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GENDER IN THE WELFARE STATE

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ABSTRACT

Gender relations—embodied in the sexual division of labor, compulsory heterosexuality, gendered forms of citizenship and political participation, ideologies of masculinity and femininity, and the like—profoundly shape the character of welfare states. Likewise, the institutions of social provision—the set of social assistance and social insurance programs and universal citizenship entitlements to which we refer as “the welfare state”—affect gender relations. Until recently, two broad approaches to gender relations and welfare states predominated: one which saw states contributing to the social reproduction of gender hierarchies, and a second which saw states having an ameliorative impact on gender inequality. More recently, two new strands of research have emerged emphasizing the variation in the effects of social policies on gender.

INTRODUCTION

Gender relations, embodied in the sexual division of labor, compulsory heterosexuality, discourses and ideologies of citizenship, motherhood, masculinity and femininity, and the like, profoundly shape the character of welfare states. Likewise, the institutions of social provision—the set of social assistance and social insurance programs, universal citizenship entitlements, and public services to which we refer as “the welfare state”—affect gender relations in a variety of ways. Studies of the welfare state have turned strongly comparative and lately have been concerned with understanding qualitative differences in the origins and trajectories of social policy in different countries, and in consequence also with developing typologies identifying the range of forms taken by welfare states: “regime types” or “worlds of welfare capitalism.” However, comparative study has so far given little systematic attention to gender. Most

feminist work, though concerned with elaborating a gendered analysis of welfare states, has not been systematically comparative. (In short, we see the persistence of sex segregation in studies of the welfare state.¹) This means that we lack a sense of the range of variation in how gender relations and welfare states mutually influence each other.

Some exciting new work is investigating precisely these issues either by tracing the historical development of state social provision and its gendered effects or by exploring comparative variation in the linkages between specific characteristics of gender relations and particular features of welfare states. In this article, I assess this new comparative and historical work. Thus, I do not focus on contemporary single-country case studies, nor do I attend to comparative studies of welfare states that entirely neglect gender. My goal is to summarize the current state of understanding about the varying effects of welfare states on gender relations and vice versa.

The “welfare state” typically is conceptualized as a state committed to modifying the play of social or market forces in order to achieve greater equality (Ruggie 1984, p. 11). It is often operationalized as the collection of social insurance and assistance programs that offer income protection to those experiencing unemployment, industrial accident, retirement, disability, ill health, death or desertion of a family breadwinner, or extreme poverty—all of which have developed over the past century or so across the western industrialized world. Other analysts, feminists prominent among them, have argued for a broader definition that includes provision of daycare, education, housing, medical services, and other services dedicated to the care of dependent citizens. I define the welfare state, or state social provision, as interventions by the state in civil society to alter social forces, including male dominance, but I do not judge a priori that all interventions are aimed at, or actually produce, greater equality among citizens.

By “feminist,” I refer to analyses that take gender relations into account as both causes and effects of various social, political, economic, and cultural processes and institutions. I do not assume, however, that categories of gender—women and men—are internally homogeneous. By “gender relations” I mean the set of mutually constitutive structures and practices which produce gender differentiation, gender inequalities, and gender hierarchy in a given society. I am informed by multidimensional theoretical frameworks of gender relations, such as Connell’s (1987) “gender order” comprised of three types of structures: labor,

¹ A review of books on the welfare state from 1991 to the present (reviewed in the *American Journal of Sociology* and carried out by Greg Maney, who provided research assistance on this project), revealed that almost all recent “mainstream” scholarship ignores the relationship between gender and the welfare state; further information is available by writing to Ann Orloff.

power, and cathexis, and Scott's (1986) four interrelated elements of gender: symbolic representations, normative interpretations of these symbols, social institutions (including kinship, the labor market, education, and the polity), and subjective gender identity. This approach allows for investigation of variation across states and over time in the intensity, character, and mix of different structural sources of gender differentiation and inequality in, e.g., the division of paid and unpaid labor, political power, and the character of sexual relationships.

GENDER AND THE WELFARE STATE

Over the past two decades, we have amassed a large body of research showing that state policies of all kinds are shaped by gender relations and in turn affect gender relations. Until recently, one of two broad understandings of the relationship between the state and gender has predominated in analyses of social policy. The first sees states contributing in one way or another to the social reproduction of gender hierarchies. In contrast, the second sees states varying in terms of their ameliorative impact on social inequality, including gender inequality.

The Social Reproduction of Gender Hierarchy

One school of thought emphasizes the ways in which state social policies regulate gender relations and contribute to the social reproduction of gender inequality through a variety of mechanisms (see Jenson 1986 for a review). Analysts saw the emergence of modern welfare states as a transition from "private" to "public" patriarchy (e.g. Holter 1984). Key mechanisms for the maintenance of gender hierarchy include: (i) gendered divisions of labor, with men responsible for families' economic support and women responsible for caregiving and domestic labor as well as for producing babies; (ii) the family wage system, in which men's relatively superior wages (and tax advantages) are justified partly in terms of their responsibility for the support of dependent wives and children; women are excluded from the paid labor force (or from favored positions within it) and therefore are economically dependent on men; (iii) traditional marriage (which implies the gender division of labor) and a concomitant double standard of sexual morality. Analysts in the United States and other English-speaking countries tended to see all of these mechanisms operating together—for example, Abromovitz (1988) refers to a "family ethic" enforced on women as analogous to the work ethic enforcing paid labor on men, while Gordon (1988) refers to welfare as reinforcing the family wage system, that is, acting as a backup by giving support to those suffering from market or family "failures," even while contributing to the reproduction of the system of gender relations (see also Lister 1992, Gordon 1990). Scandinavian—but also British—analysts

have emphasized women's responsibility for care work, the continuing dependence of the society on women's unpaid care work, and the ways in which welfare states reward care work less well than the paid labor that characterizes men's lives (e.g. Land 1978, Waerness 1984, Ungerson 1990, Hernes 1987, 1988, Sassoon 1987, Finch & Groves 1983). Finally, many have called attention to the ways in which these various mechanisms—even when not associated with women's absolute material deprivation—are coupled with women's exclusion from political power (e.g. Lewis & Åström 1992, Nelson 1984, Hernes 1987, Borchorst & Siim 1987).

