

The Public Image of Children in Recent Electoral Campaigns

Doris Bühler-Niederberger

Bergische Universität/Gesamthochschule Wuppertal, Fachbereich I/Sozialwissenschaften
Gaußstraße 20, 42097 Wuppertal, Germany
E-mail: buehler@uni-wuppertal.de

KEY WORDS family policy; children as minority; social value of children; arena; social ordering.

ABSTRACT The analysis of family policy discussions during an electoral campaign in Germany gives insight into a continual assessment of the social value of children in a political arena. Such an assessment process is aimed at the valuation of other groups besides children, e.g. politicians, parents, childless people and last but not least of groups at the social margin. The images of children produced in such a process have a minorizing effect - not only on the children but on other marginal groups, too.

THE SOCIAL DEFINITION AND SHAPING OF GENERATIONAL CATEGORIES CONTINUING CONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL INEQUALITY

Children are clearly a minority concerning their economic participation. Their abstinence from virtually all economic affairs earning, owning, and to a more limited extent, spending money is part of the "nature of child" and this means of "natural needs" which are socially ascribed to the child (Jordanova, 1987). At least in western countries such a "de-economization" of children is taken for granted although until recently (i.e. until the beginning of this century) the children of the poor were still part of the working people.¹ Children's economic minority position includes a risk of getting poor, too, which is higher compared to other age groups. This is true for almost all countries we may look at, as several studies show (Joos and Meyer, 1998; Qvortrup, 1998; Sgritta, 1996), in spite of a publically undisputed high emotional value of children.

Children's economic minority position includes a specific assessment of their social value. The following contribution is going to analyze public attempts to augment financial support for children from the public purse as they were un-

dertaken recently. Such attempts turn out to be difficult and even result in a reinforcement of the children's minority position. These outcomes are due to a strategy and course of bargaining that may be called a *comprehensive assessment process*. We may use this term to grasp the special characteristics of public debates dealing with children which are especially the following: (1) In such a debate a valuation of children as a special social group as well as of their claim to public resources is constantly ongoing. (2) This happens in a continual implicit or explicit juxtaposition of different generational and social groups, in a contrasting and relating valuation of all of them. Not only the children are therefore defined in the ongoing debates but all the groups related to them are defined and redefined constantly by just their relation to the child: parents, political parties making claims for children, their political adversaries etc.

This analysis of public debates is part of our broader attempt to give an insight into the social definition and shaping of the generational categories "children" versus "adults". As far as we can look back such a definition implied a more or less explicit valuation of children, i.e. one had to determine what they needed and what they returned. In the history of middle and north-western Europe the value of children calculated this way was never unequivocal nor self-evident. It had to be assessed and this assessment happened by considering economy as well as emotion. A look at the history of this valuation shows that obviously very different calculations served as a basis for the assessment - and the results were accordingly many and various. Children could either be assessed to be costly but an added pleasure of life or they could be assessed to be useful and worthy of love just because of this usefulness, they could be assessed

to be completely useless but of tremendous emotional value, though - to define only the range of assessments having achieved public validity in certain times. The correctness of different results was determined within the frame of the respective social context, e.g. the mode of production, the circumstances of surviving and the imageries and meanings guiding the generational arrangement. It was determined in the conflict between different social groups, too (Bühler-Niederberger, 1996).

**"THIS IS WHAT PARENTS DESERVE -
MORE MONEY FOR CHILDREN." THE
SHAPING OF GENERATIONAL CATEGO-
RIES IN AN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN**

*Two Years of Discussion About Family Policy
- An Empirical Analysis*

In fall 1995 the German Federal Ministry of Finance put an advertisement into the newspapers concerning the tax bill of the year 1996:

"This is what parents deserve: More money for children."² Under this heading information was given about novelties of the tax bill for the year 1996. It concerned a new option that was offered to parents. In compensation of the child's cost of living, parents could choose now either an augmented child allowance or a determined but also augmented tax deduction. The new child allowance was a less graduated scheme than before, concerning the number of children living in a family. The ministry praised the new solution as a major relief of the families.

