Identity, Feminism and Conflict in German social politics

a discourse analysis on gender equality and freedom of choice

Sarah Katharina Fügenschuh

Abstract

This paper's interest is the debate about the Child Care Subsidy (Betreuungsgeld). A German family policy that came into force in August 2013. The subsidy rewards parents that take care of their children themselves instead of sending them to daycare centres. The paper shall illustrate how the tedious dispute on this policy between government and opposition constituted space for discourses revealing political, societal and structural conflicts. Applying the discourse theoretical approach by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, this interpretive study will expound how a debate on family policy evolved into a discussion on gender equality and freedom of choice. Other conflict areas will be uncovered such as the towing process of expanding nursery centres in Germany and structural restraints that impede political reforms, setting the ground for a strong path dependency. The paper will elaborate discursive structures, positions and identities by consulting qualitative data such as parliamentary protocols, official party statements and online articles. Moreover it will bespeak what this debate holds for the feminist identity and the implementation of gender equality in Germany by referring to Mouffe's concept of radical democracy and Esping-Andersen's concept of women friendly politics.

Key words: Discourse-analysis, Gender-equality, Identity-formation, Radical Democracy, Post-Structuralism,
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1   Introduction

Social equity has been a major concern of German politics since its constitution came into force in 1949. One aspect that shaped the constitution was the division of Germany into West and East. As a result the constitution was called 'basic law', being regarded a preliminary law that was supposed to be adjusted once the reunification was realized. This made the constitution dynamic and adjustable without weakening its self-assertion. One focal point is the protection of the citizen and their dependants. A central article is article 6.1. that precisely puts marriage and family under state protection.[1]

These days, the notion of marriage as inseparable from family has increasingly been criticized. Critics suggest that the constitution should be adjusted to current living situations in Germany, focusing on family and children rather than on marriage as an institution (Berghahn, 2011: 44). Another point of critic addresses the economic dependence of women the constitutional protection of marriage results in. By generating fiscal advantages for married couples and measures like the income splitting (Ehegattensplitting) or free health insurance for the non-working spouse, the state creates financial incentives for married women not to work (Allmendinger, 2011: 21). This however consolidates the concept of the single-bread-winner-model.[2] In the light of expanding and changing family models and especially of an indisputable old-age poverty risk for women in Germany these policies have become increasingly questionable and there have been attempts to change the constitution towards a broader interpretation of article 6.1 shifting away from a focus on marriage enabeling reforms in the realm of social and family politics (Berghahn, 2011: 22).

With an increasing number of single households, single parents, less marriages, more divorces and a tremendous change in the working environment, the laws and practices deriving from the constitution need to be revised. Current social politics have to be evaluated and, where necessary, reformed. However these evaluations and reforms seem to be hampered by a strong culture of path dependency (Mikfeld and Turowsky, 2013: 4)
The paper at hand shall focus on the debate on modern family politics that resulted from the societal changes, stated above and peaked in a debate about a policy, the so called Child Care Subsidy.

A special interest shall lie on the situation of women since family politics are affecting women in a specific way. Family politics are also a question of gender politics and consequently of feminist interest. The paper shall therefore also shed

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[1] http://dejure.org/gesetze/GG/6.html, (08.08.2014).
[2] www.bpb.de/politik/innenpolitik/arbeitsmarktpolitik/55097/ernährermodell, (28.03.2014).

light on the feminist identity and an interpretation of gender equality and freedom of choice within this discussion.

1.1 Research Question

Having laid out my motives for this study my research interest can be formulated as follows:

"How does the debate on the Child Care Subsidy reveal discursive structures that shape the subjective understanding of gender equality and freedom of choice in relation to party identities?"
In line with this question the paper will cover the following sub-questions:

Sub-question I:
"How is the Feminist Identity challenged in that discursive battle?"

Sub-question II:
"How are 'women friendly politics' positioned in the discursive space?"

1.2 Background

As stated the motivation for this paper is the newly implemented, controversially debated, Child Care Subsidy (in the following CCS). This section will introduce the CCS as a social policy. It shall also give some information about its' background, operationalization and dominant points of criticism.

Germany has an encompassing welfare state, deriving its funding from a social insurance system that is grounded on contributions of the working citizen. This system is based on a social contract and the principle of solidarity. Yet the demographic change is challenging this system. Consequently the government has decided to revise social policy structures. One step of this revision was to conduct a critical study on family politics in 2008.[3] The study was commissioned by the ministry for family affairs and set up as a holistic long term study also asking for parents' suggestions and preferences concerning labour politics or child care facilities. The holistic approach to problem detecting shows an awareness from the governmental side and independent experts as press reports anticipated sweeping reforms when the study was published in 2013. However its execution was rather inconsistent and hesitant.

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[3]http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/familie/2013-02/familienpolitik-leistungen-sinn-und-unsinn, (25.04.2014).

Implementing the findings of the study has been criticised for several reasons.

One point of critique was maintaining the critical income splitting which eventually promotes the out dated single-bread-winner-model due to a high tax burden for two individual incomes compared to only one taxed income (Oschmiansky, 2011: 4)

Another criticized reaction to the study was raising child allowances. Investing in child care facilities instead was the most popular counter suggestion As the study revealed, the majority of parents wished for better possibilities to combine work and family life hence flexible work models and more full-day-child-care services was what many parents de facto urged for. The assumption allowances might create an incentive to have children and increase the birth rate had already been proven wrong by the carried out study.[4] Monetary aspects did not significantly pilot the desire to have children.

1.2.1   The Child Care Subsidy

One specific action, responding to the survey, has caused immense criticism amongst politicians and the public.
The so called Child Care Subsidy. The CCS was once initiated by the Christian Social Union (CSU), the Bavarian sister party of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and had been wandering around within political debate since 2006.

It's core is to give financial support to parents of infants between the age of one and three years, if they take care of their children at home instead of sending them to a nursery centre. After several years of fierce debate, the CSU had fought its proposal through and after introducing the policy as a draft law in November 2012, the CCS had come into force in August 2013 despite a widespread dissent amongst all parliamentary parties and the CDU itself.[5]

Applicants were entitled to get 100 Euro monthly, since August 2014 150 Euros. Parents can receive the subsidy for 22 months after their claims to parental allowances have expired. Moreover the CCS can be added to unemployment benefits.

Critics say that the subsidy is too little to be sustainably invested in early childhood education programmes for instance. Nonetheless, for a family with a low income, the subsidy can serve as an additional income and create incentives for the parent, in most cases the mother, to stay at home instead of returning to work or seek employment.

The subsidy has therefore been accused for being an out-dated policy, slowing down the economic independence of women and holding on to the fading picture

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[4]http://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/familie/2013-02/familienpolitik-leistungen-sinn-und-unsinn, (25.04.2014).
[5]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-politiker-fordern-abschaffung-a-983161.html, (30.07.2014).

of housewifely existence. This accusation gave the Child Care Subsidy the opprobrious name 'Herdprämie', literally meaning 'stove bonus'.

To add an educational component to the subsidy the liberal coalition partner of the CDU/CSU, the FDP, suggested the possibility of 'education savings' (Bildungssparen). Parents should have the option to save the subsidy money for upcoming educational offerings. In this case the subsidy would not be paid to the parents immediately but redeemed when making use of these offerings. Critics called this naïve since there is often a correlation between low-pay and low-education, meaning children with this background will need public education the most but are not likely to receive it if their parents are acutely in need of financial support.

1.2.2 Key Points of Criticism

Some points of critique have already been mentioned. I now want to introduce some of the most frequently debated criticism concerning the CCS.

From an integration politics aspect it had been expressed that the social and educational chances of children born in migrant families, where German is not the spoken language, could be negatively affected. These children, critics say, should get into contact with the German language as soon as possible in order to establish good verbal abilities and socialize with other German-speaking children to avoid verbal disadvantages in their future.[6]

From an educational perspective critics pointed out that the subsidy might be especially attractive for families with a low income.[7] A low income can result from several preconditions however two likely reasons can be unemployment or low education. If poverty and low skills correlate with a precarious social environment the subsidy could foster a situation where children were to spend more time in an environment detached from early-childhood education compared to children attending a day care facility. Another problem, closely related to this issue, is the plausibility of children being exposed to violence or drug or alcohol abuse for example. These are very specific cases but have to be taken into consideration nevertheless.

Furthermore from a socio-economic standpoint critics state that the subsidy stands in contrast to the official governmental initiative to encourage female gain employment and women's return to work after childbirth.
Albeit the criticism, the CSU stated that the subsidy's purpose is to enhance ethical equality between working parents and those who stay at home.

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[6]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-politiker-fordern-abschaffung-a-983161.html, (30.07.2014).
[7]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-politiker-fordern-abschaffung-a-983161.html, (30.07.2014).

1.2.3 First Developments after Implementation:

After lengthy proceedings the CCS had come into force in August 2013. As first figures, published in February 2014, revealed applications dropped in slowly. In fact only a fractional part of the estimated costs had been needed so far.[8] The first official figures provided by Detastis, the Federal Bureau of Statistics, illustrated that most applicants for the subsidy came from the CSU-heartland Bavaria and the neighbouring province Baden-Wuerttemberg.[9] Applicants from other provinces, especially from the former German Democratic Republic were rare. Critical voices feel backed up by these results. It appears to be the southern, catholic provinces, where conservative concepts as the "male breadwinner-model" are still profoundly rooted within society, are using the subsidy. In total, less than a fourth of the entitled parents in Germany has applied for the subsidy of whom 95% were mothers and 5% fathers (cf. www.detastis.de). This supports the critics' argument of promoting gender clichés.

1.3   Digression: Gender-equality and Freedom of Choice:

As these two expressions will play a vital part in this study an interpretation of these terms will be reasonable to expound the meaning they take in the debate.

Female emancipation and gender equality in Germany had very much been linked to economical factors and less to aspects of citizenship (Gerhard, 1997: 172). Improving women's chances on the labour market and increasing female workforce have therefore been major concerns of German gender-equality politics. It was hence the SPD/Bündnis '90 Die Grünen- government in the 1998, that focused on freedom of choice as a crucial constituent to boost gender-equality (Gerhard, 1997: 173).

The term freedom of choice appears halting in the context of gender equality and labour politics, yet what it is geared towards, is the possibility of both, men and women to choose whether they want to stay at home with their children or to return to work. This choice shall be made independently from gender or financial for instance tax related considerations (Allmendinger, 2009: 13).

Freedom of choice was regarded to establish gender-equality by uncoupling the strict ideological mother-child connection, implying that the mother was naturally the best carer for her child and consequently devalorising fathers as attachment figures.

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[8]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-anstieg-bei-der-herdpraemie-a-958416.html, (13.03.2014).
[9]https://www.destatis.de/DE/PresseService/Presse/Pressemitteilungen/2014/03/PD14_095_229.html;jsessionid, (09.8.2014).

Secondly it should enforce policies to even out financial losses that parental leave is connected to.

Implementing freedom of choice has been highly debated since the last 20 years and all relevant political parties have put it on their agenda, however there are many different ways to interpret this term.

2   Theory and Literature Review

The following section will set the theoretical ground for the analysis. Epistemological considerations and a look into previous research shall explain motives, approaches and further insightful concepts.

2.1   Theoretical approach

A central matter of this study is the discourse production on the Child Care Subsidy. Scrutinizing a process like discourse production means that a special focus lies on linguistic structures and the production of meaning (Wagenaar, 2011:110).

Wagenaar describes the conceptualization of discourses as a tool that "(...) offers a range of new insights of key issues in political thought, such as power, freedom, governance, state and public policy.", (Wagenaar, 2011:111). In the post-structuralist conceptualization of discourse by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, a discourse is a symbolic entity that consists of contrasts and opposites and loosely defined agents that deal with the challenges of every day reality (ibid.). Furthermore the post-structural discourse draws attention to the effects of social practises on both the individual and the society as such (ibid.). These epistemological features appear sensible when carrying out a study interested in identity formation, the production of meaning and particular political rationality.