The social reproduction analysts highlighted the ways in which welfare states reinforced pre-existing (traditional) gender roles and relations. More recently, there has been a greater focus on the ways in which state practices themselves constitute gender. Thus, some have focused particularly on the construction of gendered citizenship, with its encodings of male "independence" based on wage-earning (rather than the older basis in military service) and female "dependence," and associated gender-differentiated social provision (Gordon & Fraser 1994, Knijn 1994, Saraceno 1994, Cass 1994, Pateman 1988, Lister 1990). Another formulation highlights the state's production of gender differentiation (and inequality) through the process of claiming benefits from the state: men tend to make claims on the welfare state as workers while women make claims as members of families (as wives or mothers) and through the very existence of "masculine" and "feminine" programs—the former protecting against labor market failures and targeting a male clientele, the latter providing help for family-related problems and targeting a female clientele (e.g. Fraser 1989). Similarly, Bryson (1992) describes a "men's welfare state" and a "women's welfare state." In the United States especially, scholars speak of a "two-tier" or "two-track" welfare state in which programs targeted on men and labor market problems tend to be contributory social insurance while those primarily for women and family-related are means-tested social assistance; they emphasize the disadvantages of relying on second-tier programs in terms of benefit generosity, the restrictiveness of eligibility regulations and the extent of concomitant supervision and intrusion (e.g. Fraser 1989, Nelson 1990).

There is clearly some truth in this portrait of the welfare state helping to maintain hierarchical gender relations even as women's material position is sometimes improved. However, this picture is also incomplete—and, to some extent, inaccurate. Crucially, it ignores cross-national and historical variation that is significant for women and for gender relations because almost all studies in this tradition have focused on a single country; if the experiences of a number of countries are mentioned, it is largely to illustrate similarity rather than variation in social policy effects (e.g. Bryson 1992).

Ameliorating Gender Inequalities?

The second understanding of gender relations and the welfare state is based on the common idea that welfare states work to ameliorate social inequalities; feminist versions of this view focus on gender as well as class inequalities, especially in vulnerability to poverty. These analysts generally note that although poverty rates for the population as a whole fell in the post–World War II era, women made up an increasing proportion of poor adults, and households headed by women became an ever-larger proportion of all poor households; these trends are due partly to the improving situation of other demographic groups (e.g. the elderly) but also to some women’s deteriorating position in the labor market and the rising rates of solo motherhood (McLanahan, Sorenson and Watson 1989). Income transfer programs sometimes offer buffers against women’s poverty (Piven 1985). Although less sophisticated in their understanding of gender relations than the social reproduction analyses, these studies have sometimes noted cross-national variation in policy outcomes (see, e.g. Kamerman 1986, Goldberg & Kremen 1990, Mitchell 1993, Smeeding, Torrey & Rein 1988). For example, studies focusing on the poverty of women and/or women-maintained families consistently find the United States has the highest poverty levels, followed closely by Canada and Australia; Britain looks considerably better than its “daughter” countries, while Germany’s poverty rates for solo-mothers are quite a bit higher than is the case in other European countries (Mitchell 1993). Analysts link these variations to a key characteristic of welfare states—the relative generosity of benefit levels and levels of overall social spending (Kamerman 1986, Goldberg & Kremen 1990). The implication of these studies is that disadvantaged groups—including women—have an interest in higher spending.

While the concern of poverty researchers with cross-national variation is important, this view of welfare states and gender is also inadequate—it examines only linear variation in the effects of state policies on women’s status. This is particularly problematic if one is concerned with states’ impacts on gendered social institutions (e.g. the gendered division of labor, especially women’s responsibility for unpaid care work), and on gendered power (e.g. that accruing to men from their status as breadwinners receiving a family wage or public benefits to replace it). For example, in their comparison of seven industrialized countries, Goldberg & Kremen (1990) found that several factors in addition to the level of public benefits—the proportion of families headed by single mothers, the extent of women’s labor force participation, and the degree of gender equality in the labor market—affect the level of women’s poverty. In Sweden, good labor market conditions and generous benefits minimize single women’s poverty; in Japan, despite very unequal labor market conditions and low benefits, feminization of poverty has not emerged as an area of concern because

few mothers are single. But while Swedish social policy is recognized in most cross-national studies of poverty for its effectiveness in virtually eliminating poverty among women, analyses concentrating on poverty alone may miss other significant issues, such as the high concentration of women in part-time (albeit well-remunerated) employment and their continuing disproportionate responsibility for housework and care of children and the elderly (Ruggie 1988).

A focus on poverty rates alone can be misleading; when marriage rates are high, one sees relatively low poverty rates for women and low gender poverty gaps, but the extent of women's vulnerability to poverty is occluded. Moreover, quantitative poverty studies typically overlook the ways in which regulation may accompany benefits, as in the case of many benefits for solo parents that are conditioned on cooperation in paternity establishment (Monson 1996). In addition, the ways in which the systemic characteristics of social provision affect gender interests are ignored. For example, in the United States, increased levels of income transfers would not address the political marginalization of the status of "client" in a context where citizenship is linked strongly to the status of "worker" (Nelson 1984); nor would this strategy counter stereotypes of dependency deeply embedded in relations of class, race/ethnicity, and gender (Roberts 1995, Quadagno 1994, Collins 1990). Others have argued that the residual character of American social provision undermines popular support for social spending generally, and in such a context, calls for increased benefits in targeted programs such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) may actually exacerbate the political difficulties of welfare (Weir et al 1988). In other words, access to cash benefits is not always an unmixed blessing.

Toward Understanding Variation

These social reproduction and amelioration approaches to gender and social policy fail to capture the full complexity of policy variation—the first assumes uniformity, while the second attends only to one, linear dimension of variation (generosity of benefits or levels of social spending). Moreover, their analytic focus makes it difficult to identify women's activity in policymaking. More recently, two new strands of research have emerged from theoretically informed comparative and/or historical analyses of gender and social policies, emphasizing the variation in the effects of social policies on gender: Male dominance is not necessarily reproduced; indeed, it is often transformed. Some amelioration is possible, although it is sometimes coupled with greater regulation by the state. Historical analyses of the development of gendered social policy have challenged the assumptions that ungenerous and punitive policies have simply been imposed on women; such analyses uncovered the activities of women reformers in shaping early programs targeted on women and their children. Rather than assuming that all (Western) countries' systems operate similarly,

they find that policy may promote qualitatively different types of gender relations. Of particular importance have been studies of countries (e.g. Sweden, France) and groups (e.g. US African-Americans) that do not display the family wage system that prevails in most other countries and among dominant racial groups, but feature instead higher levels of married women's paid work.