This decision in family policy cooled a heated discussion which had lasted for almost two years. Of course family policy is an object of political debates constantly. But starting in fall 1993 and lasting until fall 1995 the discussion was strongly intensified. This had several causes, some shall be mentioned here: first, there were several judgments of the constitutional court which obliged the government to change the tax and duty system in a way that families would no longer subsidize people without children. Actually they would do this, especially because of the financing modalities of the old age pensions, the latter ones

always being provided by the next generation, that was the argument of the court. Second, the current system of family support had produced a "scandal" as the opposition faulted in January 1994 and as the newspapers heavily accused (see below). Third, the year of 1994 was declared to be the "Year of the Family" by the United Nations, which gave some additional attention to the topic from the side of newspapers and social organizations. Fourth, the year of 1994 was the year of federal elections in Germany, unsurprisingly family policy became an important topic for the electoral campaigners. The discussion did not end after the election as the reelected governing parties had difficulties to transform their promises into a concrete bill. Their difficulties rooted in different opinions held by the government itself and in financial shortage. Therefore the debate was continuing until the above mentioned solution was found. It remained controversial whether a substantial relief for families was really and in all circumstances achieved, as previously both a tax relief as well as child allowance had been given to the parents. Taken separately those amounts had been lower, but their combined effect was supposed to be higher eventually. The new solution was attacked as socially unjust, too, as the tax free amount especially relieved parents with higher income.³ This analysis will not deal primarily with the adequacy or the justice of the solution but with the arguments and the course of the discussion which lead to the decision that parents deserved more money for their children.

This contribution is based on an analysis of the content of daily newspapers ("Süddeutsche Zeitung" with occasional addition of "Frankfurter Rundschau" as well as dailies with only regional spreading) and of three weekly papers ("Zeitmagazin", "Spiegel", "Focus"). All articles concerning family policy (news, commentaries, reports, letters to the editor etc.) which had been published in this period of time were included in the analysis. Additionally we analyzed the minutes of parliamentary sessions as far as the debates dealt with children or family policy in some way. The empirical research was done in the grounded theory style, i.e. in a systematic attempt to gain and elaborate empirically grounded theoretical concepts (Strauss, 1991).

The Political Range of Value Assessment: Children as Family Essential - As Human Capital - As Endangered and Dangerous - As Persons Entitled to a Fair Share

During the analyzed discussion different value assessments were publicly maintained. They either served for claiming more money or as an argument to turn those claims down. The governing Union of Christian Democrats and Christian Socials (in the following referred to as "the Christian Democrats") first attempted to defend the status quo and then - as they got incessantly attacked by the Social Democrats - looked for possibilities of change and finally realized the above mentioned new bill. Two value arguments were put forward by Christian Democrats to defend their line of action. The first argument takes children to be the essence of the family, its indispensable core. Christian Democrats consider the family to be the guarantee of a society aimed at and worth protecting. The family is meant to be a bulwark against any radical changes as well as against an individualized society which would be hard to control. It is also meant to be a self-supporting unit rendering public support less necessary. A traditional gender arrangement is part of such a society based on families. This is not advocated openly, but whenever the Christian Democrats identify the causes of endangerment to the family they mention the emancipation of women. Therefore the value ascribed to children is a fundamentally conservative one.⁴

The second value ascribed to children by Christian Democrats is the value as human capital. Human capital is constituted by children born in sufficient amount and educated in the right way in order to preserve the economic and political position of the nation state.⁵ Such a calculation limits the child's value to the future, he is a raw material which has to be gained and to be produced. In any public discussion it is maintained that this production process is difficult. Much effort has to be put into it in order to make a success of it, and the producers have to stand aside for the children's benefit. Accordingly, possible merit is given to the cultivators and producers, but not to the "material" which is so difficult to process. In both valuations the child

does not have a value of his own, he is seen as merely an instrument to realize the desired society.