2.2   Discourse Theory in Interpretive Studies

Political theory "built to fit the facts", is not helping to comprehend current political and social phenomena (Pateman, 2003: 43). Nonetheless discourse analysis has only recently become a valued approach in post structural policy analysis (Wagenaar, 2007: 138).
I have chosen to conduct this study using several post-structural concepts. First of all he discourse theory by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, focusing on Mouffe's anti-essentialist approach to conflictive democratic structures (Nonhoff, 2007: 18). Their approach also connects to Neo-Marxist philosophy which corresponds to the economic aspect that is closely related to gender-equality issues.

2.2.1 Discourse Theory by Laclau/Mouffe

Laclau/Mouffe claim that instability and contingency are the key components of the social (Wagenaar, 2011: 138). This reasoning illustrates their dynamic understanding of politics and their analytical tool: language (Wagenaar, 2011: 139). Moreover societal values are always defined by their difference to other values. Political identities are distinguishing themselves from one another by difference (Wagenaar, 2011: 141).

Taking Laclau/Mouffe's approach means to continue their stream of thought in the new social within the concept of hegemony and its obstacles (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 192). The social has to be understood as unsutured and open, hence essentialism needs to be rejected in order to use hegemony as a tool for political analysis.

2.3 Previous Research

The question of gender equality, gender main-streaming and related issues has been a popular subject of research. Here I will only refer to a few.

Gøsta Esping Andersen for instance has in several papers referred on how the modern welfare state has to react to the situation of women. By examining and comparing quantitative data, depicting female employment, the provision of child care and other significant variables, he evaluated current welfare politics and drew conclusions how states could improve both, women's and the state's welfare. Esping-Andersen's approach focuses on economic aspects such as tackling old age poverty, the horizontal segregation of employment between men and women, meaning that women are over represented in certain professions which can make them vulnerable in times of economic crisis (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 11). Moreover he elaborates the correlation between high rates of employment and a high birth rate (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 71). What he does not consider are qualitative data or individual identities as such.

While Esping-Andersen's approach was operating on an international level, Jutta Allmendinger has conducted an encompassing study[10] on young women in Germany concerning their plans and expectations in career interests and personal matters. Her approach includes many subjective opinions which she evaluated with qualitative and quantitative methods. Still her study cannot lay out how specific variables such as attitudes or backgrounds eventually influence the process of identity formation. Another very intriguing essay was published by Sabine Berghahn in 2011. In "Der Ritt auf der Schnecke (literally: Riding on a snail), she elaborates institutional and normative developments that affected the

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[10]Allmendinger, Jutta: Frauen auf dem Sprung – wie junge Frauen heute leben wollen;2009, bpb, Bonn.

process of gender equality in Germany (Berghahn, 2011, gender-politik-online.de). Her paper however does merely focus on constitutional and civil law. Even if she depicts the social environment and gives evidence for prevailing patriarchal features, at least within German law, her findings provide little material for post structural studies. Mouffe by contrast refers to both, the question of identity and feminism in numerous texts. Still most of her examples are neither very current nor precise. What Mouffe's concept is also lacking is a conclusive illustration of both the reciprocity and the exclusion of discursive subjects (Wöhl, 2007: 155).

2.3.1 Preceding Assumptions for Shaping Discourses

Post-structuralism's main argument is that history and culture condition the study of underlying structures and that both are subject to biases and misinterpretations.

A post-structuralist approach argues in order to understand a debate, a statement or the like, it is necessary to study both the debate itself and the systems of knowledge that produced the debate. To do the latter I will deploy two assumptions to illustrate were a plausible origin for conflict may exist.

Assumption 1: This assumption is situated in a post-material setting, referring to values like motherhood, child care and family. A strong mother image that has a long societal and cultural history ('Muttermythos') constitutes the discourse on childcare and working mothers. It idealizes the image of the white, married, well educated middle class mother as the best contact and caretaker for an infant. This conviction creates a specific understanding of how the child's well-being is best secured. It also enters the sphere of female employment as there are debates whether the occupation of the mother has a negative effect on a child's development

The first assumption already bears an economical component which will be enforced in the second assumption that connects economic aspects to female occupation, female economic independence and a withdrawal of traditional gender stereotypes.

Assumption 2: This assumption is located both in a post-material but also a post industrial setting. On the one hand, emancipatory processes and the emergence of the service economy have contributed to a significant rise in female employment (Esping-Andersen, 2002 : 68). On the other hand women in Germany are still over represented in unpaid work and precarious work relations (Allmendinger, 2011: 11). Due to a large number of women still working in unpaid positions, women contribute less to the gross domestic product than men and the assumption goes that feminist objectives, like gender main-streaming, are seen as 'women's affairs' and hence less substantial (Esping -Andersen, 2002: 69) which in return, weakens their position in political debates.

2.4 Theoretical Concepts for this Study

I now want to briefly illustrate how this discourse analysis shall be put into relation with two democratic feminist concepts.

2.4.1 Gøsta Esping-Andersen and the Concept of 'Women Friendly Politics'

In "Why we need a new welfare state" (2002), Esping-Andersen elaborates a claim for a new gender contract. Policies should focus more on men's behaviour than on that of women (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 70). Meaning women should not be encouraged to take on a masculine life style in order to avoid economic cuts but men should be enabled to do the opposite without having to fear sever trade-offs (ibid.).

Esping-Andersen brings up the term 'women friendly politics' and explains that the current gender equality debate is in fact a debate on gender equity (cf. Esping_Andersen, 2002: 70). What policies try to achieve is to diminish trade-offs for women in order to enable them to combine work and family. It additionally means that gender related inequalities like the gender-wage gap – inequality in payments related to gender - and gender-time-gap – discrepancies in the work volume of men and women - should be diminished (ibid).

Two findings of Esping-Andersen's work are important for the paper at hand: first he observes a general 'masculinization' of women's life circles. This means that women spend more time on getting an education, pursuing a career, choose to stay unmarried and post pone child birth. What he stresses is that the majority of women still wants both, a career and a family. The often assumed divide between the 'career woman' and the woman focusing on family only is statistically not proven and therefore misleading (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 72). Esping-Andersen is no post structuralist yet his essay clarifies that politics is working with anticipations and constructs that need revision.

His second finding concerns the situation of women in Germany. Compared to other European countries and the US Esping-Andersen reveals that factors like 'marriage' and 'motherhood' do have a significant impact on women's employment and financial situation. Child care for infants plays a vital part in realizing gender equity. For instance in Germany, the guaranteed day care for children under the age of 3 covered 3% in 1999, while Denmark guaranteed 48% and Sweden 29% (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 74). Additionally 63% of German mothers with two children or more were outside the labour force compared to only 29% of Danish mothers (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 78). A striking result from these findings is that the estimated work-years lost over the life course for an average German woman sums up to 8 to 10 years while the average Swedish woman faces a loss of only one year (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 79).

This has a tremendous impact on women's pensions and is one reason for the increased old age poverty risk for women in Germany. Esping-Andersen therefore claims that women friendly politics have to be mother friendly politics too, providing affordable and expansive child care. However he also warns that mother friendly politics should not be realized establishing gender segregated employment where women are over represented in professions, for instance the caring sector, which offer limited chances to improve their financial standing (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 74; 88).

2.4.2 Chantal Mouffe and the Concept of Radical Democracy

The second concept I will refer to deals with the institutional setting in which discourses and identities are located. It is the concept of radical democracy that both Laclau and Mouffe have elaborated to illustrate the ontological environment of political conflict, identity formation and discursive battles.

Laclau and Mouffe consider current democracies as liberal, pluralistic democracies (Mouffe, 2004: 42). Mouffe criticises the current understanding of a functioning democracy for being grounded on the notion of rationality, individuality and universality (ibid.). Thus political actors are seen as rational individuals pursuing their own individual interests, at most restricted by morals (Mouffe, 2004: 42). According to Mouffe this understanding does neither acknowledge the presence of antagonisms, nor aim at reaching consensus within an environment of conflict and diversity, but institutionalizes and cements differences between actors (Mouffe, 2004: 42).

Mouffe claims that every act of consensus is based on an act of exclusion and a universally rational consensus is hence impossible to achieve (Mouffe, 2005: 11). Only by acknowledging the antagonisms within the political, a choice between conflicting alternatives can be made and a democratic structure can be sustained (Mouffe, 2005: 10). Hence in a radical democracy, there has to be space for dissent. Conflictive values and interests should be expressed in order to appreciate various political identities (Mouffe, 2004: 46). This concept shall underlie my following analysis of the conflictive space in which the different actors of the debate were articulating their standpoints. Radical democracy is no attempt to overthrow democratic structures but as a shift to more direct democratic structures, promoting an atmosphere of debate and democratic dynamics. Mouffe's central idea of a radical democracy is accepting antagonisms-conflicts between enemies and turning them into agonisms- conflicts between adversaries (Mouffe, 2004: 45).

2.5   Conflict and Contingency

In pluralist democracies, social entities are always dealing with a construct of 'we' which can only exist by the demarcation of 'they'. Only by accepting and allowing conflicts, the individual has the chance to form an identity, locate itself and opt for an alternative. Consensus in the reading of Mouffe is always a conflictive consensus which is based on manifold interpretations and opinions. This secures political dynamics and democratic structures as it allows political diversity (Mouffe, 2004: 46-47).

2.5.1   The Agonist Pluralism in Radical Democracy

One significant motive in Mouffe's theoretical approach is converting antagonism into applicable agonism in politics.

Not every we/they-constellation is an antagonistic relation. Still every time when 'they' puts the existence of 'we' into question the relation can turn into a hostile antagonistic one (Mouffe, 2005: 15). Mouffe suggests to include conflicts and antagonisms rather than to deny and hush them up.

In order to do so antagonisms and affective behaviour have to be regarded as valid dimensions of policy making. Mouffe states that confrontation is the very reason for the existence of democracy. "(...) In a pluralist liberal democratic society does not deny the existence of conflicts but provides the institutions allowing them to be expressed in an adversarial form.", (Mouffe, 2005: 30). Mouffe therefore suggests a model of democracy in which clashing political positions are legitimate. An antagonism is constructed between two poles. The one representing those who want to preserve the traditional values and the one representing their adversaries. (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 170).

Referring to the topic of this study, the debate circulating around questions of freedom of choice and gender-equality, can in fact be labelled as a conflict between 'right' or conservative positions and 'left', for instance feminist standpoints. Mouffe argues that ignoring the ongoing left/right divide in politics will not contribute to efficient policy making or a pacified society. In the current example, increasing the gap between conservative and feminist values could be a result and severely hamper solution oriented policy processes.

2.6   Agonist Pluralism, Discourse and Identity

How does this understanding influence discourse analysis? An analysis of discourses has to bear the precarious and unstable identity-formations and subject-

positions within discourses in mind. The precarious feature of identity results from identity being shaped in two interacting spheres – the discursive sphere by taking position and the political sphere, where identity is characterized by actions (Wöhl, 2007: 141). Mouffe describes the intricacy of identity as follows: "(...) Consequently, no identity is ever definitely established, there always being a certain degree of openness and ambiguity in the way the different subject positions are articulated.", (Mouffe, 1993: 12).

2.7 Identity formation in Discourses

Within radical democracy identity formation is not made impossible but very unstable (Bruel, 2007: 199; 201). Laclau and Mouffe regard identities as never permanently fixed entities but as continually longing for completing the identity formation process (Bruel, 2007: 200). This reasoning supports anti-essentialist thinking and fights the idea that only a fixed and coherent identity enables rational access to the world.