MATERNALISM AND THE ORIGINS OF WELFARE STATES

Recent studies of the origins of modern social provision have challenged some key assumptions of both mainstream and earlier feminist scholarship. First, these studies have revealed the significant amount of state activity aimed at the welfare of mothers and children and the activities of women reformers, ignored in the mainstream literature's focus on labor market regulation and class actors. Second, they have challenged some of the assumptions of the social reproduction analysts by highlighting women's participation (even as subordinate actors) in the shaping of policies directed at women and families.

Many women (and some male) reformers were motivated by the ideas and discourses of maternalism. Koven & Michel (1993, p. 4) define maternalism as "ideologies and discourses which exalted women's capacity to mother and applied to society as a whole the values they attached to that role: care, nurturance and morality." The widespread acceptance of ideals of gender differentiation did not deter women from entering the political sphere—indeed, they entered it largely on the basis of "difference," claiming their work as mothers gave them unique capacities for developing state policies that would safeguard mothers and children, leading to "equality in difference." Koven & Michel emphasize the ambiguous meanings and uses of maternalism, noting that it can encompass pronatalists most concerned with population increase, women who accepted the ideal of a family wage for men as the source of support for mothers, and feminists who called for an independent state-supplied income for mothers (Pedersen 1993, Lake 1992). Others (e.g. Ladd-Taylor 1994, p. 5) prefer a more restricted definition that contrasts maternalism to feminism, particularly in terms of their positions on the desirability of the family wage and women's economic dependence (maternalists supported them, feminists opposed them). Finally, Skocpol (1992) distinguishes between "maternalist" and "paternalist" welfare states; both are premised on gender differentiation and the family wage, but institutionalize different types of linkages between states and citizens. In Europe and the Antipodes, elite male political leaders established and administered programs "for the good of" working-class men, often organized in trade unions and labor parties, who gained access to benefits based on their labor-

force participation. Yet these men were also understood in terms of their family status—as heads of families and supporters of dependent wives and children. A maternalist welfare state would feature “female-dominated public agencies implementing regulations and benefits for the good of women and their children” (p. 2). Skocpol writes that such a welfare state never came fully to fruition in the United States, although an impressive range of legislation targeted on women in their role as mothers was passed in most states.

Koven & Michel (1993) distinguish between outcomes in “strong” and “weak” states; paradoxically, while women’s movements were stronger and their involvement was greater in the so-called weak states—Britain and the United States—than in the strong—Germany and France, policies aimed at protecting women and children were better developed and more generous in the latter. While weak states provided greater political opportunities for women’s political activism, they had fewer capacities for enacting and financing generous social policies and women’s movements were not yet strong enough to press for better outcomes. Bock & Thane (1991) point to differences between countries that maintained democratic governments in the 1930s and 1940s and those that became fascist dictatorships. All these countries started with policies that could be called maternalist (by the broader definition), although organized women were not equivalently active in their initiation and administration. Fascist governments made significant changes; Bock (1991), Saraceno (1991), and Nash (1991) argue that it was the attention to men, masculinity, and fatherhood rather than pronatalism that distinguished the fascist countries. For example, payment of allowances for children was made to fathers, often as part of the wage packet, rather than to mothers, as was the case in the democracies. (Interestingly, these patterns have continued even after the return to democracy—Wennemo (1994) finds that these countries offer support to children through employment-based schemes, which go disproportionately to men). Germany was internationally unique, Bock (1991) contends, in its antinatalist policies carried out against Jewish people and those considered “defective” by the National Socialist regime—policies that eventually culminated in genocide.

The few explicitly comparative studies of this period offer some clues to which factors were most significant in shaping the character of social policies aimed at the support of motherhood, parenthood, and children—variations that in many cases continue to distinguish the systems of social provision in the contemporary west. Of particular significance are: (i) the balance of power among labor, employers, and the state; (ii) discourses and ideologies of motherhood, especially whether or not mothering was seen as compatible with paid work; and (iii) concerns about population quality and quantity, particularly in the context of international military competition.

Jenson's (1986) comparison of British and French policies for the support of reproduction was influential in questioning the generalizations about women and the state that predominated in the early 1980s. Both French and British elites operated within an international context that raised concerns about population, particularly about declining birthrates and rates of infant mortality perceived to be too high. Yet Jenson showed that differences in the capacities of organized workers and employers, different levels of demand for female labor, and different discourses about motherhood and paid work, produced strikingly different policies. British policy worked to make the support of babies primarily dependent on fathers' wages, while France developed policies that allowed for mothers' paid work, offering both material support and health-related services to working mothers and their children. Klaus (1993) compares maternal and infant health policies in the United States and France, and finds that the relative level of international military competition was important in shaping outcomes. It was fiercer in France than in the United States, providing a greater incentive to political actors for conserving infant and maternal life and promoting population growth; these concerns were reflected in the development of more generous and far-reaching policies. Concerns about population also feature in Hobson's (1993) comparison of New-Deal America and Sweden in the 1930s around the issue of married women's right to engage in paid work. She finds that fears about population decline were utilized by Swedish women reformers to create new protections for women workers, while their American counterparts were marginalized and found no comparable national discourse which could justify such protections.

Pedersen's (1993) study of Britain and France elaborates some of the themes initially put forward by Jenson. She argues that the balance of power among workers, employers, and the state was the most significant factor determining policies vis-à-vis dependent children and women's labor force participation in the ensuing years. But trade unionists and employers (and others) had gender and familial as well as occupational or class interests, and were influenced as well by the discursive connotations of various policies. British and French trade unionists—mainly men—defended a “family wage” which would give them control of the resources flowing to their families; they preferred that their wives be kept out of the labor market (wives did not always disagree, of course). Employers in both countries appreciated cheap female labor. British unions had the capacity to keep most married women out of paid work and to block the use of family allowances to restrain wages, while French employers had the capacity to block measures keeping married women out of the labor market and acceded to state-mandated family allowances, which promoted wage restraint while funneling funds to families with children. Pedersen also attends to the role

of feminists and other women's groups, social scientists, intellectuals, political leaders, church officials, and pronatalists in constructing the discourse of family issues and policy. Differences in the strength of feminist and women's groups were reflected in how family allowances were carried into political discourse and consequently how they were perceived politically, contributing in this way to the different outcomes in the two countries. Pedersen notes unintended effects of the patterns institutionalized in the interwar years. France's "parental welfare state" gave less institutionalized support for family wages; in Britain, strong male-dominated unions succeeded in making the family wage central to social provision. Once political forms of women's oppression were lifted, the French system has offered excellent support for two-earner families and ensures children's welfare more effectively than has been the case in Britain, where children must depend almost exclusively upon the wages of their fathers in an economy marked by great inequalities and a society in which women cannot always depend on access to male wages.