The oppositional Social Democrats used the human capital value assessment occasionally, too, but they based their claims for a substantial raising and change of modalities of family support mainly on a different evaluation of children. In their vehement attacks against the family policy of the government - a policy they maintained to be insufficient and socially unjust, they underlined the needs of children. The children they referred (and still refer) to are endangered by poverty, bad housing and other economic disadvantages and might get damaged in their psychosocial development by such unfair treatment and even get criminal. Their families need public support in order to achieve social justice and turn away danger from society as well. The following chronological analysis will give abundant evidence of this assessment. Social Democrats underlined the needs of children in the parliamentary debates about economic issues of family policy, as well as in their attempts to change laws and political actions concerning children's rights and protection. For instance they pointed to those needs in a *démarche* to the abolishment of corporal punishment, again in another one to extend the period of limitation in cases of sexual child abuse and once more in an attempt to force the government to take action against child labour in Third World countries. In practically all of these parliamentary debates the contents of their claims were supported, at least partially, by some representatives of the Green Party and representatives of the Party of Democratic Socialism, the most left wing of all the parties represented in the Parliament. In this way they were occasionally supported even by representatives (especially the women representatives) of the Free Democrats, a little party governing in coalition with the Christian Democrats. The latter ones declared the situation not to be as black as it was painted by the Social Democrats. Christian Democrats insisted to have done a lot to meet the needs of families during their time of governance and they referred to the capacity of self-regulation of families, too.

To complete the relevant value assessments it is important to mention the one made by the

Party of Democratic Socialism. They did not base their claims for higher public support for children on calculations of needs or returns which might be ascribed to children. They simply and explicitly insisted on a right of children to get a justified share in order to meet the requirements of a decent standard of living.⁶ Their arguments concerning children were therefore not child specific but universalistic. This may be demonstrated, too, by the example of their line of argumentation concerning corporal punishment. Two of their female representatives argued that in whatever case of disagreement the members of the parliamentary party of the Christian Democrats would never have a corporal fight. They used this argument in order to deconstruct the self-evidence of a slap in the child's face given by strained parents. Other representatives did not even understand their argumentation and judged it to be an unnecessary disturbance. The two women were admonished to stick to the point.⁷

Value Assessments and Propositions in the Arena Process

The above mentioned political images of children include different concepts and claims concerning family policy and each one is used to legitimate different political decisions. According to our interest in economic participation of children the analysis is focused on the financial claims and decisions of the political parties. The Social Democrats (with their value assessment of a needy and even endangered child) started the discussion and kept the government constantly under fire because of its family policy. They claimed a child allowance much higher than actually paid, a standard allowance for all children. In return, they proposed the abolition of tax relief which they criticised for its disproportionately higher effects for high incomes. And although their representatives were not entirely unanimous concerning their concrete propositions in the early discussion, they corresponded in the direction of claims. In addition, they demanded housing programs, child care institutions for working parents and other steps to facilitate women's returning or staying at work.

The government on the other hand (with the two value assessments of the child as family

essential and as human capital) defended its combined model of tax relief and child allowance which was graduated strongly according to the number of children in the family (approximately twice the amount for a second child compared to the first, and three times the amount for a third). The tax relief favored married couples and here especially the breadwinner model. The tax relief was defended mainly with the argument that it should be conceded to parents to use their own income for raising their children (this argumentation also implied a critique against any attempt of redistribution as an annoying state intervention). The government clung to its combination model although it was complicated and provoked inexplicable and unjustified jumps of the supporting amount along the income scale. Reacting to the judgements of the constitutional court an attempt was made to relieve lower income parents, but it even led to further disadvantage for lower income families. Probably this happened unintentionally, but the Social Democrats named it a "mess".⁸ The newspapers spoke of "betrayed children"⁹ and mentioned the number of 870,000 cheated families having 1.4 millions of children, a number which (whether wrongly or correctly cited) became part of many political attacks afterwards. When attacked, the government praised other novelties which had been decided during their time of government. They mentioned especially the "child raising vacation"¹⁰, a "childcare money", paid after childbirth in given circumstances,¹¹ and the taking into account of the child raising work in the payment of old-age pension to some extent. By the way, occasionally those novelties were attacked by oppositional members of parliament as conserving traditional gender roles.¹²