A coherent identity is not a paramount for political action taking and contingency and ambiguity of the subject have to be included in identity studies. Each subject is depending on social relations and self-image placement. Moreover are unconscious emotive and affective components significant for establishing one's own identity (Bruel, 2007: 197). While this applies to identity formation in general, I will now elaborate the notion of the feminist identity and anti-essentialist standpoints on feminist identity. Both aspects are crucial for the understanding of Mouffe's discourse theoretical approach and the upcoming discourse analysis where subject positioning within a context of feminist politics will be scrutinized.

2.8 The Feminist Identity

Feminism as such is a heterogeneous term and concept. The definitions range from a radical feminism, to a liberal feminism of difference to a Marxist feminism to name only a few. Resulting from these different varieties, there is a plurality of discursive forms of constructing an antagonism on the basis of the different modes of women's subordination (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 168).

This factionalism amongst feminists has started to crack up the ideal of a universal feminism.

Scholars like Judith Butler, Dorothy E. Smith, or Diana Fuss have begun to de-essentialize the woman in general and feminism in particular. (Lloyd, 2005:18). The woman as a subject is produced in multiple ways. Even sexual difference can be constructed by laws, the family, social policies, or cultural history (Lloyd, 2005: 19).

2.8.1 Mouffe and the Question of Feminism

Chantal Mouffe has put this reading of Butler and others into relation with her own political theorem and concludes that the social category 'woman' is always put into a relation that makes her inferior or subordinate to the social category 'man'. She observes an overall subordination of women in multiple contexts of society and hence the task of feminism is to "struggle against the multiple forms in which the category "woman" is constructed in subordination" (Mouffe, 2005: 19). When dealing with feminist values, politics and identity Mouffe starts from an anti essentialist approach that offers the chance to shed light on multiple forms of oppression and to deliver just and democratic solutions.(Mouffe, 1993: 75). As she states only deconstructing essential identities renders feminist political action possible as it acknowledges ambiguity and contingency of ever identity (Mouffe, 1993: 76).

2.8.2 The Critique on the Unified Subject

Mouffe rejects universal notions of social entities. For instance there is no such thing as 'the woman' or 'the feminist movement'. The following paragraph shall explain the discrepancy between essentialist and anti-essentialist thinking as it will help to understand how conflicts between interacting identities can arise.

Laclau/Mouffe as anti-essentialists disconnect themselves from Marxism, that operates with the notion of a universal class, and claim that democracy has to move away from the idea of a unified subject and positioning conflicts in a class-scheme. Only by moving away from this conviction and by recognizing the discursive dispersion within which every subject position is constituted, can we get to the essential mind set for thinking the multiplicity out of which antagonisms emerge in societies (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001:166).

Essentialism beliefs in an unchanging true essence that is constitutive of a certain thing, for instance feminism. In feminist theory, essentialism claims that there is a pure, original femininity. This femininity exists outside the social and is pristine (Fuss, 1989: 2). Feminist Essentialism presumes the unity of its object of inquiry, the women, and postulates issues affecting women as universal. In essentialism women speak with a joint female voice and use a distinct feminine way of articulation. This is where the strength of feminism stems from (ibid.). Post structural thinking, is at odds with these assumptions. Mostly because post-structuralists, or anti-essentialists, would call essence a construct itself. According to anti essentialist thinking every term and any object seen as natural or given, is in fact constructed via discursive means. In fact every process of social determination is a discursive process of subject positioning (Fuss, 1989: 3). On the other hand one must not deny that also anti-essentialists make use of essence in their argumentation (Fuss, 1989: 28). For instance anti-essentialists are also referring to general terms like 'men' or 'women', without always clarifying which men or women they specifically address.

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I will now explain the point of contention between essential feminists and de-essentialized point of views and then elaborate why the question of essence and identity is crucial for the discourse at hand.

2.8.3 Woman as a Construct

One factor that is being brought up repetitively is the so called shared experience that unites all women.

As stated above gender related questions often refer to certain stereotypes, as mentioned in the mother-myth-assumption.

Feminist standpoint theory is only one attempt to address the multiple subject positions women can take. However, what thinking about these problematic might result in, is a less rigid approach in black and white terms, but a more open and permeable way of dealing with feminist identity and hence the identities participating in the gender discourse.

2.8.4 Anti-essentialism and Feminism within a Policy Discourse

The so far elaborated concept shall now be put into perspective with discourses on feminist politics in a radical democracy. Both Llyod and Mouffe are countering the argument that deconstructing the essential identity would weaken feminist political action (Mouffe, 1993: 76; Lloyd, 2005: 19).

Moya Lloyd has revisited Mouffes's point of view in her work on feminism, power and politics (cf. Llyod, 2005). Here she comprehensively lays out that no single discourse exists that could produce woman or some spiritual home all women could relate to (Llyod, 2005: 19), instead the subject of woman is produced in various ways which are sometimes conflicting or intersecting and are always practised in relation to institutions and social concepts and discourses. According to Mouffe this over-determination illustrates the real origin of women's subordination (Lloyd, 2005: 19).

For a long time the enemy stereotype of feminism was the patriarchal society. Nevertheless from an anti-essentialist viewpoint it is inconsistent to construct society around one monolithic principle. Again one has to question the coherence and stableness of the system one operates in. Only by acknowledging the incomplete and inessential structure of society one can unveil and tackle the various ways of subordination and oppression (Llyod, 2005: 75).

For the debate I am scrutinizing this means I will have to examine how the actors are considering the subjects they are referring to? If they want to realize women friendly politics, which idea of 'women' do they bear in mind? An essential or a de-essentialized idea? If they debate about choice, what are the options this choices should provide?

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3   Methodology

This paper aims at both, gaining knowledge about discursive structures and political identity formation and applying knowledge meaning applying discourse theory and analysis in practice (Boeije, 2010: 2).
This analysis is driven by three major questions: where do knowledge and convictions originate from, how do they position the subject and do structures of dominance alter? (Nonhoff, 2007: 174)

3.1   Research Design

The study is conducted in a qualitative manner which means that data such as parliamentary protocols, party statements and articles will be consulted to evaluate the discourse. Quantitative data for instance surveys and statistics, is available, however this data will only be used to round up the discourse environment. It is my intention, by using theses quantitative data, to illustrate in what kind of social environment the debate takes place. As a matter of fact these figures will show that attitudes and values can be affected by both endogenous and exogenous factors and that they set the ground for interpretive studies

The qualitative study will be conducted as follows: the research sample should accurately represent the research subject (Boejie, 2010: 5). In the case at hand the sample consists of articles, parliamentary minutes from the Bundestag and party statements, all relating to the CCS, the research subject. The findings, combined with the theory, will be applied to describe the protagonists' perception of reality and their behaviour (Boejie, 2010: 5). The study is neither theory testing nor theory developing but rather theory applying and aims to understand the social worlds of the competing parties in the CCS discourse (Boejie, 2010: 12). My focus lies on what the CCS means to the actors involved in the debate and how they relate to it.

With precisely choosing material on the CCS, I will be able to work with relevant data. At the same time I have to be aware that I am already moving within a pre-interpreted environment or as Boejie calls it "hardened ways of thinking, feeling and acting.", (Boejie, 2010: 13).

3.2   Discourse Analysis as Interpretive Policy Analysis

As Foucault put it "Every society has their own specific regime of truth, a general policy of truth: i.e. it accepts certain discourses as true; certain mechanisms and instances are in regarded as judging discourses as true or false by sanctioning the one or the other" (Turowski and Mikfeld; 2013: 21). Decoding certain truths and how differentiating positions can cause antagonisms is one motive of any discourse analysis.

In conducting a discourse analysis on societal conflicts, the researcher is dealing with the discrepancies that arise when different actors produce meaning individually and contemplate to make their interpretation the dominating one. For this paper the issue at stake is gender equality within the realm of freedom of choice and the different readings of it. With this conflictive situation as a point of departure the study will analysis several elements of a discourse pursuing several interests. How is the discourse structured? Who has the power to form it? Which subject positions can be discovered? What are the rules for what can be said about gender equality/freedom of choice? Can certain power hierarchies or shifts be discovered?

3.3   Discourse Terminology

According to Laclau/Mouffe, discourses are an ever ongoing dialectical interplay of differences and equivalences. The "peculiar terminology" (Wagenaar, 2007: 139) of Laclau/Mouffe's approach appears unusual at first glance and needs explanation. Demands are the crucial aspect in discourses and are in general addressing a lack within the discourse. The hegemonic demand is consequently a demand which is considered being able to remedy this lack or to, temporarily, fill the empty space. The empty signifier is the discursive centre, or the nodal point, or more general a privileged discursive element that gathers up several differential elements, and connects them into a discursive formation, a chain of equivalence. Only by emptying a certain signifier of its content is it possible to achieve this process and produce a dynamic discursive formation. The nodal point of the competitor within this discursive battle is hence the antagonistic demand, the "root of all evil" (Nonhoff, 2007:180). Remarkable is that these chains are never lasting but continuously developing since equivalences and differences, just as actors and their subject positions are never stable and identities can be constituted in manifold ways (Norris, 2006: 114).

3.4 Discourse Production and Lexicometric Analysis

Discourses are verbal and non-verbal statements, establishing order and knowledge. At the same time, discourses themselves illustrate an order of knowledge. When looking at discourses we are therefore looking at a dialectical process constituting knowledge (Turowski and Mikfeld, 2013: 20). The study at hand will follow the analytical framework as provided in Martin Nonhoff's discourse analysis of the social market economy.[11] Another methodological feature of the analysis will be borrowed from linguistics: lexicometric corpus linguistic analysis.

In lexicometric analysis the focus lies on quantitative relations between discursive elements within a defined corpus of text (Dzudzek, Glasze, Mattissek and Schirmel, 2009: 233). Lexicometry is rooted in the linguistics by Saussure and post-structural theory, thus it connects to the discursive thinking of Laclau/Mouffe and bears many opportunities for discourse theoretical analysis. I will explain the method of lexicometric corpus linguistics in the following.

One aspect speaking for applying corpus linguistic methods in discourse analysis is its post-structural idea that discursive elements are always situated in relation to one another and that meaning results from unveiling these relations. Corpus linguistic seeks to find quantitative relations between elements and the actual interpretation of the findings takes place when the analysis is done and results are present to work with. In post-structural thinking, there is no such thing as one absolute truth. Working with this method therefore means to acknowledge the ambiguity and instability in identities, statements and opinions (Dzudzek, Glasze, Mattissek and Schirmel, 2009: 236).

Corpus linguistic offers two approaches to conduct an analysis. One is the corpus based approach, where the researcher starts with certain hypotheses and then continues to search for linguistic evidence to support these hypotheses in the text corpus. Another approach is the corpus driven method. Here the researcher does not try to answer previously posed research questions but is open to find inductive results which are then continuing the research process. Hence unexpected structures can be revealed. This method is suitable for an explorative analysis and to provides an overview of discrepancies and commonalities within specific linguistic structures of a particular issue (Dzudzek, Glasze, Mattissek and Schirmel, 2009: 234).

As a matter of fact I have chosen to apply the corpus driven approach since my analysis is interested in veiled structures that made the family policy debate shift towards a gender equality debate. It would be naïve to assume that any analysis can be conducted without any previous assumptions, or preliminary considerations what the reasons for discrepancy could be. However one has to distinguish between hypotheses and common sense assumptions. Whereas the former are already based on some expert-knowledge and hard facts, the latter

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[11]Nonhoff, Martin, 2006: Politischer Diskurs und Hegemonie. Das Projekt 'Soziale Marktwirtschaft'. Bielefeld:transcrip.

consists of everyday knowledge and more or less individually drawn conclusions. These assumptions will not steer the analysis but are open for results of any kind. I will therefore scrutinize the text corpora to find statements and terms to suit my previously stated assumptions (sa. p. 9)

The next step is to define the text corpus one seeks to work with. In this study I have chosen to look at texts from before and directly after the implementation of the CCS. Following a corpus driven approach I will not pre-determinate my keywords but settle for keywords after having scrutinized the text corpora. I am doing this by analyzing the characteristics of text segments (Dzudzek, Glasze, Mattissek and Schirmel, 2009: 240). This method enables the researcher to find out which characteristics are significant for certain parts of the text and hence illustrate on what a certain opinion is based.