American social policy exceptionalism is shown to have a gender dimension in recent studies. Koven & Michel (1993) group the United States and Britain as "weak" states featuring strong women's movements but relatively weaker public protections for women and children. But Sklar (1993) and Skocpol (1992, also Skocpol & Ritter 1991) describe key institutional differences between Britain and the United States that made gender more salient as a political identity to Americans and offered opportunities for the development of autonomous women's organizations even before women had the vote; these included the relatively open structure of religion and higher education, as well as the existence of universal white manhood suffrage. Sklar (1993) provocatively argues that in the United States, gender substituted for class as the organizing principle in welfare politics as organized middle-class women played the role of welfare champions elsewhere undertaken by organized labor and working-class parties.

Skocpol's (1992) analysis is significant for drawing attention to the impact of political structures and processes on gendered identities, capacities for mobilization, and potential for successfully influencing policy. Her work differs from both mainstream and feminist analyses in simultaneously analyzing men's and women's political activities and the differing fates of maternalist and paternalist policies. She examines the ways in which the American polity was particularly receptive to women's organizing, even when women lacked the vote, while at the same time it was unreceptive to demands for paternalist, class-based policies. The work is distinctive in focusing on the activities of married ladies' voluntary organizations in the Midwest and West in addition to investigating elite reformers in the Northeast. These groups were essential to a cross-class alliance among women that gave administrators such as Julia Lathrop of the

United States Children's Bureau (identified as a core woman-dominated state agency; see also Muncy 1991)—at least for a time—the capacity to initiate and maintain their innovative policies. In a related quantitative analysis of state-level mothers' pensions (Skocpol et al 1993), women's voluntary groups are shown to be the most important predictor of the timing of passage of these programs.

Gordon (1994, pp. 7–8) notes a paradox: today, “programs for women are inferior to programs for men. . . . Many feminists have understandably assumed that women were slotted into inferior programs because of ‘patriarchy’ and men’s monopoly on state power. But the fact is that ADC [which later became AFDC] was designed by. . . feminist women.” (pp. 7–8). Gordon traces the origins of these developments through, among other things, an examination of different approaches to welfare by networks of white male and female reformers and of African-American reformers and their involvement in the policymaking process from the late nineteenth century through the Social Security Act. (See Skocpol 1993 and Gordon 1993 for a debate about their respective analyses of welfare programs.)

No one disagrees that today, AFDC represents a stigmatized and ungenerous program; however, analysts of early United States social policy disagree about the character of early programs, the forerunners of today's “welfare,” about the interests and actions of the elite women who were responsible for their initiation and administration, and about what factors led to the degradation of social provision for poor single women. One group of analysts traces at least some of the problems of AFDC to the vision of those who initiated mothers' pensions. A particularly important component of this vision was their preference for supervision in the programs that were to assist poor women. Gordon (1994) contends that this was tied to the social work and casework background of women elites, reflecting their class and racial interests. Goodwin (1992) and Michel (1993) note their acceptance of a family wage ideology and preference for women's domesticity, which made supervision a necessity. Mink (1994) focuses on their views about the necessity of “Americanizing” the predominantly immigrant clients of mothers' pensions. The flaws in mothers' pensions were not corrected when they were given federal funding and somewhat standardized as ADC under the Social Security Act in 1935; even later reforms of the 1960s and 1970s were only partial remedies. Another group highlights the universalistic character of the maternalists' claims and contrasts this with the ways in which policies came to be implemented and eventually undermined (Skocpol 1992, Orloff 1991, 1993b, Ch. 5). Ladd-Taylor (1994) locates these universalistic aspects of maternalism in women's private lives—their common vulnerability to death in childbirth and to loss of their children. Mothers' pensions and

other programs were seen to recognize the socially valuable work of mothering, even if women had no access to a male breadwinner's wage—their service to the state was understood as parallel to men's soldiering or industrial service. Lack of administrative capacities, which meant that on the local level programs were often turned over to those who had initially opposed them, the inability of women's groups to monitor programs after implementation, and inadequate financing all undermined the universalist promise of maternalist policies.

Analyses of maternalism have provided some opening for consideration of the ways in which race, ethnicity, and nationalism have also shaped gendered policies. In the United States, a number of studies have shown that maternalist policies such as mothers' pensions and the Sheppard-Towner maternal health programs were not equally aimed at or accessible to African-Americans and other women of color (Bellingham & Mathis 1994, Goodwin 1992, Gordon 1994, Mink 1994, Boris 1995). Thus, the motherhood (and infant life) to be supported was bounded in racial and ethnic terms; analysts disagree about the extent to which this reflects the interests of maternalist reformers or is simply a reflection of the power of racist forces in American society. Similar considerations obtained in Australian policy, which simultaneously supported white motherhood (largely through state-regulated male wages, but also with maternalist measures), banned non-European immigration under the rubric of the "White Australia" policy, and systematically deprived aboriginal mothers of custody of their children (Lake 1992, Shaver 1990, Burney 1994). A debate in Germany about the character of social provision under National Socialism features disagreement about the interests of dominant-group women. Bock (1991) emphasizes that only some group's reproduction was supported—pronatalism for "Aryans" was accompanied by antinatalism for Jews, Gypsies and "defectives." Yet Bock and Koonz (1987) have disagreed about the extent to which Christian German women benefited from Nazi policies—Bock has argued that because Nazi policies channeled benefits to men, German women were not implicated as beneficiaries of Nazism, while Koonz has argued that German Christian women did benefit from the pronatalist aspects of the Nazi regime.

The New Deal period in American social provision has been less studied from a gendered perspective than have the Progressive Era and the 1920s. Still, few would dispute that the institutionalization of national contributory social insurance targeted on (mostly male) wage-earners, which soon after incorporated their (almost exclusively female) dependent spouses, while support for single mothers remained a largely state-run social assistance program was significant for the emergence of the bifurcated welfare state we have today (Weir, Orloff & Skocpol 1988, Orloff 1993b, Gordon 1994, Chs. 7–10). Quadagno's (1994) study of the War on Poverty and the Nixon Era is one of the few to bring the

gendered history of American social policy development close to the present; she is able to show, for example, the ways in which the proposed Family Assistance Plan depended on notions of the desirability of a traditional gender division of labor—although in the end, racial politics and federal institutional structures “trumped” those concerns and left AFDC in place.