The Party of Democratic Socialism (whose representatives abstained from any value assessment and maintained simply that children were entitled to a fair share) attacked the government as fiercely as the Social Democrats. Like the latter ones they claimed an abolition of tax relief and a child allowance which, following their concept, ought to be independent from the family the child lived in (e.g. not graduated according to the number of children in the family). Instead, the child allowance should be graduated according to the demand of the child, e.g. they claimed

important point here is where these songs are played: in a totally different site from where they originated, they lose their provoking political message and become domesticated in the self-satisfied and self-indulgent atmosphere of well-to-do youth.

Circulating in the City: Images and Impressions

A young football player, with an ascendingly notorious professional career, appears with his head shaved. The same situation is very soon repeated with other football-players, as if a game was being played. After a while, "skin-heads" become a phenomenon among young people, especially males. Everywhere, shaved heads can be noted from schoolboys to university students. An image is born! What makes these youngsters adopt such an image? To look like Ronaldinho, the football player we are talking about, "borrowing" his conspicuous personal mark, the "skin-head", allows these young people to be like him, by identifying themselves with him as a successful and competent football player, at the same time that they remain themselves (Falk, 1994). Ronaldinho's shaved head becomes a sign for the desirable and desired status that he has achieved - fame, wealth, prestige, and so on. In a way, the image that he emblematically projects with his shaved head is appropriated by boys and by male youth of whatever age to signify an aspect of individual self-construction through an identification with symbols of success and prestige. The "borrowed" image also allows the individual a certain euphoria in experiencing a kind of self-fulfilment by introjecting something good. The circulation of this image in the city points, yet, at another direction. For boys and male youth, it concerns communicating to one another the new status thus acquired.

The pace at which things happen in the city, where a constant renewal of experiences is produced, the crowds and the masses moving about, one elbowing one's way among strangers, looking without seeing and being together without really encountering, makes the artificial more real than the real. In the constant flux of city life, the empire of images has been implanted: "the city as a labyrinth of images", says Certeau (1993). Transient and ephemeral reality, and its repro-

ducible counterpart represented by the image, is intensified giving place to the ever new. Constant metamorphosis brings about new lifestyles based on the consumption of new products and experiences which altogether define who one is. Thus, the aestheticization of everyday life, with its proliferation of signs and images, intervenes in the processes of self-definition, self-construction and self-recognition by making social identities flexible and disposable. As Featherstone (1994) put it: "These signs, which are de-contextualised from tradition or subcultural ordering, are played with in a superficial way, with people revelling in the fact that they are artificial, opaque and 'depthless' in the sense that they cannot be de-coded to offer access to some revelatory meaning or fundamental sense of truth." (p.100)

As childhood and youth have for long been considered the ages of growth and development, where change is paradigmatic, no wonder that children and youth have been swept away by contemporary cultural dynamisms that engender evolving, transient and ephemeral aspects of social reality. Children and youth are prone, then, to overindulge in image construction by producing transformations of the body, clothes, hairstyle and overall appearance.

The process of image production makes the surface meaningful instead of being based on the expectation that meaning is to emerge from depth and reflexion. Rather, it is the immediate, what is given before the eyes that comes to acquire a significant dimension in providing the impressions about oneself round the city. As one young woman of fifteen explains about the multiple impressions of herself that she is able to convey to others: "It all depends on whom my boy-friend is. If he is a skatist, and then loves sport, I become careless about my clothes, as he does with his own. Skatists never have a haircut, they don't shave. However, if I go out with a rapper, then it is different. I even change the way I dance. The colour of the clothes also matter when I go out with rappers." Therefore, how one looks and the images thus conveyed based on such external signs become the foremost aspect of social identification. Round the city, impressions are bound to be multiple and mutable, contingent upon the circumstances, so that

of children. In "Endangered Species" the importance of children to secure old age pensions was emphasized. Childless people were accused for "legalized theft" as they would profit from family efforts to raise these valuable children. In "Parents always pay for it" the journalist valued the work of the family, its tremendous importance to the society and deplored society's ingratitude.

