

## Chapter 1

# International Differences in Women's Labour Force Participation: Theoretical Approaches

### Comparative Analysis in Sociology

Since sociology has become a scientific discipline in its own right a whole host of studies have been conducted that compare societies in order to investigate individual issues. The comparison of societies was

... made an explicit method that was now regarded as the safe and ideal solution for the execution of the discipline's concept of social history.<sup>1</sup>

The works of the leading authorities in sociology (such as Marx, Durkheim, and Weber) that are concerned with comparative research were to a considerable extent influenced by classical evolution-theoretical concepts according to which countries experience the same sequence of historical phases in the process of 'civilization' (cf. Boudon 1986, Tomnaga 1991, Wimmer 1996). The objective of comparisons in Émile Durkheim's sociology was not the explanation of differences but the discovery of variants of universal phenomena in the societies compared. According to Matthes (1992),

... this method did not compare differences, but a variable that has been projectively abstracted from a certain societal context and turned in a universal 'theoretical' construct is tested in the real world for its variations.<sup>2</sup>

These variations were then categorized on the basis of the 'central idea' that social development progresses in steps from the 'traditional' to the 'modern' society; the yardstick for the 'modern' society, which was regarded as positive in the normative sense, were Western European industrial countries. Specific characteristics of individual societies were played down and marginalized by Durkheim as 'cultural features' and not made the subject of analysis or explanation. According to Matthes, this understanding of the 'Operation called Vergleichen' (the title of his essay) is also dominant in contemporary sociology; he also criticized the lack of theoretical approaches that take variety as the starting point.<sup>3</sup>

Quite early, however, a competing tradition of sociological comparison developed that explicitly concentrated on the differences between societies. The origin of this branch of research was in ethnomethodology, represented, for example, by Malinowski. This type of argumentation emphasized that societies were unique,

coherent units that could be understood only in their respective uniqueness and entirety.

The relations of cultural values, social institutions, and the practice of social actors has always been a controversial matter, though. On the one hand there are 'idealistic' theories according to which the variations of phenomena in the comparison of societies are best explained by the influences of the cultural system. On the other hand, representatives of structuralist and institutional theories generally assume that social structures and the influence of institutions are mainly responsible for such differences. This type of approach can primarily be found in theory formation with regard to comparative analysis of the development of women's labour force participation (see also O'Reilly 1996). Two types of theories can be differentiated. One tries to explain cross-national differences in the behaviour of individuals with welfare state policy and distinguishes between different 'welfare regimes' or 'regimes of government gender policy'. The other, also a structuralist or institutional theory, deals with the relations of the various institutions or structures and the way the gendered division of labour is produced and reproduced on this basis. Here the structural dimension is either put before the dimension of cultural values, as in the patriarchal-theoretical approach, or culture and institutions are treated as a coherent unit.

In the following, the most important of the existing theoretical approaches to comparison are introduced and their contribution to an explanation is discussed.

### Explanation with Differences in Welfare State Policy

The explanation approaches to cross-national differences in women's labour force participation often come from the more recent international discourse in social policy research. Here the differences are explained with country-specific variations in welfare state policy.

In the early 1990s the sociological discourse gained new impetus from the influential works of Scandinavian resource theorists such as Gøsta Esping-Andersen and Walter Korppi, in which the connection between welfare state policy and gainful employment plays an important role. In this respect the book *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* by Esping-Andersen (1990) was met with a tremendous response. There the author investigates how welfare states in Western industrial societies influence the structures of social inequality. According to Esping-Andersen, various 'welfare regimes' can be identified in which the state – in different ways and with different objectives – intervenes in the market and affects the social distribution of resources. The differences are due to the fact that policy orients with the specific principles each welfare state is based on. These welfare regimes can be distinguished on the basis of three criteria: the quality of social rights, their effects on the structures of social inequality, and the way state, market and family are related.