COMPARING GENDER IN CONTEMPORARY WELFARE STATES

In comparative work, scholars from—or familiar with the cases of—the Scandinavian countries have been particularly prominent in pointing out that assumptions about the inevitability of the reproduction of patriarchy are too narrowly based on the experiences of countries where the the family wage was (and to some extent still is) the starting premise of social policy, and policies seem unlikely to promote women’s interests (e.g. Siim 1988, Hernes 1987, 1988, Borchorst & Siim 1987, Ruggie 1984, Haas 1992, Leira 1992). The centrality of the family wage and women’s domesticity to gender-related social policies has been questioned also by analysts of the French case (Jenson 1986) and of the situation of nonwhite women in the United States and elsewhere (e.g. Roberts 1995). In these cases, women’s paid work is far more accepted—indeed promoted—than has been the case for women of the dominant racial group in the English-speaking countries and in Central Europe. A number of analysts have therefore tried to explain the difference between the Scandinavian and other cases; the strength and organization of working-class groups looms large as an explanatory factor.

Ruggie’s (1984) analysis of Swedish and British policies toward working women revealed that the overall relationship between state and society—determined by the character of governing coalitions—affected women workers’ progress: “for the successful achievement of their employment pursuits, women must be incorporated into labor, and labor must be incorporated into the governing coalition” (p. 346). Similarly, Hill & Tigges (1995) compared women’s public pension quality across 20 industrialized countries and found that working-class strength is associated with improved income security and adequacy for older women, while women’s participation in working-class political and economic organizations increases older women’s economic equality with men. In a comparison of policies supporting care work and caretakers in Britain and Denmark, Siim (1990) argued that the extent to which increased social welfare benefits also increased women’s political power depended in part on the organization of social reproduction. In Denmark, women’s dual roles as worker and mother are supported by social and family policy that gives the state

a larger role in organizing and financing care for dependents, which facilitates women's integration into the workforce. In Britain, a "familist" social policy assigns primary responsibility for care work to "the family," assuming this contains a breadwinner husband and a wife who has time to attend to (unpaid) caregiving work; this seriously undercuts women's capacities to enter the paid labor force on an equal footing with men.

Interest in comparatively based explanations has also been stimulated by the persistence of "traditional" gender relations, particularly relatively low rates of women's labor force participation (see, e.g. on Ireland, Jackson 1993; on the Netherlands, Knijn 1994, Bussemaker & van Kersbergen 1994; and on Germany and other German-speaking countries, Schmidt 1993, Ostner 1993). European integration has raised the issue of how gender relations and social policies will be changed by processes of economic integration and by formal institutions such as the European court and the European Union equality directive (e.g. Schunter-Kleemann 1992, Lewis 1993).

Gender and Regime Types

A particularly promising development in comparative scholarship has come with the elaboration of the concept of "social policy regimes," which offers a way to analyze the qualitative variation across national systems. As Shaver (1990) describes them, social policy regimes are institutionalized patterns in welfare state provision establishing systematic relations between the state and social structures of conflict, domination, and accommodation. Such patterns refer to the terms and conditions under which claims may be made on the resources of the state, and reciprocally, the terms and conditions of economic, social, and political obligation to the state. These regimes are to be found in both individual institutions of the welfare state and in common patterns cutting across domains of social provision, such as health or income maintenance. Mainstream analysts of regime types have been concerned with the effects of welfare states on class relations and particularly with whether the state can "push back the frontiers of capitalism" (Esping-Andersen 1990). Feminist analysts using the regime type concept are interested in the gendered effects of state social policy; some are also attempting to define and measure gender interests [e.g. "woman-friendliness," in the felicitous phrase coined by Helga Hernes (1988)].

Much recent feminist work on regime types builds on Esping-Andersen's *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990). While Esping-Andersen's work only incidentally takes account of gender differences among different types of welfare states, his ideal-typical scheme has inspired fruitful research on the variation among regimes as investigators have utilized or reworked his schema to incorporate gender. Esping-Andersen proposes three dimensions that

characterize welfare states, including the relationship between the state and the market in providing income and services and the effects of the welfare state on social stratification. Central to the understanding of how welfare states affect class relations are the concepts of social rights and the “decommodification of labor,” defined as the degree to which the individual’s typical life situation is freed from dependence on the labor market. These rights affect the class balance of power by insulating workers to some extent from market pressures and by contributing to working-class political capacities.

Esping-Andersen has constructed a typology of regimes representing “three worlds of welfare capitalism”—liberal, conservative-corporatist and social-democratic—based on where they fall out on the three dimensions. Liberal regimes promote market provision wherever possible, encourage social dualisms between the majority of citizens who rely mainly on the market and those who rely principally on public provision, and do little to offer citizens alternatives to participating in the market for services and income. The welfare state is well-developed in both social-democratic and conservative-corporatist regimes, bringing almost all citizens under the umbrella of state provision, but in other ways the two types differ. The former are universalistic and egalitarian, while the latter preserve status and class differentials. Only social-democratic regimes promote significant decommodification of labor, for conservative-corporatist regimes condition their relatively generous benefits on strong ties to the labor market. Significant for gender relations is the fact that conservative regimes promote subsidiarity (thereby strengthening women’s dependence on the family), while social-democratic regimes have promoted an individual model of entitlement and provide services allowing those responsible for care work—mostly married mothers—to enter the paid labor force. Liberal regimes, he argues, are indifferent to gender relations, leaving service provision to the market. Despite the fact that “there is no single pure case,” Esping-Andersen classified the United States, Canada, Australia, and (probably) Great Britain as liberal regimes; the Nordic countries are identified as social-democratic regimes; and Austria, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands are conservative-corporatist regimes.

Many feminist analysts have critiqued Esping-Andersen for the gender-blindness of his scheme: His citizens are implicitly male workers; his dimensions tap into states’ impact on class relations and the relationship between states and markets without considering gender differences within classes or the relations between states and families; he leaves invisible women’s work on behalf of societal welfare (i.e. unpaid caring/domestic labor); and his framework fails to consider states’ effects on gender relations, inequalities, and power (see e.g. Langan & Ostner 1991, O’Connor 1993a, Orloff 1993a, Sainsbury 1994a,b,c,

Bussemaker & van Kersbergen 1994, Borchorst 1994a). Still, Esping-Andersen is not entirely uninterested in questions relevant for gender. The second half of his book considers the effects of welfare regimes on labor markets, with an in-depth analysis of the United States, Germany, and Sweden, and he here must confront patterns of gender within employment (albeit without any systematic understanding of how this is linked to gender relations overall). Swedish women's employment depends on the state both for jobs and for the services that make employment for those with caregiving responsibilities a possibility. German women are largely marginalized by an employment regime that revolves around the needs of predominantly male industrial workers, a relatively underdeveloped service sector, and state policies that prize subsidiarity over the public provision of services. US women's rising employment and the advances women have made into the upper ranks of the labor force are largely market-driven, although state anti-discrimination activity has been important in opening opportunities in the realm of private employment. While some US women have benefited from private employment opportunities and can afford private provision of services, others have suffered from the low wages and benefits of the lower rungs of the service sector.