During the parliamentary session of the 2nd February the family minister was heavily attacked but defended her line by criticising the attacks as being mere electoral campaigning. However, she reacted quickly. Already in February she presented her plan for a modification of the family policy to the press. Among other things, she planned a much higher child allowance, still graduating strongly according to the number of children, and a higher tax relief for each child. She also promised that the work of child raising should be taken into account in the payment of women's old-age pensions to a higher degree than before (favouring mothers with more than two children disproportionately in her proposal). The argumentation she used for her proposition was built entirely upon the human capital value of children. She spoke about the contributions of families to the financing of the social security system and the "securing of the future". Accordingly she recommended a financing of the additional family support by charging childless people with an extra tax, as they should make a "contribution to the future", too. Immediately it became clear that this argumentation was strategically unsuitable and lead to a disqualification of its advocate. The proposition and its basis of argumentation were judged to be either ridiculous or to be ultra-right wing. Parents defending the human capital line of argumentation and claiming for more money in letters to the editor were judged in other letters of this kind to be materialistic and to be unable to estimate the children's true value. So the advocates of the human capital value argument were blamed for an instrumentalization of children, and this happened to the political advocates as well as to the claiming parents. It was just the attribution of an economic value to children, even if this was only a future one, which was criticised to be com-

pletely incompatible with the emotional one.

All this may be exemplified by reviewing the newspapers. According to them the refusal of the family minister's proposition and argumentation was almost unanimous. Especially the members of the governing parties, i.e. the members of the minister's own party, rejected her proposal. They called the proposition "immature" and judged a tax for childless people to be as nonsensical as a "tax for beards of bare heads".¹³ A magazine criticised the family minister to have got this idea from another party member belonging to the ultraright wing, and in a letter to the editor following this article the proposition was compared right away to the ideas of the Third Reich.¹⁴ Paradoxically the minister got the highest acceptance for her proposal from the representatives of the opposition who judged it to be at least a "step in the right direction",¹⁵ and she got acceptance from the representatives of family and child saving organizations. Biting critic was directed to parents, who sometimes supported the proposal of the family minister in letters to the editor. They were criticised to be parents who wanted to be paid for their "happiness with the children", who were not able "to see in children anything else than a cost factor," and who probably had got their children out of "egoistic drives" and "irresponsibly".¹⁶

The human capital value had not provoked such critical reactions before, quite in the contrary, it had often been used by the Christian Democrats as well as by the newspapers. Therefore it can clearly be seen, that the admonished inconsistency between the economic arguments and an emotional value of children was a strategic response, a response in order to turn down claims. Not surprisingly several of the critical writers of letters to the editor mentioned that they were already paying enough for families with children and that they had responsible motives to remain childless. But there is no need to judge about the legitimacy and morality of arguments and counterarguments, what is interesting for our analysis is the insight, that a

counterargument against the human capital value argument and any claims based on it is at hand and can easily and effectively be used. Nobody mentioned the family minister's proposal any more, except family organizations and child saving organizations and after the reelection of the governing parties a new family minister was named.

Meanwhile the attacks on insufficiency and social injustice of the family policy continued. The oppositional Social Democrats made them in the parliament and so did the newspapers, the churches, the family organizations, the child savers, the labour unions etc. They were argumentatively based on a draft of a child which grew more and more needy in the ongoing debate, more and more endangered and as a consequence dangerous himself. The situation of children was now called to be "alarming", the number of homeless children was said to be increasing and irreparable damages in children's souls were predicted as well as far reaching consequences for "all of us".

