	8	10	0.72	0.98	1.25
Ticino	5	20	21	0.28	0.93	1.03

Sources: Betriebszählung (BZ) und Statistik des jährlichen Bevölkerungsstandes (ESPOP)

Table 2: carers in childcare facilities (crèches, after-school-clubs) by Canton and per 1000 children aged below 7 (full-time equivalent)



Source: BFS online

Tab 3, RR3/4 children
2005: labour force participation rate (in %) by age group and gender; comparison Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and Italy

Age Groups	Switzerland		Germany		Sweden		Italy	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
15-19	51,5	55,1	27,0	32,7	36,2	27,6	9,6	16,0
20-24	78,2	77,8	66,5	73,1	68,5	73,4	45,7	59,7
25-29	86,8	93,3	73,5	86,0	83,2	88,9	63,8	82,1
30-34	78,7	97,0	74,4	95,0	84,6	94,2	69,4	92,1
35-39	78,1	97,0	78,7	96,4	88,1	95,1	67,8	94,5
40-44	81,3	96,4	83,5	95,9	89,3	93,7	65,4	95,2
45-49	85,2	95,0	82,9	94,6	88,1	92,7	61,0	93,8
50-54	78,7	94,3	78,4	91,3	85,3	89,1	51,4	87,8
55-59	70,4	88,5	64,5	82,2	79,5	85,8	32,2	57,4
60-64	42,8	64,7	22,9	40,6	56,9	65,1	9,4	28,8
65-69	11,2	20,2	4,8	8,5	8,8	19,1	2,9	11,8
70+	4,8	12,7	1,7	4,3	2,2	8,6	0,9	5,1

Sources: BFS (2008: T2), UNECE Gender Statistics Database

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