I regard this approach as very promising since it deals with the text segments without any previously fixed guidelines and bears the feasibility to discover unexpected twists and mind sets in the debate.

3.5   Empirical Data

Laclau/Mouffe have often been accused of not developing the empirical component of hegemonic and discourse theory further and recent scholars have therefore focused on connecting discourse analysis with empirical data. This study aims at taking empirical findings into consideration by focusing on individual value orientation (Scheuer, 2013: 377). These values and attitudes are no fixed variables but connected to societal and economic changes (ibid.).

3.5.1   The Data Set

The statistical data collection at hand is distributed by Detastis, the Federal Bureau of Statistics (Statistisches Bundesamt) and the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung) in their Data report from 2013.[12]

This report had been conducted in collaboration with the Socio-Economic Panel and the German Institute for Economic Research (DWI).The function of this data set is to mirror the quality of life and living conditions in Germany and was the first all-German-census after the reunification.

For my analysis I will especially take changes from material towards post-material attitudes into consideration as this represents the issue at hand: the replacement of the male bread winner model, the emancipation of women, the struggle of combining work and family life.

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[12]The complete electronic version of the report is accessible online on: www.wzb.eu/publikationen/datenreport;

3.5.2 Data in Interpretative Studies

I will consider statistics on data referring to labour market and family situations but also on family values and gender roles, in order to illustrate the societal climate in which the discursive battle at hand is taking place. Other data of interest will be surveys on attitudes and values concerning family, work and the role of women within society. A distinction between data from West and East Germany has to be considered. The GDR era still influences peoples' mindsets and the image of the working woman, wife and mother is more common and accepted in the East as in the western Germany (Fuchs and Roller, 2013: 371).

The value orientation of a society has significant influence on the political decision making process and its justification (Scheuer, 2013: 377). As mentioned above the CCS was an unpopular policy from the start and has evoked a lot of critique. The use of surveys and other data will show whether there are correlations with these allegations and illustrate the initial situation of the discourse. This practise will eventually enable me to expound that the political and the media-discourse are indeed corresponding to political antagonisms within the policy debate. The purpose of this statistical input is to demonstrate how the dominating value orientation will act upon processes of interpretation, meaning that what is seen as the truth is always depending on what the individual concludes from the regimes of truth in which he or she is located in. This applies to the protagonists of my study but also to me as the researcher.

3.5.3 Material and Post-Material Values in Germany

Since 1980 the ALLBUS[13] Surveys are observing the change in value orientation according to the Inglehart-Index.

The Inglehart Index asks questionees to choose their first and second most important value between two material and two post material priorities: namely 'sustaining peace and order ' or 'fighting inflation' and 'protecting the right of freedom of speech' and 'more civil influence on governmental decisions' (Scheuer, 2013: 377). If the questionee chooses the material goals as their priorities they are labelled as 'materialists' if they opt for the post-material goals they are 'post-materialists' respectively (ibid.). Mixed-types are possible since a questionee can opt for one material and one post-material goal. The index speaks of 'material mix-types' if the respondent chooses a material goal first and a post-material goal second Should a respondent opt for a post-material value first and second for a material value he or she is a 'post-material mix type'.

Over a timespan of 32 years, the survey has detected two significant developments. First, value orientation still differs between East and West Germany.[14] However an alignment has been observable over the years.

Another finding is a general shift from material values towards post-material values. The dominant types are the mixed-types while there are slight variations between the post-material and the material mix-type. What is striking is that in times of economic crisis there is a shift towards material values. (Scheuer, 2013: 380).

3.5.4 Attitudes Towards Women's Role in Society

The ALLBUS pole has also collected data concerning the changing perception of women, family and female employment in Germany, from 1980 onwards respectively from 1991 including the former GDR (Blohm, 2013: 385).

The survey constitutes two dimensions of value division: the role allocation between men and women and the consequences of increasing female employment (ibid.). The former actually deals how gender roles are perceived and how female employment is evaluated in society, the latter is targeted at the effects female employment will have on an infant's development.

The survey divided respondents into a traditional and an egalitarian group. Over the years one can observe that attitudes towards both issues are becoming increasingly more egalitarian. Contrary to the previous Inglehart Index survey, the differences between East and West are approximating but not aligning after the reunification (Blohm, 2013: 387).

To name one example: regarding the consequences of female employment on the child's development, in 1991, 77% of women living in the former GDR had an egalitarian attitude meaning they didn't see it as a problem for the child, while only 49% of women in West Germany shared this view. In 2012, 95% of interviewed women had an egalitarian view on the same question while only 82% thought so in the West. The discrepancy is even higher amongst interviewed men. In 1991, 70% of men in the East had an egalitarian viewpoint on this issue, opposing 37% of men in the West. In 2012 the survey compared 90% of egalitarian men in the East to 66% in the West.

Attitudes do not significantly differ between men and women from the same region, age however is again a significant factor. In general younger respondents share an egalitarian attitude (Blohm, 2013: 387).

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[14]East Germany is included in the poll since 1991 (cf. Scheuer in: data report, 2013: 379).

3.6 Selected Sources:Governmental Documents and Articles

Besides surveys, another way to get an overview of a society's common sense on that topic is to trace the news coverage. One has however to bear in mind that this is a two-edged sword; media coverage, such as print and online magazines, TV programmes or the like, does on the one hand mirror the societal climate, on the other hand it also form opinions. A common argument goes that print media are sustaining a loss in influence on opinion building nowadays due to the numerous digital alternatives there are these days. However with shifting to the digital sector themselves, many newspapers have established a stable online presence and can still be regarded as an important source of information, origin of debate and competing discourses.

I have decided to choose articles from 'Spiegel Online' (SPON), the online magazine of the print copy 'Der Spiegel'.

The choice of newspaper or magazine was another sensible decision for conducting this study.

First of all, the newspaper should have a rather heterogeneous readership than a specified homogeneous one. This will promote a style of writing that addresses more viewpoints, more political standpoints, more gendered positions, more readers from different educational and/or economic backgrounds. I have decided to work with articles from the online magazine since these articles are available for free and downloadable over an infinite time span. This makes them even more accessible than the articles from the printed issue. The SPON desk is an independent subsidiary company still it belongs to the same publishing house as the print version 'Der Spiegel' and follows the same political philosophy. 'Der Spiegel' is a weekly magazine. Politically it can be located in the liberal sphere. With approximately 6.4 million readers, the magazine has the widest circulation in Germany and Europe. Its online pendant SPON was founded in 1994 and is by now the German speaking news website with the widest coverage both nationally and internationally.[15]

Critics adjudge it to be the strongest opinion-building influence amongst political magazines.[16] It hence appears to be suitable for being consulted for the analysis in this paper as it meets the afore mentioned requirements: Accessibility, a wide spread scope and political significance

The next step is to choose online articles, referring to the policy of interest, to carry out the analysis. The analysis will hence be conducted by consulting articles from SPON that have been published while the debate on the CCS was dominating the parliamentary and public debate.

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[15]http://www.spiegelgruppe.de/spiegelgruppe/home.nsf/Navigation/CEF3A44164AED9BBC1256F720034CBAC, (04.08.2014).
[16]http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-32092775.html, (04.08.2014).

Another written source are protocols from the 'Aktuelle Stunde' (question time) at the Bundestag on family politics.[17]

These protocols are verbatim quoting what had been said on a specific topic to a specific time. The analysis will therefore consult two protocols, one from a question time in November 2011, before the CCS was implemented in the coalition treaty and one thereafter in November 2012. These minutes provide insightful information about the political identity of the parties involved. They are unfiltered and include every speaker's personal viewpoint but also slips of the tongue, insults, interjections and every sign of approval or disapproval. These minutes will be the main source to evaluate the subject positioning process and to map out the discursive field.

Technically there is a step between a parliamentary debate and a news-magazine report on that parliamentary debate. This step includes the information gathering by press offices or journalists in order to pass on this information to the public.

This intermediate step shall also be part of the analysis, thus statements made by party representatives and summarized and published by the parliamentary press department will be examined in the analysis section as well.

The governmental statements include the party's standpoint to the child care subsidy the parties want to be published. The parliamentary press department is therefore an interesting and important point of intersection in the debate.

3.6.1 Strategic Approach

The discourse analysis will be divided into two stages: firstly the identity formation of the political parties will be analysed. Secondly, a linguistic approach shall be carried out in order to be able to detect linguistic patterns and conflict areas.

In the first part of the analysis I will look at two dominant moments of the CCS debate. Gender equality on the one side or freedom of choice on the other. How do the parties interpret these two terms individually and where do they see their own competences in relation to these terms? The first part of the discourse analysis is hence a very interpretative study in which I will refer to the concept of anti-essentialist identity and the societal and political climate previously illustrated by the Data report from 2013.

The second part is focusing on how is the discourse on gender equality and freedom of choice is linguistically structured and how it produces a particular kind of knowledge. In which contexts are the words 'equality' and 'choice' mentioned and how are arguments about the discourse constructed? What kinds of other discourses does it link to? And what are the relations between the statements made about gender equality and free choice? I identify the key themes through coding of the various arguments and statements made in the articles. I will

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[17]http://www.bundestag.de/protokolle, (10.08.2014).

furthermore consider the social context and the subjects participating in the discourse and to locate the social sites from. How do the subjects relate to the gender equality/freedom of choice discourse? The aim is to describe the institutional settings for the public discourse on gender-equality/freedom of choice and to investigate what kinds of subjectivity the discourse and its context produce and constitute.

3.7   Discourse-Analysis in Practice

Nonhoff's method of discourse analysis refers directly to the readings of Laclau/Mouffe and especially follows the idea of Chantal Mouffe to work with instead of against conflictual situations. Working within a political context sets the ground for analyzing the conflictual potential of a discourse (Nonhoff, 2007: 179). One reasoning for this is to define the conflicting actors: the government and the opposition.

3.7.1   Operationalization

The following shall describe how Nonhoff's approach and Laclau/Mouffe's terminology can be used in practise.

Having settled for physical sources, one can begin with scanning the texts. The analytic will search for articulation regularities. By doing so the analytic already gets an image of certain dynamics and the fragile structure of those verbal actions (Nonhoff, 2007: 175). The terms element, demand, stratagem and nodal point shall now be explained in detail.

To examine the so far detected elements in terms of a political discourse analysis one has to take further steps: What kind of demands are these elements expressing? The idea of labelling elements as demands stems from Laclau who aimed at stressing the political character of the analysis by doing so (Laclau, 2005: 72).

Some demands will be stronger and more influential than others, some will remain unfulfilled. To express this clash of demands in the terminology of Laclau/Mouffe one needs to localize the demands within the logic of differences and equivalences, meaning the connotation of one element gets defined over matching another and differing from another. In this current example we can find equivalence in the demand for modern family politics but we can find difference in the values that come along with this demand: as the Union parties want to realize modern family politics alongside traditional family values the opposition parties are stressing their ideal of economic independence, for families and especially women, modern family politics should promote. What results from this

assumption is that the social needs antagonisms to be constituted in the first place (Nonhoff, 2007: 177). Two elements being in a relation of difference to on another are hence outlining an antagonism. Connecting this to the topic at hand a very obvious example could be 'progressive' and 'outdated'. Whereas one group defined current family politics as modern the other groups regards them as being backwards and out of time. This forms a very classic conflictual situation.

The last feature one has to bear in mind is the political setting where the analysis takes place. In this case a liberal, pluralistic democracy and hence actors taking part, are manifold. The discourse at hand for instance includes five political parties, press representatives and eventually recipients of the press coverage, the public. According to the numerous actors there are numerous discourse arenas co-existing separately, or partly overlapping.

