

# What people know and think:

THE ROLE OF ATTITUDES AND INFORMATION  
IN THE PROCESS  
OF POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING AND  
POLICY USE

## WHAT IMPACTS INDIVIDUAL USE OF SOCIAL POLICIES?

And how are policies decided upon in the first place? Which role do attitudes and information of population and policy makers play? Over the past decades, many European countries have increasingly invested in social policies to facilitate the combination of employment and family. However, previous social science research has, on the one hand, focused on the structural and institutional level of policy-making, comparing policy decisions over time and across countries to decipher patterns, similarities or differences. On the other hand, studies have predominantly investigated whether changes in family policy, such as parental leave legislations and the provision of state-subsidized childcare services, have removed disincentives to female labour supply. However, less is known about the role of attitudes and information when it comes to political decision-making and use of implemented social policies.

## TO-DATE, THE INFLUENCE OF ATTITUDES AND INFORMATION

on the use of family policies such as formal childcare services or length of leave take-up, particularly for fathers, is well assumed. However, only few studies provide empirical evidence on how individual attitudes as well as relevant information on availability or access conditions may moderate the individual use of policies. Moreover, only few studies have investigated whether and through which channels family policy legislation may also alter social attitudes and norms in the short-term. Against the well documented background of socio-economic disparities in use as well as the heterogeneous impact of family policies on parental employment behaviour, this rather comes as a surprise.

## THERE IS AN EQUALLY IMPORTANT RESEARCH GAP

with regard to the role of information and attitudes in the process of political decision making itself. Yet it can be assumed that attitudes and the availability of information have a significant impact on actors and decision-making processes. Again, there is not much research on how attitudes of population and political actors, as well as information through media and other channels, might affect party and government positions on social policy, and family policy in particular. Little is known especially about how this influences actors' subsequent strategies in policy-making processes. Family policy has long been a key concern for national governments, and is increasingly important to policy-makers in the European Union. However, research has not sufficiently explored how attitudes, such as national work-care norms, and affect policy-makers positions and strategies and alter the European process of family policy-making.

## WE WISH TO CONNECT RESEARCHERS

of different disciplines and methodological backgrounds in a workshop to discuss these questions and see how we can jointly improve research: on the importance of attitudes and available information in the context of access and use of family policies as well as the decision-making process of such policies on the national and European level. Our workshop aims to encourage a debate about where research stands, what current theoretical frameworks as well as methods can and cannot achieve and where our research should head.

### WORKSHOP

**Scheduled Date:** 16-17 March, 2017

**Place:** Bamberg Graduate School of Social Sciences, University of Bamberg, Germany.

[www.uni-bamberg.de/bagss/events/attitudes-information](http://www.uni-bamberg.de/bagss/events/attitudes-information)

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## HOSTS AND ORGANIZERS



### Isabel Winnwa

University of Bamberg,  
Doctoral Fellow at the  
Bamberg Graduate  
School of Social Sciences,  
Political Science

Her research interests include the role of actors in EU decision-making processes, with a focus on the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament, comparing the Justice and Home Affairs and Social Policy areas. In her doctoral project, she investigates the key role of actors and their strategies in legislative negotiations in intra- and interinstitutional decision-making processes.

[www.uni-bamberg.de/bagss/isabel-winnwa](http://www.uni-bamberg.de/bagss/isabel-winnwa)  
[isabel.winnwa@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:isabel.winnwa@uni-bamberg.de)



### Gundula Zoch

University of Bamberg,  
Doctoral Fellow at the  
Bamberg Graduate  
School of Social Sciences,  
Sociology

Her research interests include social and gender inequalities in labour market participation and family processes and how social policies impact social stratification over the life course. In her doctoral project, she investigates whether the recent expansion of childcare services in Germany has altered parents' gender role attitudes as well as maternal employment participation.

[www.uni-bamberg.de/bagss/gundula-zoch](http://www.uni-bamberg.de/bagss/gundula-zoch)  
[gundula.zoch@uni-bamberg.de](mailto:gundula.zoch@uni-bamberg.de)

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## TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

Bamberg can be reached by high speed trains (ICE) from many German cities, as it is located on the high-speed railway line Munich – Nuremberg – Leipzig – Berlin/Hamburg.

Distances: Airport Nuremberg NUE -1 hour by train; Airport Munich MUC, Airport Frankfurt FRA - 3 hours by train

Costs: We cover your costs for traveling (either by train (second class) or plane (economy)), accommodation in Bamberg as well as public transportation from hotel to university.

We kindly ask you to book and pay your train ticket or your flight by yourself (outward and return leg). Once here in Bamberg, we will provide you a reimbursement form which you can submit with all your travel receipts.

Hotel: The reservation and billing for the hotel room, incl. breakfast, will be made directly to us.