Such argumentation was found in newspapers abundantly. Two examples shall be given. "Der Stern" reported a number of 50,000 children run away from home because of poverty and living in the milieu of car stations now. "Die Zeit" published a reportage of the growing number of young criminals and cited a wellknown criminologist explaining this development to be a consequence of increasing poverty of children.¹⁷ Representatives of Social Democrats as well as other oppositional parties mentioned a deplorable state of affairs in various parliamentary debates, e.g. in the session of 24th June, when they warned that the whole society would have to suffer from the consequences of such a development. In an interview on TV the candidate for the chancellorship, Rudolf Scharping, spoke about the lot of children living on social welfare and warned that in these circumstances aggressions might grow.¹⁸

The argument of the needy and endangered child proved again and again to be strategically fruitful. It united a broad coalition of organizations in their effort to improve the family policy and it got a lot of assistance by journalists. The governing parties made promises to augment

the financial support to families in case of their reelection. Such promises were repeatedly made. Even the minister of finance promised a higher support in August 1994.¹⁹ The promises were kept a year later, by the decision which was presented at the beginning of this analysis. This decision was founded on the human capital value as it had always been used by the Christian Democrats.

There's another way the argument of the needy and endangered child proved to be opportune. The use of this argument in a political debate can not be admonished as offending the true and real value of the child. Unlike the value assessment of children as human capital it could not be turned against its advocates, instead, as already mentioned, it gave them a lot of moral credit and support. In turn it accused the political opponent and justified even very strong accusations against his moral standings.

The social democratic candidate for the chancellorship Scharping spoke of a "cold policy" the government made and referred to the family policy to prove evidence for this reproach. Probably the strongest moral accusation was made by the representative Klose shortly before the elections in September 94 when he listed all shortcomings of the actual government. Among other things he mentioned "one million children whose parents live on welfare and who have learned in school in an often bitter way there is no reason to be proud of such parents", and he called up the families in which "the happiness about children gets smothered by material sorrows..." and where "nobody sees a chance of getting any further - for himself or at least for his children..."²⁰

Beside its rich strategic possibilities the argument of the endangered child is problematic. It suits the politicians using it, but its minorizing effect must be considered as serious. In fact, the argumentation has such an effect on the group of children. They are declared to be eventually or really outsiders. Therefore they need money, in order to avoid things going from bad to worse. But the real extent of minorization becomes evident if the argument is disconnected from its

embedding in a policy aimed at social justice. This disconnection may happen whenever the argument has become accepted and common in public discussions.

In a conservative context the argument of the endangered and therefore dangerous child proves to have a minorizing effect on adult groups of society, too. This can be shown in the electoral campaign of 1998 in which the endangered and dangerous child has become part of the rhetoric of the conservatives, too. In their political intentions it becomes a matter of social disciplining. The groups the disciplining is aimed at are the ones at which it is usually aimed: poor people, immigrants and single mothers and people with deviant cultural and political values, specially parents with permissive ideas of education, the so-called "anti-authoritarians". These groups were now identified as to be responsible for the increasing number of endangered and dangerous children.

We can't reconstruct this line of public debate in detail here, but will illustrate its actual development by two political démarches made by the right wing of the governing parties. One is the proposition to deport the immigrant parents of criminal children, maintained by the Bavarian Christian Socials.²¹ The other is the proposition of politicians of the Christian Democratic Party as well as the Christian Social Party to cancel or reduce child allowance for parents not caring enough for their children, e.g. parents not controlling their children, parents not visiting the school of their children even if they had been asked to do so etc. In these cases, the politicians argued, the grounds to give child allowance would not exist any longer.²²

These right wing politicians combine the human capital value and the assessment of children as being endangered and dangerous in a special way. Accordingly, such parents do not "deserve" the child allowance anymore, as their endangered and dangerous children do not constitute human capital. This rhetoric will probably not have political consequences as these would conflict with the constitution. But it illustrates the problem of the assessment of children as endangered and of the political use of this as-

essment. Once again this rhetoric states clearly that it is not the children who "deserve" any money or not, but only their parents may do so.