Another important term Nonhoff works with is the stratagem, or as a larger number of discourse theorists refer to it: a 'moment'. Moments are complex arranged elements which are in-dividable. 'Modern family politics' could be such a moment, resulting from elements as 'working mother', 'single parents' and 'young parents'.

The first two elements could be occupied by the opposition parties as they promote a less traditional image of family whereas the third element could be rather occupied by the Union parties that promotes rather mind sets than structures to be crucial in order to support modern family politics. A dominant moment takes on the position of a representative demand, representing what the issue at stake is actually about. This representative demand often develops into the empty signifier or 'the lack'.They are two empty signifiers, meaning that both opposing camps in this debate claim to have the knowledge to fill this empty signifier with meaning. Plain spoken: These two points embody the conflict and the struggle.

The next task for the analytic will be to take a closer look at the identified lack, the deprivation each involved party defines after their own subjective standpoint and urges to occupy. If we take for instance 'freedom of choice' and all the different perspectives the competing parties take on it, it becomes clear that freedom of choice as a nodal point connects different chains of equivalence with this demand, always referring to the prevailing understanding of freedom of choice. Is freedom of choice to be understood as an economical freedom, a societal freedom or an individual freedom? Are the several parties dealing with the term freedom of choice in an impartial way or are they rather occupying it with their own party-historical or personal ideals? The reader will recognize that the formation of these articulations is an ever ongoing process and every fixation is only temporary (Nonhoff, 2007: 176).

3.8   Limitations of the Study

As Turowski and Mikfeld have outlined in their tract, discourses take place on different levels and are constituted within certain discourse worlds (Turowski and Mikfeld, 2013: 49).

This study can merely show that there are shifts and alterations but the origin of these alterations cannot be precisely identified. It could be time, it could also be a current event. It could be an external or internal influence. In this specific case we have several plausible factors; an ailing coalition partner, very contrary party programmes, a forthcoming election to name only a few.

Another limitation of the study will be the subjective nature of the research topic. The sources will consist of subjective statements which can be linked to quantitative statistic data but of course there will always be room for interpretation left and a deliberate hidden agenda can only be assumed.

Last, the mentioned data set can also interpreted subjectively and is no warranty for objectiveness.

4   Analysis

The previous sections of the study dealt with an illustration of the theoretical approach and an outline of the methodology and the research design in order to depict how discursive relations, discursive patterns and stratagems of hegemonic structures can be examined and how texts can be strategically analysed. The section at hand shall enable to reconstruct the discursive stratagems of the gender equality/freedom of choice debate.

In discourses, discursive elements are circulating around a general lack, an empty space within the discursive space, that is regarded as imperative to be connoted with the hegemonic argument. In the issue at hand, this lack is prima facie child care in regards of freedom of choice.

The jumping-off point of the debate is a need for action in terms of providing child care that balances the child's well-being and material and personal self-fulfilment of the child's parents, whereas again the 'parents' self fulfilment' is a term open for interpretation. The discourse reveals vividly how all political parties try to occupy the hegemonic position to dominate the opinion building process on how this balance is achieved. At the same time digital and print the media transfer the issue into the public and embody a media discourse establishing another discursive space

4.1   Analysis Part I: Mapping out the Discoursive Space before passing the CCS

The first source to be scrutinized will be an excerpt from the parliamentary protocol taken at the "Aktuelle Stunde" (question time) on October 27th 2011[18]

The debate taking place at the Bundestag in October 2011 was initiated by the party 'Die Linke' and was a so called face-to-face criticism session. The tool of a criticism session is a method of debate that seeks to clarify and solve specific issues. In this case 'Die Linke' wanted to clarify the modern understanding of family and how the coalition was to contribute to family life in a constructive way. Back then the coalition consisted of the Union parties CDU and CSU and the liberal democratic party FDP. The CCS was officially not an item of the agenda

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[18]Plenarprotokoll, 136. Sitzung, Tagesordnungspunkt 11; Antrag der Partei Die Linke: *"Für eine moderne und zukunftsweisende Familienpolitik"* Drucksache 17/6915 (page 115-130)

but gets impetuously brought up by several politicians. This suggests that the CCS policy was a smouldering conflict in family politics already. The protocoll of this session points out that 'Die Linke' but also other members of the parliament are in doubt whether this policy actually meets the needs of modern families. Additionally severely conflicting attitudes towards family politics amongst the government and the opposition are manifest.

I will now display how the subject positioning of the opposition and the governmental coalition can be defined by working with the minutes taken from the opposition parties: Die Linke, SPD, and Bündnis '90 Die Grünen:

MP Diana Golze, (Die Linke) openes the question time with her speech on modern, future oriented family politics. Furthermore she addresses the financial dependence of many women either on their husbands' income or, in case of many single mothers, on social welfare. Her standpoint makes clear that the government is not in line with "women friendly politics" according to the suggestions made by Esping Andersen (s.a.) and that freedom of choice for mothers has not been realized yet. She concludes that

> *Family is where people are willing to take responsibility for one another independently from marriage certificates or sexual orientation.[19]*
> *(Golze, Die Linke)*

I now want to illustrate the opposition's standpoints.

All opposition parties are addressing the social change that had altered the image of the traditional core family, and hence the traditional image of women within society. For instance Katja Dörner from the green party states:

> *The family politics of the coalition are still focusing on an outdated image: married couples with children, with her staying at home or working part time. But this is not how the world works any more. (Dörner, Die Grünen)*

Dörner furthermore reminds the government that

> *Family politics need to adapt to the families not the other way around.*

and her colleague from the SPD, Christel Humme joins in by stating

> *The current government does not acknowledge the changing family concepts.(…) The income splitting is an outdated model which fixes the role of the wife as the extra earner. (Humme, SPD)*

> *The federal secretary of family affairs says she wants freedom of choice. That sounds nice but at the same time the government indicates with the CCS: 'mothers, stay at home.' That is no freedom of choice and it is by no means future oriented. (Humme, SPD)*

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[19]The following statements are taken from the parliamentary protocols. These protocols are accessible online in fulltext. As these protocols are in German the paper uses selected passages from the protocols, The passages have been translated into English by the author of this paper.

MP Golze from the left party 'Die Linke' elaborates this though by claiming:

First of all one has to ask oneself what makes modern family politics. This question has to be followed by the question what exactly family is. The federal minister for family affairs puts it like this: 'The majority of our citizens still understands family as a married couple with children', (...) But we have to face reality. According to this a growing number of children are being raised by single parents. (...) For children of single parents their Grandmother and Grandfather, even aunt and uncle are seen as family. I reckon this a very encompassing notion of family which politics have to take account for. (Golze, Die Linke)

Thus they urge the government to accept these changes and react by delivering adjusted family politics meeting the needs of all families.
What the opposition also shares in their statements is a focus on economic questions which arise in the context of current family policies. For example, the green party representative, brings up the poverty risk that can be linked with having children .

It is a fact that children still are a risk for poverty in this country.(Dörner Die Grünen)

Employment perspectives for women are another important feature of the debate and Humme from the SPD states

Taking responsibility for one another is only possible when there are funds to do so. If everyone has their own funds. Because then women can support their families in case their husbands should get unemployed. That's what it is all about. (Humme, SPD)

The opposition hence positions itself as the progressive counterpart that is able to see the whole picture. MP Schwarze from the SPD puts it bluntly when telling the government:

We do not share the same perception of family, this has become clear today. (Schwarze, SPD)

Family politics does not only deal with supporting families it also means to enable parents to be economically independent.

Young women and men want both: responsibility for their family and their career.(Schwarze, SPD)

There is still the relict of the income splitting of married couples (...) a financial support of a very specific family model. A model consisting of a single bread-earner bringing home the money and a wife that stays at home

and maybe earns a little pocket money on the side. This promotes a very specific marriage model. (Golze, Die Linke)

The combination of poverty risk and female employment already hints at the 'women friendly politics', Esping-Andersen refers to. However the parties are not specifically positioning themselves in the sphere of feminist politics. Their focus lies on accusing the government of malinvesting tax money by not investing sufficiently into nursery schools and by sticking to the concept of income splitting.

I regret the minister of family affairs does not take action and calls for a nursery summit. We were told the system was under financed. Take the money from the CCS, 2 billion Euros, and reform the income splitting system, there are plenty of options!(Humme, SPD)

We need to secure a legal claim for a place in nursery school for every child aged one. The 35% the government is aiming for are insufficient. (Schwarze, SPD)

Where are the urgently needed initiatives of the government to secure a place in nursery centres for every child younger than three?(Dörner, Die Grünen)

In the long run these two aspects are indeed disadvantages for women however all three parties do not make use of this issue in a specifically feminist way. The opposition mostly claims to stand for a modern and impartial family concept.

Now the discursive space of the governing coalition consisting of the CDU/CSU and FDP shall be mapped out

Taking a look at what had been said by the Union parties and the FDP it is noticeable how clearly the Union can be placed into contrast to the opposition. Even though the Union politicians want to make clear that they too acknowledge the changing family concepts they still insist that promoting traditional family values such as marriage and having children is something the majority of the German people wants.

Family is a model of success and one of the pillars of our society.
Take a look around! In which other countries are there such conditions for families? (...) Where else is it possible for children to grow up this protected as in Germany. (Tauber, CDU)

That does not mean we are not also talking about problems. These start with day care centres and continue with all day schools.(Tauber CDU)

Hence the CDU can be regarded as those defending conventional values alongside all other concepts. While the problem of insufficient day care facilities is being

mentioned it is not marked as an issue that is a result of Union politics but an institutional issue.

> *I am wondering why families in France tend to have more children than those in Germany-this cannot solely be due to child care facilities. (Jarzombek, CDU)*

The most striking finding is the harsh accusations made by the CSU politicians against 'Die Linke'. Here one can sense a shift from a rational political debate towards an ideologically charged one that aims at clearly separating 'Die Linke' from the democratic arena, almost labelling it as a threat.

> *I recommend you to take a look in the constitution. In article 6, paragraph 1 it says: 'Marriage and family appreciate special protection by the state's officials.'(Bär, CSU)*

> *We are also making politics for those women who decide to stay at home for some time. To stand up, Ms Golze, and claim 'For these group of people one mustn't make politics' is scandalous! (Bär, CSU)*

> *You had your turn on the big stage today to present your ineffable programme. But to rip off the mask so that everyone can see what kind of party that is, that acts irresponsibly and takes away the air to breathe by dictating everyone how they should live (...) I tell you, we don't dictate anyone how they should live their lives, we are not forcing a benefit on anyone. We don't tell families how they are supposed to live.(Bär, CSU)*

The aim of this first section was to illustrate how political identities are being established within this discourse. The Union parties CSU and CDU claim to be more democratic and accuses 'Die Linke' of being authoritarian and unrealistic and enforcing ideals on the public.

> *We are no propagandists. We are making politics for the real world and the real society.(Landgraf, CDU)*

> *We are realizing freedom of choice.(Landgraf, CDU)*

> *In the meantime 'Die Linke' can go back to their beautiful island. From there, feel free to proclaim your unrealistic visions and try to enthuse some other dreamers but please not here in Germany. (Landgraf, CDU)*

In fact one feels reminded of a vocabulary being used in the Cold-War-Era when the 'free world' had to defend itself against the communist threat. A vocabulary like 'propaganda', 'Propagandists' 'enforcing benefits on someone' or enforcing ideals underlines this impression. Referring to the left party as a "group of propagandists" or accusing them to "enforce their ideals on the German citizens" shows how the coalition regards itself as a bearer of democratic values, reason and efficiency. The coalition partner FDP contrarily deepens its position as the

economically driven party. Their representative focuses on economic aspects of family politics. For instance when MP Brach-Bendt mentions initiatives that should improve women's financial standing.