Analysts have tried to make sense of gendered relations and patterns using the regime-type framework, evaluating whether or not liberal, conservative, and social-democratic regime types have distinctive effects on gender relations. Extending the analysis of regime types to consider the ways in which care work (broadly defined) is organized and supported has been a key area of concern for those interested in states and gender relations. Taylor-Gooby (1991) enriches Esping-Andersen's model by considering regime-type differences in the organization of the unpaid care work and the connected issue of how governments deal with issues of gender equality (principally in access to paid work). Gustafsson (1994) finds that childcare policies in the United States, the Netherlands, and Sweden reflect the regime-type differences specified by Esping-Andersen, that is, that public services are best developed in Sweden, market provision of services is prominent in the United States, and the Netherlands offers little public provision, in effect opting to support mothers' caregiving work rather than offering daycare. In a study of family support in the OECD countries, Wennemo (1994) finds two clusters: the countries of continental Europe—corresponding to Esping-Andersen's conservative regimes, which channel benefits through the wage system and therefore largely to men, and the English-speaking and Scandinavian countries—i.e. the liberal and social-democratic regimes—which offer public family allowances that are paid to mothers.

Sainsbury (1993) considers the effects on women of one aspect of social rights, the bases for making welfare claims, and the programmatic characteristics

(i.e. social assistance, social insurance, or universal entitlements) of four different welfare states—the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Sweden [which, although she is not explicit as to her selection criteria, do correspond to Esping-Andersen's three types (allowing for Britain's status as a mixed type)]. She shows that indeed, whether claims are based on labor market status, need, or citizenship is significant for gendered outcomes; women do best in Sweden, a system with strong universal characteristics, and fare worst in the United States and Britain, the countries with claims based principally on labor market participation. Lewis & Åström (1992) claim that Sweden's "woman-friendly" universalism is actually based on the fact that most Swedish women are in the paid labor force, thus successfully laying claim to the status of "worker citizens" as they also press demands based on "difference" [echoing Ruggie's (1984) argument]. Ruggie (1988, p. 174) has recently argued that Swedish politics had important limitations for further progress to the extent that "women's interests go beyond or are different from the interests of 'workers as a whole'." This would imply that the claims bases delineated by Esping-Andersen, Korpi, and others as important for the character of social rights must also be considered in terms of their gender content and that some concerns of women cannot be satisfied even by the generous social-democratic policy approach.

Many analyses of Luxembourg Income Study data have assessed regime-type concepts. For example, McLanahan and her colleagues have used LIS data to examine women's poverty levels, the association of different women's roles with poverty rates, and differences in men's and women's poverty in countries said by Esping-Andersen and others to represent different regime types (McLanahan et al 1995, Caspar et al 1994). These studies find relatively high poverty rates for single mothers and relatively high gender gaps in poverty (i.e. the difference between men's and women's rates) in Germany and Britain, but most notably in the United States, Canada, and Australia. Moreover, the policy strategies of countries that have relatively low poverty rates for women and low gender gaps differ qualitatively and in ways which seem to be related to regime types as defined by Esping-Andersen: Sweden reduces women's poverty by promoting their employment, Italy by reinforcing marriage [so that women's access to men's wages is (they assume) assured], the Netherlands by providing generous social transfers to all citizens. However, it is worth noting that gender roles have a significant influence on outcomes apart from differences in regimes types: "marriage and work reduce the risk of poverty for women in all countries, whereas motherhood increases the chances of being poor. The only mothers who have a better than average chance of staying out of poverty are mothers who combine parenthood and work with marriage" (McLanahan et al 1995, p. 275).

States clearly differ to some extent in their effects on gender relations. However, conclusions based on analyses that contrast countries purporting to represent different regime types are very likely influenced by the country chosen to “stand in” for any given regime cluster, when we have not carefully assessed their differences and similarities across dimensions relevant for gender. Thus, a “most-similar nations” comparative strategy can be very useful. Leira (1992) and Borchorst (1994b) examine the Scandinavian (i.e. social-democratic) states and find that there is significant variation within this group in the level of public child-care provision, with concomitant differences in women’s labor force participation; Denmark and Sweden offer greater support for combining motherhood with paid work, particularly for mothers of very young children, than does Norway. Leira argues that this results from differing models of motherhood, a dimension that seems to cross-cut the regimes as classified by Esping-Andersen’s dimensions. Similarly, investigations of the policies of countries classified as “liberal” using explicitly gendered dimensions reveal some important differences. Shaver (1993) finds a difference in reproductive policies. In the United Kingdom and Australia, women gain access to abortion through medical entitlement—universal health coverage gives them a social right to abortion understood as a medical procedure. In Canada and the United States, women have legal entitlement to “body rights”—including abortion with little medical or social regulation—but have no social right to help in providing the service. Orloff (1996) finds that different models of motherhood, as institutionalized in policies for the support of single mothers, hold sway in the United States as opposed to the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada; while the United States is moving to require paid work as the only route for the support of households, whether headed by couples or single mothers, (poor) solo mothers are still offered a period of state-supported full-time caring for their children in the other three. O’Connor (1993b) notes that Australia offers greater support for women’s and mothers’ paid work than do other “liberal” regimes; she attributes this to greater involvement by the central state in setting terms and conditions of paid work and the influence of state-oriented feminist movements.

GENDERED DIMENSIONS FOR ASSESSING WELFARE STATES

All of the approaches I have reviewed have helped to show the importance of gender relations in the welfare state and the significance of welfare states for the situations of men and women and their relationships. Yet these studies share some analytic weaknesses: an inadequate theorization of the political

interests of gender and a failure to specify the dimensions of social provision and other state interventions relevant for gender relations (Orloff 1993a, Borchorst 1994a). The two weaknesses are related; if one wants to argue that welfare states help to promote patriarchy or that welfare state benefits help women, one needs to specify the yardsticks for measuring these effects. One may ask the social reproduction analysts: What will constitute evidence that a given policy works for or against male dominance? One may ask the poverty researchers: Are women's interests only economic? Comparative analyses have generally had a more nuanced view of gender and state policies, but the understandings of gender interests and their measures often remain implicit and, to some extent, idiosyncratic. Finally, one may ask those who have used Esping-Andersen's regime-type scheme whether gender interests are fully correlated with class interests, and whether women's interests are limited to entering paid work. We need an explicit framework for assessing the gendered effects of social policy that is informed by an understanding of gender interests.