CONCLUSION

The analysed debates show that a *value assessment* of children is made constantly. It is worked out in a highly strategic process which can be identified as an *arena*. In such a process the value assessment of children turns out to be an assessment of all the other participants, too, it is a *comprehensive assessment process*. The assessment of children as endangered and dangerous is the one which implies no problems for the politicians advocating it. It is a strategically suitable assessment - but with possible and probably *minorizing* consequences, not only for children. The minorizing consequences may easily extend to other social groups which may be publicly judged and devalued. This is based on a public claim on their children, a claim to *produce*²³ them in an accepted way and following the exigencies of the hegemonial groups. Since the formation of the bourgeois society such a claim was effectively used in order to discipline mainly lower class people (Donzelot, 1977; Joseph et al., 1977). Evidently it is still used with some effect, although it is not unchallenged anymore.

The human capital value on the other side is a problematic basis of political claims. It conflicts with the *type of child*, with the strong moral norm to enjoy merely the emotional value of children and to abstain from any (other) instrumentalization of children which is judged to be abusive (Bühler-Niederberger and Hungerland, 1997). Such a pure emotional value assessment of children is hardly used by itself to base claims on, but evidently may be quoted successfully. However maintaining such a conflict is a strategic device in order to turn down claims. Therefore, none of the value assessments is normatively fixed in an absolute way, but all of them are strategical assessments, too.

Both assessments (the human capital value as well as the assessment of children as endangered and dangerous) offer very limited possibilities to correct the minority position of children, if worked out and negotiated in an arena. The argumentative basis of the claims made by

the very left wing is simply anybody's right to get a fair share. It might be a remedy from the point of view of its inherent logic. Politically it is without a chance of general acceptance today.

NOTES

1. Zelizer (1985) analyses the moral campaign at the beginning of this century which aimed successfully at the "de-economization" and a tremendous emotionalization of children.
2. "Die Zeit", 10th Nov. 95: "Information zum Jahressteuergesetz '96 - Das haben Eltern verdient: Mehr Geld für Kinder".
3. "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 2nd June 95: "Arme Eltern haben wenig vom neuen Kindergeld"; "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 1st June 95: "Bürger um 22 Milliarden Mark entlastet"; "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 20th Sept. 95: "Familienförderung - Die Familienlobby wehrt sich gegen den Etikettenschwindel."
4. Such an assessment was worked out e.g. in a book of the president of the parliamentary party Wolfgang Schäuble "Turned to the Future" which appeared in 1994 and to which the newspapers paid a lot of attention.
5. e.g. this value was very explicitly worked out in the governmental commentary to the comprehensive family report appearing in 1994 (Fünfter Familienbericht: Familien und Familienpolitik im geeinten Deutschland. - Zukunft des Humanvermögens. Bonn, 1994).
6. Parliamentary Session, Deutscher Bundestag, 20th Jan. 94; minute p. 17779.
7. Parliamentary Session, Deutscher Bundestag, 14th April 94; minute pp. 19027.
8. "FOCUS", 24th Jan. 94: "Die Vergessenen. Klage- welle droht: Bonn spart auf Kosten von einer Million Kinder."
9. "Die Zeit", 28th Jan. 94: "Betrogene Kinder. Familienförderung: Bei der Steuerreform hat Bonn Hunderttausende von Eltern vergessen."
10. This means mothers (and very seldom fathers) giving up their work after the birth of their child, get a guarantee for the next three years to return to their work.
11. i.e. six months payment of DM 600.- each month after the birth of a child to lower income families.
12. e.g. by the representative Wester, SPD. Parliamentary Session, Deutscher Bundestag, 24th June 94; minute p. 20729.
13. "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 19th Feb. 94: "Zur Förderung der Familien mit Kindern sollen Kinderlose steuerlich belastet werden."; "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 21st Feb. 94: "Vorschlag einer Steuer für Kinderlose stößt auf breite Ablehnung".
14. "Spiegel", 28th Feb. 94: "Frommer Wunsch" and letters to the editor 13th March 94: "Brandsatz gelegt".
15. "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 19th Feb. 94 "Zur Förderung der Familien mit Kindern sollen Kinderlose steuerlich belastet werden".
16. Letters to the editor in "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 5th March 94: "Bezahlen für das Kindergeld der and- eren" and in "Die Zeit", 25th March 94: "Kosten- faktor Kind" and in "Stern", 19th March 94: "Park- plätze vor Spielplätzen".
17. "Der Stern", 10th March 94: "Wenn Kinder zum Luxus werden" and "Kinder dürfen keine soziale Not bedeuten"; "Die Zeit", 20th May 94: "Tatort Deutschland."
18. "Süddeutsche Zeitung", 18th Aug. 94: "1,5 Mill. Kinder von Armut betroffen."
19. The minister of finance Theo Waigel made them for instance in interviews to the TV-station "n-tv" (20th Aug. 94) or to "Welt am Sonntag" (12th Sept. 94).
20. Parliamentary Session, Deutscher Bundestag, 7th Jan. 94; minute p. 21411.
21. "Frankfurter Rundschau", 23rd May 98 and 25th May 98; "Freidemokraten warnen vor 'Wettbewerb um den Sheriffstern'".
22. "Frankfurter Rundschau", 2nd June 98: "Kinder geldkürzung für schlechte Eltern gefordert."
23. cf. Hungerland (1998).