> *You are accusing the minister to stick to old fashioned gender clichés but the opposite is the case. Think of the initiative 'more men in nursery schools' or our efforts to make girls gain more interest in the MINT sector.(Brach-Bendt, FDP)*

The next step of this analysis the protocol will be scrutinized after the CCS has passed the legal proceedings and was in the making to become a tidied up policy. This means the CCS has become part of the coalition treaty. I have decided to choose the minutes taken at the 'Aktuelle Stunde' directly after the CCS bill has passed in November 2012.[20] This has two reasons: firstly the debate got new input as it has eventually turned from an ongoing hypothetical debate into a discussion on factual and soon-to-be politics, which resulted in the parties being more precise in their articulation. Secondly, the debate was still not linked too closely to the upcoming elections in September 2013 which could have blurred actual intentions.

4.2   Mapping out the Discursive Space after passing the CCS bill

Aktuelle Stunde (question time) on October 25th 2012

To begin with one can definitely discover that positions have been consolidated. The feminist aspect was rather sublime in the debate before the CCS passed the draft law status. Now opposition parties are openly attacking the policy as 'anti-women' and a catastrophe.
MP Gysi calls the image of women within the Union out dated and backwards, by doing so he actually puts the gender issue into the CCS topic.

> *If one wants to achieve gender equality, one has to change the image men have of women profoundly. (Gysi, Die Linke)*

> *'If you want some bucks, don't send your child to a nursery centre'. That's 19th century and it has nothing to do with 21st century (Gysi, Die Linke)*

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[20]Plenarprotokoll, Deutscher Bundestag, 25. Oktober 2012, 201. Sitzung, Drucksache 17/201 (page 57-64).

Other opposition politicians are also establishing the correlation between women's ineterests and a policy neglecting them.

So saving for educational programmes is the educational component of the CCS. Are you trying to make fun of all the women in this country?(Künast, Die Grünen)

On the other hand the government has shifted from the hostile sparing partner to a rather defensive counterpart. A statement by the FDP makes this visible as it shows alignment with the opposition's point of view

Expanding nursery centres has to be carried out as it had been agreed on. (Meinhard, FDP)

Thus hegemonic patterns have already altered.
One remark makes this especially clear when a opposition politician from the green party self-confidently claims:

You do not supply the communities with funds to expand day care facilities, instead they get the CCS. If necessary, we will just abolish it next year. (Künast, Die Grünen)

This statement hints at the upcoming elections in September 2013. Within a year the FDP has significantly lost influence within the coalition and has become a weak partner and mocking remarks from the opposition, targeted at the FDP's likeliness to lose significant votes , are being made.

   With a weak partner the entire coalition gets weakened and the opposition being aware of that harshly attacks the government in general and the FDP in particular.

   The conflicts within the discourse have multiplied and numerous discursive elements have entered the field. Feminist politics is still seen as a very leftist topic. In fact the debate clearly labels feminist issues as class issues which becomes obvious when 'Die Linke' openly accuses the Union as a patriarchal party.

Another aspect has entered the field of discourse: the coalition treaty and the obligations that come with it.

Stop spending money on making parents leave their kids at home! On the contrary: every Euro, every Cent that's been wasted on this nonsense is urgently needed to expand our nursery facilities. All arguments are on the table but they are not on your side. On your side is only the obscure coalition peace. You feel obliged to that but you are not, you are obliged to the well-being of the families and children in Germany. Stop the CCS! (Steinmeier, SPD)

The need for day care facilities keeps on growing. Many Fathers want to work less and women more. This sets the frame for the family politics we

need. I get the impression however that not families but the coalition is to be rescued here.(Künast, Die Grünen)

The FDP gets the image being a stickler to the rules with no courage to speak up against the Union.

Mr Rösler is right when he says the CCS is too costly, a wrong instrument, unfinanced and has no educational component. (...) And shortly after that Mr Brüderle comes and says 'no, we are loyal to the coalition treaty'. (Künast, Die Grünen)

Likewise the Union is depicted as a party that cares more about staying in power and pleasing the conservative clientèle than making politics that the majority of the people actually wants. Moreover it is said to struggle to discipline its own members.

The majority of parents does not want the CCS. Even the social service of catholic women in Bavaria rejects it. What everyone wants instead is an improved infrastructure with individual support.(Künast, Die Grünen)

71% of the German citizens do not want the CCS, by the way, also 62% of the CDU members don't want it either, you should consider that.(Gysi, Die Linke)

If the coalition was convinced by the CCS it would have been implemented ages ago. The critique amongst your own members is growing month by month, lots of your colleagues don't believe in that tool themselves. (Steinmeier, SPD)

Again the debate is very ideologically charged but power positions have changed. The feminist aspect has developed further and is dominating the debate.

We have to act accordingly to family politics but also according to economics. Many children with a migrant background who need early age language advancement will stay at home due to the CCS just as young, skilled women will do. But we have to promote female gainful employment. (Steinmeier, SPD)

Scientific studies prove that it is to the child's sustainable advantage to attend public day care facilities. Instead of investing into the CCS one should invest into nursery centres.(Gysi, Die Linke)

The Union seems to avoid any gender realted issue by sticking to administrative aspects of providing child care and refers to the CCS simply as "a wonderful total package", again realizing real freedom of choice.

4.3 Analysis Part II: Conflict-Area Scanning

The second stage of the analysis will be dealing with the discursive setting. My intention is to connect the matter at hand with the concept of radical democracy suggested by Mouffe, meaning the conflict area, the actors and the specific elements of the discourse defining difference shall be the main interest in this section. A certain understanding shall be gained why the occurrence of crisis consciousness does not necessarily lead to correlating political action (cf. Turowski and Mikfeld, 2013: 4). Another aim is to illustrate that complex structures like institutions, interpretive patterns and subjectively perceived normality shape the production of meaning (ibid.).

I will begin with taking a look at the statements delivered by the governmental press department and continue with articles from the magazine 'Der Spiegel'. Again from before and after the CCS had been attached to the coalition treaty.

4.3.1 The Press Department as a Means of Information

The main function of the press department of the German parliament is to objectively sum up the actions of the Bundestag, its institutions and MP's and furthermore to inform about political, economical and cultural events.[21] It responds to journalists' queries, and informs in advance about important upcoming events. The press department can be seen as the gate keeper between the public press and the federal administration. It channels requests and gathers information from the specific administrative posts.[22] Everyone with access to the internet can get current and archived information on debates. The stock of the parliamentary archive holds digitalised information just as well as physical paper copies of debates and sessions back from the first legislative period in 1948.[23]

These statements provide insight into the way the media discourse will be affected by the provided information. The governmental press department has to be objective in its coverage, moreover the parties are aware that the information provided by the press department will find its ways into national and international news magazines, programmes and other sources of information for example online news feeds. In these statements I will therefore find how the parties themselves want to be represented in the news coverage. They want to make sure where in the discourse they want to be positioned. Contrary to the emotional debate in parliament the report at hand will be very spot on and factual. It will be insightful to see which notions observable in the debate will be translated into the report and vice versa. It is, so to speak, a pre-filtered discourse that will become a part of the public media discourse further on.

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[21]https://www.bundestag.de/presse/pressedokumentation, (23.07.2014).
[22]http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/verwaltung/abteilung_puk/, (23.07.2014).
[23]http://www.bundestag.de/archiv, (23.07.2014).

4.3.2 Party Statements on the CCS

Taking a first and very general look at the reported parliamentary statements of the different parties, the discourse on the CCS, in both camps involved, can be identified in mainly two discussions: the most dominating discussion is about "real freedom of choice", and "family" which are both mentioned a several times by the opposition and the government. The second most dealt with topic is "expansion of daycare centres". What is remarkable is that the word "women" is only addressed from the opposing site and not once by the Union or the liberal party who are only talking about "parents" or "mothers" when mentioning the plausible clientèle of the CCS. This is remarkable as one would assume women being the main group of interest in this debate as they will mostly be affected by this policy as for once children, no matter how progressive a society is, will always be pictured together with their first attachment figure, their mothers. Of course not every woman is a mother but every mother is a woman and mothers are hence affected by gendered politics. Avoiding the term 'women' seems as if the Union was aware that this debate could shift into a debate on feminism and gender equality, which they probably urged to elude. After this first assumption an in depth lexicometric analysis, as explained earlier, shall give more thorough insight.

4.3.3 Passages reported from Parliamentary Debates

Now statements first of the coalition, then the opposition shall be scrutinized in order to see whether the subject positions from the protocol analysis match and moreover, to detect and focus on certain elements. All statements are accessible online and the links are provided in the references. In this text the statements were translated from German into English by the author of this paper.

Selected passaged from before November 2011[24]:
Again the coalition claims to provide a model of real freedom of choice, also the motive of not enforcing benefits on anyone is present. So does the secretary of family affairs claim to establish "real freedom of choice" and that only the Union is "acknowledging what it takes to raise children". The coalition as the only truly democratic actor is hence a repeated motive from the protocol above. Also the rather aggressive tone is still detectable, even though the statements have already been filtered by the press department. So one can for instance read that the Union accuses the SPD of "a shameful and hypocrite approach towards full time parents", "putting parents under general suspicion" when insisting that the CCS could bear risks for children. This means, the coalition is not only eager to take this position within parliamentary debates but also want this to be reported to the press and the public. Another motive becomes apparent: the coalition as a reasonable party opposing an ideologically blinded group. "The state is not enforcing a certain family model, the CCS is an investment into future, it comes alongside the further expansion of day care facilities, the SPD seems to be afraid

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[24]http://www.bundestag.de/service/impressum/index.html, (16.04.2014).

to lose its influence on family politics, (literally: is afraid to lose its air sovereignty above the childrens' beds; A/N)." one can read, or the secretary calls the debate an "unbearable ideological debate". The coalition partner FDP takes on a sceptical role and remains irresolute in between the two camps. They merely repeat that "(...) a focus on education should be included, expanding day care facilities is necessary and monitoring the use of the CCS inevitable".

The opposition's remarks are in some aspects mirrored tit-for-tat-responses. For example does 'Die Linke' accuse the Union for putting "working parents under general suspicion", by trying to encourage parents to leave their children at home instead of sending them to a nursery school. The green party and the SPD are, as in the protocol, taking on the part of the progressive, social negotiant and alerter. They accuse the government to be "trapped in outdated role clichés", "setting the course into the completely wrong direction", moreover "the CCS puts chances of those children at risk, that need support and help the most.". The day care debate gets put very bluntly by 'Die Linke' when they claim: "(...) the government is not willing to expand day care facilities". However the opposition uses the argument of reason and calls the CCS "nonsense" and utters that "not a single independent expert has found advantages the CCS would offer for children and their families, unnecessary amount of money, more targeted politics when it comes to day care facilities.".

The input made by the press department itself remains rather objective and only states that "The CCS is questioned even amongst the Union itself,", moreover the debate is described as "highly emotional". The coalition partner FDP is described as "more sceptical" towards the CCS and the critic of the SPD is called "harsh".

To sum up, the press department reported the subjects' positions of the single parties matching to what could be observed in the protocol itself. For the interested citizens as well as the national and international observer it is therefore possible to position the actors of the discourse and to position themselves according to the located opinions.

Selected passages from after: November 2012:[25]
What becomes obvious by taking a first look at texts after the implementation of the CCS had been decided, is that the language becomes very impetuous. Another difference is that statements, as anticipated before, become more precise. While a major shift in subject positions cannot be detected in the camp supporting the CCS, the opposing camp takes on a clearly offensive position which becomes very bold by the repetitive use of the word "hostile" in their statements. Moreover the opposition specifies their critique in emphasizing the financial downside of the CCS. In several utterances the CCS is declared a malinvestment. Hence the debate remains a struggle for just family politics but at the same time turns into struggle for economic rationality. Still, the prevailing elements are "freedom of choice" and "expanding day care facilities".

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[25]http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2012/41446253_kw45_de_betreuungsgeld/, (16.04.2014).

While the Union still calls the CCS "a wonderful total package", that implements "freedom of choice for parents" and "meets individual needs of all children", the FDP insisted on the educational factor of the CCS (Bildungssparen).