Gender Interests

Defining gender interests is necessary to the task of assessing the gendered effects of welfare states, but not simple. A prominent theme in recent feminist scholarship concerns conflicts of interests. For example, in addition to pointing out that men and women may have conflicting interests based on who has family wage-paying jobs or who has access to domestic or sexual services, feminist analysts have noted ways in which women's interests cohere and/or compete with children's interests. Others argue that it is falsely homogenizing to speak of women's interests per se, since the "interests that women (or men) have" (the descriptive sense of the concept) vary by class, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexual orientation, and so on (e.g. Molyneux 1985, Collins 1990). Molyneux (1985) calls attention to gender interests—those based on one's position within structures of gender relations (e.g. the gender division of labor, heterosexuality, or access to political power). This would imply that neither men's nor women's gender interests can be limited to the economic realm (Connell 1987, Jónasdóttir 1994, Fraser 1994). Thus conflicts of interests based both on gender relations and on other types of cleavages among women (and men) are quite likely in heterogeneous societies like our own. Molyneux further distinguished two types of gender interests: practical gender interests, those that if realized would improve women's (or men's) material situation but would not in themselves fundamentally challenge the gender order, and strategic gender interests, which for women are those that if realized would undermine some aspects of gender subordination. Post-structuralist theorists and those influenced by institutionalism argue further for shifting attention away from the question of "how women's interests can be most accurately represented to the processes whereby

they are constituted” (Pringle & Watson 1992, p. 63). Here, one needs to understand how the character of different welfare states’ policies both shapes and is shaped by the content of women’s (and men’s) practical and strategic gender interests, and how these change over time and vary within and across countries.

Political power and participation are also of concern in understanding interests. Jonasdottir (1988) contends that everyone has an interest in participating in the construction of choices in the policy areas that which affect them. Thus, being the subject as well as the object of policy is a critical aspect of women’s and men’s interests (see also Lewis 1992, Orloff 1993a, Lister 1990, O’Connor 1993a, Nelson 1984). Participation takes on a specifically gendered character in that women have been so long formally and informally excluded from the policymaking that shapes the structures of their incentives to work for pay and bear children, and to care for children, their husbands, or the disabled.

Gendered Dimensions for Assessing Welfare States

Feminist analysts note that Esping-Andersen’s framework was developed to address issues of class rather than gender power. Therefore, they argue, one cannot fully tap into states’ effects on gender relations simply by looking at how women and men fare in different regime types using his (or others’) gender-blind dimensions. Rather, specifically gendered dimensions based on an understanding of gendered interests are needed to assess the impact of state policies on gender relations.

Lewis (1992) argues for considering policy regimes in terms of their different levels of commitment to a male breadwinner-female housewife household form, which in ideal-typical form would “find married women excluded from the labour market, firmly subordinated to their husbands for the purposes of social security entitlements and tax, and expected to undertake the work of caring (for children and other dependents) at home without public support” (p. 162). Women’s interests, she thereby implies, are least well served by policies supporting this traditional set of arrangements, but they fare somewhat better when policy supports dual-earner households. She contrasts France, Sweden, Britain and Ireland, finding Britain and Ireland strongly committed to the breadwinner form, France less strongly so, and Sweden only weakly so, tending to a dual-breadwinner form. Although these cases are also in different regime clusters in Esping-Andersen’s scheme, there is considerable variation in the extent to which states approximate the ideal-type within his clusters (e.g. Germany vs. France within the corporatist type or Norway vs. Sweden within the social-democratic cluster). Lewis shows that her gendered dimension does not correlate neatly with class-related dimensions, but the model seems to conflate a number of potentially separable dimensions, notably women’s exclusion from paid work and their subordination within a male-headed family.

Sainsbury (1994c) proposes examining states in terms of their similarity to one of two gendered ideal-types: the breadwinner model (similar to Lewis's conception) and what she calls an individual model, where both men and women are earners and carers, benefits are targeted on individuals, and much caring work is paid and provided publicly. (One may also need to consider whether some elements of the individual model can be provided by nonstate sources.) She draws out specific dimensions of variation that differentiate the two models: the character of familial ideology, entitlement (including its basis, recipient, benefit unit, contribution unit, and mode of taxation), employment and wage policies, and organization of care work.

Shaver's (1990) earlier work on the gendered character of policy regimes argues that such regimes have components concerned with personhood and the rights of the individual, with the social organization of work, and with social bonding in emotional and reproductive relationships. These have close congruence with the terms used by RW Connell (1987) to map the structures of gender relations more generally. Connell identifies three underlying structures—labor, power, and cathexis. Shaver shows that the gender dimensions of policy regimes are shaped by state policies and legal frameworks. This approach then calls for an investigation of the gender basis of legal personhood, particularly with reference to "body rights" such as access to control over reproduction (see also Shaver 1993); how the sexual division of labor is institutionalized in paid employment and how it is affected by related policies such as child care; and how family, reproduction, and sexuality are affected by the institutionalization of dependency or individualization and the privileging of heterosexuality.

Langan & Ostner (1991) develop a gendered extension of Leibfried's (1992) empirically based classificatory scheme, which differentiated among Scandinavian, Bismarckian, Anglo-Saxon, and Latin Rim regimes on the basis of their relative emphasis on the market or citizenship, the extent to which traditional household forms remain, and the extent to which public social provision has been institutionalized and extended to the entire population. They examine each regime type in terms of whether the traditional family or individuals are the basis for social policy and how women are treated as unpaid and paid workers (occupational segregation, pay); however, their assessment criteria are not spelled out.

Orloff (1993a) and O'Connor (1993a) have worked to gender the conceptual apparatus of regime types as developed by Esping-Andersen, Korpi and others. Both argue that the organization of state-market relations and of the power balance among labor, state, and capital are significant for gender, as they affect the character of women's labor force participation and the organization of family support systems (e.g. unpaid care work, services). They also argue for including a stratification dimension, to include both gender differentiation and gender

inequality. Gender differentiation exists on the systemic level (e.g. through creating different programs for labor market and family “failures”) and on the individual level (e.g. through processes of making claims on the state, where men have typically made claims as individuals and workers, women often as dependents and family members). Access to benefits of similar quality for men and women in a range of different statuses (e.g. solo parent, unemployed worker, married person, retiree) is a key element of women’s interests in the welfare state. In contrast, Lewis’s scheme seems to give inadequate attention to women’s situation when they are not linked to men through marriage. As Hobson notes (1994, p. 175), “to cluster Britain, the Netherlands and Germany into a strong breadwinner model is to ignore the differences in poverty among solo mothers, who are the residuum in the male breadwinner ideology.”