REFERENCES

- Bühler-Niederberger, D. 1996. "Teure Kinder-Ökonomie und Emotionen im Wandel der Zeit." (pp. 97-116) in H. Zeiher, P. Büchner and J. Zinnecker (eds.), *Kinder als Außenseiter. Umbrüche in der gesellschaftlichen Wahrnehmung von Kindern und Kindheit*. Weinheim, München: Juventa.
- Bühler-Niederberger, D. and B. Hungerland. 1997. "Der Wert der Kinder als Gegenstand und Produkt sozialer Auseinandersetzungen." (pp. 738-743) in K.-S. Rehberg (ed.), *Differenz und Integration*. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag.
- Donzelot, J. 1977. *La police des familles*. Postface de Gilles Deleuze. Paris: Ed. de Minuit.
- Hungerland, B. 1998. *Childhood as a product of parental time management*. Paper presented at the 14th ISA World Congress, Montreal.
- Joos, M. and W. Meyer. 1998. "Die Entwicklung der relativen Einkommensarmut von Kindern in Deutschland." (pp. 19-33) in J. Mansel and G. Neubauer (eds.), *Armut und soziale Ungleichheit bei Kindern*. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.
- Jordanova, L. J. 1987. "Conceptualizing Childhood in the Eighteenth Century: The Problem of Child Labour." *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 10: 189-199.
- Joseph, I., P. Fritsch, and A. Battegay. 1977. "Disciplines à domicile. L'édification de la famille." *Recherches*, 28.

- Qvortrup, J. 1998. "Kinder in der intergenerationalen Ressourcenverteilung." (pp. 214-229) in J. Mansel, G. Neubauer (eds.), *Armut und soziale Ungleichheit bei Kindern*. Opladen: Leske & Budrich.
- Sgritta, G.-B. 1996. "The Golden Age of Child Poverty. Facts and Reasons." *Eurosocial Report 61*, Budapest: 25-42.
- Strauss, A.L. 1991. *Grundlagen qualitativer Sozialforschung*. München: Fink.
- . 1993. *Continual Permutations of Action*. New York: DeGruyter.
- Zelizer, V.A. 1985. *Pricing the Priceless Child. The Changing Social Value of Children*. New York: Basic Books.