The opposition on the contrary calls the CCS "(...) insane, outdated and against women friendly politics as it keeps women away from work". "(...) it is a horse-trade putting children's chances to develop at risk". Moreover Die Linke claims that the CCS could only be forced through, because most intra-party opponents decided to deny their own opinion, and "(...) with more than 220,000 missing places for children in day care there is no real freedom of choice.". The green party refers to the CCS as "anti-children, anti-women, anti-families and anti-economy as it will cost 1,2 billions Euros a year."

The press department captures the Union's position as defensive and reports the opposition's accusations that the CCS had a "patronizing and discrediting" character.

It seems the shift from the government turning more defensive and the opposition more offensive is the most remarkable finding in the press report after the CCS had entered the coalition treaty. It illustrates a significant weakening of the coalitions standing in parliament.

4.3.4 Lexicometric Corpus Linguistic Analysis of selected Articles

The third and last section of the analysis will contain articles from the online magazine "Spiegel Online". Here the discourse is transmitted by journalists and the recipients are the magazine's reader. The journalists are the final consumers but also the gate keepers of what had first been debated in the question times and then been reported in the press statements.

Article, Spiegel "Fight about Child Care Bonus" April 5th 2012:[26]
This article that stands representative for many articles that have been written about the CCS at that time- the policy is declared "questionable" and the question is raised whether is is a policy that "really makes sense?". The article likewise adds the insufficient day care facility situation to the debate and follows the pattern one could observe so far in the analysis. "Latest figures show, that many provinces will not manage to expand nursery centres". The argument of the CCS being contrary to the child's well-being is made as well. "Experts are afraid of negative consequences for children and mothers". By mentioning experts, the article eludes an argument the opposition has repeatedly uttered in their statements and terms like "Riot", and "threatening" are conveying the emotional level of the debate to the public. However the article also holds some judgemental passages for instance: "The battle about the CCS holds something absurd". In total it attempts to remain objective and closes with "The CCS is no longer just a war of opinions – more and more facts are disapproving the bonus", and mentions one important line of thought.

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[26]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/forscher-warnen-vor-gefahren-des-betreuungsgeldes-a-825563.html, (16.04.2014) translated by the author.

"After all facts have been presented, more parents than expected will apply for the CCS – not because they want to stay at home but rather because there are not enough day care facilities. Mothers and fathers who do not find a place for their child will not choose to miss out on that money." Applying for the CCS should not automatically be seen as approval for this policy – vice versa one has to admit, not applying is maybe due to a lack of information and not due to rejecting the policy.

The media discourse openly attacks the lack of sufficient day care facilities for young small children, and questions the reason behind the CCS. We can hence observe a compliance between the political- and the media discourse. The news coverage in the Spiegel is informative however it does not seem to be absolutely impartial. The use of the pejorative word "Herdprämie" (stove bonus) could be an indicator for a certain closeness to the opposition's line of thinking.

Choosing an insightful article after the CCS has entered the stage of factual politics was difficult. Mainly because official figures were missing to give proof of how many entitled parents actually applied for the CCS money. The news coverage therefore was mostly speculative and repetitive. In March 2014, the research institute Detastis finally published first results on application rates related to the 16 German provinces. I have therefore decided to work with this article in combination with an article published in June 2014. The latter also puts the CCS into relation with the concerns, critics of the CCS had uttered beforehand. I find this combination of articles reasonable as it is does not only provide my analysis with figures on application rates but also refers to the social debate that has marked the long and emotional debates on the CCS.

Article, The Child Care Subsidy booms; Der Spiegel (March, 2014)[27]*:*

First of all the article uses several negatively connoted terms like "stove bonus", "busted flush", "a toad the secretary of family affairs had to swallow", and "heavily criticised". This surprises the reader since the headline of the article seemed unexpectedly positive. The article then continues with facts and figures about the amount of application nationwide and geographical specifications. One reads that there were "more applications than expected", but also "most applications have been sent in in Bavaria and Baden Wuerttemberg", and that there are "big clashes within Germany". The figures have been provided at an early stage and were not put into any social context so they leave room for speculations if maybe more families than expected are in favour of a "conservative family image".

The article was rather negatively perceived by the readers since it appeared inconsistent to them. So one reader asked why the title said the CCS would boom, if the article informs that only a third of all parents entitled to apply for the bonus have done so? Another one is not pleased with the author's conclusion that maybe parents are more in favour of a traditional family image than expected as she mentions that it is mainly people from the CSU heartland applying where this image might be more popular then in the rest of the republic. Another one

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[27]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-anstieg-bei-der-herdpraemie-a-958416.html, (10.08.2014), translated by the author.

mentions the possibility of parents applying due to a lack of nursery schools and other alternatives. Another one suggests, that people are simply being rational: if the state offers money, it would be stupid not to take it.

It was difficult to get a whole picture and round off the debate with these early figures only, so I decided to include an article that published findings of a survey that eventually put the applications for the CCS into relation to social aspects like migration background and education.

Article: "Current study confirms charges", June 2014:[28]
Terms like "Stove bonus", "Obolus", or "unfair" remain present in this article as well when initiating the debate on the CCS policy. Further more the charge of the CCS giving "wrong incentives" is being stated. Eventually the article reveals that "Social contribution boosts educational inequalities", and "The bonus is an incentive for disadvantaged families not to make use of early age educational programmes.", "A preliminary result of the study says the worries are justified". The article is very critical and uses predominantly negative terms like 'disadvantage', 'worries', or 'inequalities'. Also using a scientific survey stresses the credibility of the statements being made.

I have so far given an overview over the CCS debate using several sources. Frequently have I mentioned elements that dominated the discourses. I will now work out the most significant discursive stratagems I could map out while examining the press statements and the articles. Again applying the corpus based method Where can nodal points of chains of equivalences be recognized and with which other discourses are some elements connected? This again shall help to divide the discursive sphere and highlight contrarieties.

Real freedom of choice
Analysing the parliamentary documents the struggle over dominating the interpretation of freedom of choice becomes evident. The question on freedom of choice probably bears the highest conflictual potential. Every party positions themselves as realizing freedom of choice. But they also seem to know what every one wants to choose. A slight distinction can be made between the Union and the opposition as the former regards itself as securing "*real* freedom of choice" as to point out that the freedom of choice the opposition is speaking about is only an incomplete freedom missing out a crucial aspect – the freedom to choose to stay at home. The opposition in return openly calls this interpretation of freedom "nonsense" as it has for a long time been a woman's fate to stay at home. The freedom of choice is closely linked to economic reasoning and, especially by the opposition, to gender equality. While the Union keeps linking freedom of choice to parents only, they evoke the image of raising children has already become a joint venture of both fathers and mothers to equal conditions. The opposition however points out that staying with the children is still in most cases the mother's purpose. What the Union interprets as freedom is regarded as an additional incentive to stay at home or even as an obstacle to return to work. One topic that repetitively shows up is the expansion of nursery centres that the Union promises

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[28]http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-politiker-fordern-abschaffung-a-983161.html, (20.07.2014), translated by author.

to continue alongside the CCS and the opposition claims is being wantonly neglected. Freedom of choice is hence a nodal point temporarily fixing both, stratagems of the economic discourse tackling the economic standing of women, and child care in a more family politics understanding. Elements of the former discursive field could be old age poverty risk, part time work, child care possibilities. The latter could include mother-child-relation, well-being, healthy development. It becomes obvious that this discursive field holds plenty of directions into which it could develop even further.

Family
Another antagonistic term is "family". Several elements can be linked to it such as married couple, children, aunt, uncle, modern, traditional, single parents and many more. Both poles in the debate are charging the discussion on the CCS with their own interpretation of current family values and which part they should play in policy making. This establishes another antagonistic dichotomy of the discursive space. One term the Union is continually working with is "appreciation of parenting". In their wording, the CCS would appreciate the effort parents make in raising their children even if this means to stay at home and accept financial and career cut backs. The opposition contrary regards the expansion of nursery centres to meet the expectations young families have in modern family politics. On average both, men and women are well educated these days and therefore pursue an individual career management. Young women especially do not aim at being taken care of by their husbands any more (Allmendinger, 2009: 99). At the same time the majority of men would welcome family and labour politics that enable them to engage in the parenting role without risking financial short cuts for their family. A gender-equal politic therefore should acknowledge today's family structures and not enforce to stick to the traditional core family where it is no longer the desired ideal.

Women
A striking feature of the debate is how both camps deal with gender relations within family structures and society. The Union, especially the Bavarian sister party CSU, is known for promoting rather conservative family values, arising from a catholic set a values. It is thus noticeable that the term "woman" is very frequently uttered in parliamentary speeches, however in the published statements it gets never mentioned when talking about parenting. Instead parenting is represented as a task that is to be done by parents as a single entity. Even the term "mother" is not uttered in the statements but only once in its plural form "mothers". It occurs the impression as if the gendered relation between women and the task of child education has to be avoided. Reading the statements from a gender aware perspective one gets the impression that the risk of the CCS debate shifting into a gender debate had been anticipated. The opposition otherwise addresses women in both ways, as women and as mothers. By doing so it also specifically addresses fathers as parents and additionally open the ground for a gendered debate by putting the women's interests in the focus of freedom of choice. This approach fixes the idealistic divide between the government and the opposition.

Here the different parties are struggling to dominate the view on reasonable childcare and just family politics. The link between just family politics and gender-equality however remains covert. While the opposition points out that this policy is mainly going to affect women, the Union is avoiding this part of the debate strictly. By focusing on the term woman or women in carrying out a lexicometric analysis reveals how conflictual the political debate can be when the issue at hand asks for women friendly politics but the government apparently seeks to avoid to make use of any term that could link the debate to a gender issue or feminist politics.

4.4   Findings and Obstacles

The previous discourse analysis has shed light on several aspects. First of all it has evaluated where the participating parties position themselves in the political discourse and hence how they identify themselves with the subject. Here the most striking finding was that the conservative and liberal party regard the CCS debate rather as a freedom of choice debate while the social democrats and rather left parties regard it a gender equality debate. Freedom of choice is a central term for both camps however the left parties link freedom of choice closely to gender politics while it seems the conservative parties try to avoid the connection and aim at linking it to family politics, a field where they traditionally feel more competent. The left parties in return feel more competent in matters of the working individual, so they connect the CCS debate to female employment, child care that supports female employment and new family concepts that require female employment. It becomes obvious that the opposition identifies itself with the women friendly politics as described by Esping-Andersen which links the opposition's politics to a politic of change while the coalitions seems to be aiming at pursuing their static line of politics.

Linking these findings to the feminist identity one could argue that the opposition accepts influences of a patriarchal system rather as a given than the coalition does (Lloyd, 2005: 86). This implies that the coalition also assumes that relations of power, domination and oppression are present in current social and family politics (Lloyd, 2005: 88). The opposition also seems to pay more attention to capitalist structures. Both gives the impression of the coalition white washing their politics while the opposition is more spot on in their arguments, suggestions and problem awareness. These findings so far suggest that the critical discourse on the CCS – meaning the gender equality discourse is stronger than the freedom of choice discourse and leads to the question why this still had little influence on the implementation of the CCS in the coalition treaty. This question shall be captured in the discussion section. As explained earlier Laclau/Mouffe regard identities and power structures as always temporarily fixed and furthermore as historically specific and contingent (Glaze and Matissek, 2009) The analysis exemplified both. Firstly one could see how power structures altered when the coalition got weaker the more precise the CCS became and the more people

rejected it. Secondly the identities within the discourse followed historical patterns: the conservative party standing for values, the social democrats defending the working class individual, the liberal party focusing on economic arguments. Also 'Der Spiegel' met the expectations and took a moderate left position. The articles were informative and rendered the arguments of all parties involved. Still they rather matched the standpoint of the opposition

The second part of the analysis has dealt with the discursive structures and complexities. This section of the analysis went hand in hand with the subject positioning analysis as it served to divide the discursive space into two and visualized the contrariety between the several participants (Nonhoff, 2007: 187). The sections has introduced specific chains of equivalences, consisting of discursive elements that stressed specific demands of the discourse and hence represented the parliamentary power structures (Nonhoff, 2007: 187).