O’Connor (1993a) and Orloff (1993a) argue for retaining and augmenting the decommodification dimension. Decommodification “protects individuals, irrespective of gender, from total dependence on the labor market for survival. . . . [a] protection from forced participation, irrespective of age, health conditions, family status, availability of suitable employment, [that] is obviously of major importance to both men and women” (O’Connor 1993a, p. 513). But not all social groups have equal access to the jobs that allow personal independence and access to decommodifying benefits. Both argue that access to paid work and to the services that facilitate employment for caregivers are critical gender dimensions of welfare regime variability, and reflect core gendered interests of women. O’Connor (1993a, p. 511) conceptualizes these dimensions as aspects of the ways in which the state affects “personal autonomy and insulation from personal and/or public dependence,” which centrally affects gender relations. Paid work is a principal avenue by which women have sought both to enhance their independence from husbands and fathers in families (thereby undermining the breadwinner-housewife family form) and to claim full status as “independent” citizens; it is also a prerequisite for gaining access to work-related benefits which decommodify labor.

Orloff (1993a) proposes also to consider how benefits contribute to women’s capacity to form and maintain an autonomous household, a dimension that indicates “the ability of those who do most of the domestic and caring work—almost all women—to form and maintain autonomous households, that is, to survive and support their children without having to marry to gain access to breadwinners’ income.” This should enhance women’s power vis-à-vis men within marriages and families (see also Hobson 1990). Men typically gain this capacity through their market work, backed up by income maintenance programs. State policies have differed in how (if at all) this capacity is achieved for women; some regimes have promoted women’s employment through varying combinations

of childcare services, wage subsidies, or improved-access policies, or by reducing levels of and eligibility for public support; this overlaps, then, with the dimension of access to paid work. Other regimes have offered support for solo mothers to stay at home to care for their children; this maintains core features of the gender division of labor—women remain responsible for caretaking—but undermines economic dependence on husbands. Orloff (1996) argues that the capacity to form and maintain a household embodies “the right to a family,” implying more than individual independence, and reflects the character of laws regulating sexuality, marriage, and household formation (e.g. laws on divorce, custody, homosexuality).

Political philosopher Fraser (1994) has proposed a set of evaluative standards for social policy based on an analysis of gender equity that recognizes that it is “a complex notion comprising a plurality of distinct normative principles” (p. 595). The principles include prevention of poverty, prevention of exploitable dependency, gender equality in income, leisure and respect, promotion of women’s participation on a par with men in all areas of social life, and the reconstruction of “androcentric institutions so as to welcome human beings who can give birth and who often care for relatives and friends, treating them not as exceptions, but as ideal-typical participants” (pp. 599–600). She argues that the only way to satisfy these principles would be to deconstruct gender by “inducing men to become more like what most women are now—that is, people who do primary care work” (p. 611); this would dismantle “the gendered opposition between breadwinning and caregiving.” Women’s gender interests are expressed in overcoming the gender division of labor and concomitant economic dependency and marginalization as well as in equality in access to valued resources (income, respect, time).

These various frameworks offer researchers a range of ways to take gender into account in evaluating welfare states. In addition to assessing the effects of state social provision on various aspects of gender relations, many of the analysts involved in these efforts to theorize gender and the welfare state have called for attention to the dimension of political participation (Lewis 1992, Orloff 1993a, O’Connor 1993a, Shaver 1990).

CONCLUSION

On the basis of this review, I recommend that future research include a comparative dimension; case studies should be situated in the context of the range of cross-national variation in relations between welfare states and gender relations. Moreover, I would encourage the use of gendered dimensions of variation to give greater specificity to findings and to allow the further development of a body of comparable findings concerning the mutual effects of gender relations

and welfare states. These findings may also speak to the question of the extent to which different gendered interests are reflected in state social provision, including the “woman-friendliness” of the state (Hernes 1988).

Out of this juxtaposition of studies coming from several different disciplines, modes of analysis, and theoretical emphases, I am struck by the potential to evaluate comparatively explanations for the variation in states’ gendered effects documented over time and across state boundaries. Research has established the causal significance of several factors: the balance of power between organized labor and employers; state capacities; the character of production and labor markets; the character of organized women’s groups (and men’s groups—usually manifest in organized labor); the character of discourses and ideologies of motherhood, population, femininity and masculinity; demographic characteristics; the extent of international military and economic competition (and the kind of wars for which countries need to prepare). Several case studies have also argued for the importance of race, ethnicity, and nationality (e.g. different population compositions and histories of immigration and settlement) to policy outcomes (see Williams 1995 for a proposed framework for comparison); gender relations differ across races, ethnicities, and nationalities within national contexts and are thus differently affected by social provision and contribute differently to social politics. The relative causal importance of these factors can now be assessed more explicitly, and the specific conjunctures of factors associated with particular outcomes identified. It seems likely as well that the political and programmatic legacies of different manifestations of “maternalist” policy will help in developing explanations for contemporary regime differences.

A focus on states as constitutive of gender relations—without the functionalist baggage of early research—has already been useful, and further refinements promise to be fruitful. For example, one might look at whether state capacities function in the same ways when the state is organized along formally gender-neutral principles as when it is characterized by gender differentiation and explicit masculine authority. Research on the maternalist policies and politics of the first part of the century suggest that when state administrative capacities are extensive, women’s autonomous organizations are less likely to emerge, but these capacities are also associated with relatively well-developed programs targeting women as mothers (and their children). However, in the contemporary era, state capacities in particular political contexts (e.g. social-democratic or labor parties in power) are associated with the development of “state feminism” and the promotion of various kinds of equality policies (e.g. Franzway, Court & Connell 1989, Stetson & Mazur 1995). Analysts are also highlighting the effects of discourse on gendered political participation (e.g. social movements, institutional participation) and on policymaking more generally; here,

too, specification of how these effects are shaped within particular economic, political, and institutional contexts would be welcome.

Research on gender relations and welfare states is engaged with many of the same issues as those that occupy "mainstream" research (i.e. research not concerned with gender)—but also offers some new perspectives on some vexing issues (e.g. American social policy exceptionalism). Moreover, it is increasingly clear that women are central to labor market developments, that social politics are at least partly gender politics, and that much welfare state restructuring is and has been a response to changes in gender relations. I close with the suggestion that we fully integrate gender into all studies of the welfare state.

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