5   Discussion and Outlook

The carried out study has brought up several current topics of debate in social politics especially related to aspects of gender-equality. The next section shall put forward how identity, radical democracy and feminist issues could be dealt with in future policy making and discourse analysis.

5.1   Discussion

This chapter of the paper shall now reflect on further aspects referring to the principles of contingency and instability in political discourses.

It became apparent conducting this study that both government and opposition have realized the call for action in family politics. Assuming that both the coalition and the opposition initiate from a universal approach to subject positions within the discourse could be one reason that hampers reaching political agreements and causes gridlocked situations

Especially the Union's line of argumentation shows some features of being torn between conservative values and acknowledging reality which makes its political agitation and articulation inconsistent. One example for inconsistency the analysis brought forward was the mentioned programme 'more men in nursery schools!'.[29] Here MP Brach-Bendt tried to defend her party against the prejudice of being stuck in old gender clichés. This programme tried indeed to erase clichés, by recruiting more men for a traditionally female profession: nursery. However it also has a sting in the tail: a job cannot become attractive for men if the structures continue to exist that position men as the main bread winner and this traditionally female profession remains poorly paid. This leads to another related dissonance in the Union's position: The programme that should encourage girls to opt for careers in the so called MINT sector. It is surely important to boost girls' interest in natural sciences and technical and managing professions, but this is only one side of the coin. To improve girls' and women's economic standing it is myopic to make them opt for careers that promise good wages, one also has to improve and secure and improve female employment as such. The opposition seems to regard women friendly politics as the panacea for any issue in family politics. Still women friendly politics is a term open for interpretation itself and thus depending on hegemonic structures. Elaborating these flaws amongst the arguments of both

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[29]cf. http://www.mikitas.de/, (11.08.2014).

political camps one must assume that Mouffe's idea of a radical democracy is facing severe hurdles. Especially if the inconsistency of the actors in this discourse results from them regarding themselves as essential and ideologically fixed

5.2   The Future of Feminist Politics

Feminist standpoints in this debate might have to improve their articulations to the outside world in the first run (Squires, 2008: 42). The analysis revealed that feminist objectives were present throughout the CCS debate, yet they were not clearly defined and located. One could observe feminist standpoints in both political sites. This however makes it difficult in discursive spaces to form identities, as they are always constituted over difference and temporary compliance. Feminists do not need to share an essential identity but they should sharpen their profile when it comes to represent a feminist identity in discursive fields. Mouffe's understanding of democracy and antagonism can help to address and deal with issues amongst feminist groupings and issues within society.

5.3   The Current State of the CCS

As I am writing this study the debate on the CCS has been triggered off again by a study conducted by the University of Dortmund, examining the effects of the CCS. The study reveals that indeed parents from a financially less well off and a less educated background, such as parents with a migrant background are more likely to apply for the money than others with the effect that their children are kept at home and do not make use of any educational programmes. The study also backed up the results of the Detastis study published in March (s.a.), which showed that Bavaria and Baden Wuerttemberg have the highest number of applicants. As mentioned before, these provinces are not only the heartland of the Union parties, they are also the provinces where a high demand of nursery centres is prevailing and therefore it is questionable whether the parents applied for the CCS because they prefer it to sending their children to a day care centre or if they do so due to a lack of alternatives. In fact critics and sceptical voices are being backed up by this study and demands from the both, the opposition and the new coalition partner, the SPD, have been made to discontinue this unpopular policy.[30]

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[30]   http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/betreuungsgeld-politiker-fordern-abschaffung-a-983161.html;
(28.07.2014).

6   Conclusion

Germany is confronted with manifold societal and structural challenges. The CCS-debate unveiled that the prerogative of interpreting modern family politics has become a war of opinions. The entire debate is very idealistically charged. At the same time politicians of both camps accused each other to be idealistically driven. This illustrates how both camps demand the sovereignty over ratio and knowledge in this matter.

In order to sum the findings of this study up I now want to refer to the assumptions I have brought up earlier in this paper.

The first assumption has brought the so called 'mother-myth' forward. A glorifying and idealizing image of motherhood. The mother as a central element is a strong and prevailing theme within the German discourse of family politics, parenthood and the child's well-being. When analysing the political and the media discourse one could observe that this element has occurred several times. Either the mother was the best company for an infant, or the fear of female occupation affecting a child's development in a negative way was mentioned or the appreciation of stay-at-home-parents was emphasized. Hence the emotionally connoted term of motherhood and parenthood is still strongly shaping the discourse in a post-structural, post-material sense.

The second assumption addressed the influence of economic thinking on post material values and put women's affairs in the sphere of welfare politics. Welfare politics being seen as politics for the poor and needy and therefore for an ill represented minority in society, is traditionally on a weaker position within discursive battles and additionally 'women friendly politics' are still not seen as interests from the dominant class but the subordinated one. How wrong this thinking is gets clearly revealed in Esping Andersen's call for new gender contract. Because " (…) improving the welfare of women means improving the collective welfare of society at large", (Esping Andersen, 2002: 20).

Hence the assumptions made in the beginning of this study are still enduring and in a dialectical relation to one another:
If one regards the mother as the best company for her child, there is only a faltering motivation for expanding day care facilities. However if employment is seen as an obstacle for having children there might also be a concern for promoting full time employment of women. According to the findings of Esping-Andersen it would be essential to expand daycare to increase female occupation which has in return proven the best measurement for increasing the birthrate. As the situation is now, women in Germany still have to make a choice between having a career or having children (Esping-Andersen, 2002: 80).
While Esping-Andersen might relate these issues to the principle of path dependency, Mouffe might accuse a too static democratic structure for these

obstacles. By and large there is the impression of German politics being aware of all these needs on the one hand. On the other hand it seems that path dependency and hardened self-positioning is impeding progress in family politics. Mutual recriminations are common in politics and can contribute to sharpen one's own political identity. Yet political parties should comprehend that their identities are not carved in stone. Progressive and dynamic politics require for constructive debate that does not reject differing opinions but accepts includes them in the process of problem articulation and solving (Mouffe, 2005: 123).

7 Executive Summary

This study at hand has scrutinized political discourses in the realm of social politics in order to comprehend the formation of political identities and the emrgence of conflicts. The following summary shall give an overview over my research interets, relevance of the topic and the results of the analysis.

The study circulated around the a controversial German family policy that had been implemented in August 2013.

Germany is facing a tremendous structural change affecting private households as much as it does the economy and therefore the entire welfare system. The increasing number of single households, a stagnation in birth rates and an aging generation Germany has to come up with efficient solutions. The government has therefore mandated a study that should evaluate current family politics and give suggestions where adjustments could counteract the afore mentioned challenges. The results of this study eventually revealed that despite spending significant amounts of money on family politics the observable positive effects are only marginal. After the study had been published the government launched several initiatives and policies responding to the findings of the study. One very controversial consequence of the study was the Child Care Subsidy (CCS). A policy rewarding parents for not sending their child to a nursery school. In times where day care facilities are highly needed such a move from the government appeared peculiar and unreasonable. As a result, the CCS became an object of fierce debate. It was accused of promoting out dated family politics and an out dated image of women. Namely the ideal of the housewife-existance. This accusation gave the Child Care Subsidy the opprobrious name "Herdprämie", which translates as "stove bonus". Party interests, economic interests, mentalities, and attitudes were struggling for dominance.

The paper at hand shall focus on the debate on family politics that originated from the CCS debate. My research questions should therefore elaborate how he debate on the Child Care Subsidy revealed discursive structures that shaped the understanding on gender equality and freedom of choice. Two additional sub-questions dealt with the issue on how the Feminist Identity was constituted in that discursive battle and how women friendly politics were positioned in the discursive space.

The aim of the study was to map out the discursive spaces that emerged from that ebate, identify the subjects of the discourses and scrutinize the subject positioning process. Furthermore a special interest lay on the notion of feminist politics and feminist subject positioning within this matter. Scrutinizing a process like a debate means that a special focus lies on linguistic structures and how meaning is produced. Language as a tool and discourse

analysis as a means of olicy analysis has been elaborated by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. According to Laclau/Mouffe a discourse is a symbolic entity that consists of contrasts and opposites. Furthermore a post-structural discourse draws attention to the effects of social practises. These epistemological features appear promising carrying out a study on identity formation and the production of meaning. Discourses establishing order and knowledge verbally and non-verbally. At the same time, discourses themselves illustrate an order of knowledge.

Discourse analysis has only recently become frequently used in social sciences and it was challenging to settle for an applicable, comprehensible approach suiting my topic.

The study will follow the analytical framework as provided by Martin Nonhoff. Moreover I have decided to add the methodoligy of lexicometric corpus linguistic analysis.

This method focuses on quantitative relations between discursive elements within a defined corpus of text and is rooted in the linguistics by Saussure but also in post-structural theory. It therefore corresponds to the discursive thinking of Laclau/Mouffe and offers many possibilities for discourse theoretical analysis. I will explain the method of lexicometric corpus linguistics in the following.

The sources I have consulted in this analysis were parliamentary protocolls, dealing with the CCS policy, party statements reported by the parliamentary press department that referred to the CCS and last, articles from the online news magazine 'Der Spiegel'. All sources provided significant information on the topic as well as sufficiant material to analyse antagonisms and identities.

Mapping out the discoursive fields eventually provided manifold insights and left room for further anticipations.

First of all the study revealed where the participating parties positioned themselves in the political discourse and hence how they identify themselves with the subject, the CCS and connected to it, gender-equality and freedom of choice. It was remarkable that one could detect certain preferences how one party wanted the debate to be understood. Here the most striking finding was that the conservative and liberal party regard the CCS debate as a freedom of choice debate while the social democrats and the green as the left party regarded it a gender equality debate. Even though freedom of choice is a central term for both political camps 'Die Linke' especially connects freedom of choice to gender politics. The conservative parties by contrast, try to avoid this connection and aim at connecting it to family politics, probably since this is a field where they feel more competent. The more left parties in return feel competent in matters of the working individual. This is also why they connect the CCS debate to female employment, child care that supports female occupation and new family concepts such as single parents, hat require female employment. The opposition parties identify themselves consequently with the concept of women friendly politics as described by Esping-Andersen which links the opposition's politics to a politic of change while the coalitions seems to be aiming at pursuing their static line of politics. These findings made mes suggest that the critical discourse on the CCS issue− meaning the gender equality discourse, is stronger than the freedom of

choice discourse and leads to the question why this still had little influence on the implementation of the CCS in the coalition treaty. I tried to address this question in my discussion section. As a preliminary result I concluded that dynamics in polcy processes get hampered as the involved actors regard themselves as being fixed identities, an assumption that according to Mouffe, does not support solution oriented politics but rather mechanisms that enforce consensus on the parties.

As explained earlier Laclau/Mouffe regard identities and power structures as always temporarily fixed and furthermore as historically specific and contingent. The analysis exemplified both. Firstly one could see how power structures altered when the coalition got weaker the more precise the CCS became and the more people rejected it. Secondly the identities within the discourse followed historical patterns.

I concluded from my analysis that German politics is still very much following the principle of path dependency. This means changes in policies and other reforming acts are difficult to achieve . This goes for attitudes concerning terms like motherhood or the child's well being but it also affects aspects such as economic independence for women. Concerning women friendly politics, Esping-Andersen concludes in his text 'Why we need a new welfare state" that this pathdependency means that women in Germany still have to decide whether they want a carreer or if they want children accepting long term financial trade-offs. In Chantal Mouffe's understanding these trade-offs for women are a result of an inflexible democratic structure .

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