According to this theory, the quality of social rights depends to a considerable extent on the degree of decommodification in a society that is caused by the welfare state. Esping-Andersen hereby refers to the degree to which individuals are enabled by social security provided by the welfare state to secure their livelihood by other means than through gainful employment:

... the degree to which individuals, or families, can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation. (1990: 37)

The extent of decommodification of labour on the other hand, as Esping-Andersen argued, affects the conditions under which individuals have to sell their labour, the size of wages, the welfare and security of the workers, and their opportunities to organize themselves collectively for their own interests.<sup>4</sup> Thereby the state also creates different settings for the gainful employment of women (see also Kolberg/Esping-Andersen 1991). On this basis Esping-Andersen (1990) ideal-typically differentiates between the social democratic, the conservative-corporate, and the liberal welfare regime.

The *social democratic* welfare regime, which according to the author can be found especially in the Scandinavian countries, is characterized by universal social citizen rights and a high degree of decommodification. It typically tends to promote an evening out of social inequalities. This type of welfare state policy – the Swedish welfare state is the prototype for Esping-Andersen – is based on the idea that men and women should both be fully integrated in gainful employment and that the state is primarily responsible for the production of social welfare. Hence the welfare state provides a wide range of social services. It thereby also becomes one of the most important employers for women. A prerequisite for the realization of this type of welfare state is the heavy taxation of incomes. As this requires the participation of the middle classes in the consensus, welfare state benefits are provided on a qualitatively high level that meets the demands also of the middle classes.

In the *conservative-corporate* welfare regime on the other hand – which according to the approach of Esping-Andersen (1990) is typical especially for continental Western Europe, e.g. West Germany, Austria, and France – the state plays an important role in the distribution of welfare, and decommodification is an important policy element. In contrast to the Scandinavian welfare regime, however, social policy does not orient with the principles of solidarity or try to even out social inequalities but rather tends to reproduce the existing structures of vertical inequality. Accordingly, the entitlements to benefits from the social security system vary with the size of income. The family is of particular importance for the production of social services. Government transfer payments and services come into effect only when the family is unable to generate these itself. At the same time, gainful employment of women is not promoted, for example the state does not provide any special services that support the entry of mothers into the employment system. This restriction of employment creates a fundamental problem: according to Esping-Andersen, a relatively small part of the population has to generate the wage and salary income that is to secure the livelihood also of those parts of the population who are not gainfully employed.<sup>5</sup>

The *liberal* model of the welfare state, realized especially in the Anglo-American countries, is based on liberal ideals according to which the 'free play of the market forces' is the best guarantee for a fair distribution. Here the state tries to interfere in the market as little as possible and to maintain the commodity character of labour to a large extent. The function of the state in this welfare regime is more a residual one, i.e. to cushion the worst effects of poverty. Here the degree of decommodification is particularly low and all adult individuals are generally forced

to provide for themselves through gainful employment. The benefits granted by the social security systems are relatively low. With this policy, as Esping-Andersen argues, liberal welfare regimes reinforce the existing structures of social inequality. A special policy for the promotion of women's gainful employment, for example by providing an extensive supply of public kindergarten places, is not intended, 'concepts of gender matter less than the sanctity of the market' (Esping-Andersen 1990: 28).<sup>6</sup>

According to Kolberg and Esping-Andersen (1991) three labour market regimes can be differentiated, complementary to the three welfare regimes, with respect to the extent the welfare state assumes the function of an employer. In countries where the full employment of women is an element of welfare state policy the state plays an important role as an employer, especially with respect to female employment. Where the state's function is only a residual one, however, it fulfils this role only to a very limited extent. Esping-Andersen's principal explanation of the differences between the welfare states is that social democracy's capability to form class coalitions varied historically (Esping-Andersen 1990).

His argumentation contains an important idea although it has not been theoretically pursued in all respects: this idea is that the attitude of the welfare state to female gainful employment is an important distinguishing feature of welfare regimes. Nevertheless, some objections to this theory can be raised.

1 Although Esping-Andersen's typification of welfare states is convincing, his assumption that the general principles of welfare state policy he identified were linked to a respective specific policy as to women's participation in gainful employment does not seem plausible to me. It is difficult to see why basic cultural principles of a policy that attaches particular value to the decommmodification of labour and pursues the objective of an egalitarian social structure (as in the social democratic model) were to be logically linked to the idea of women's full integration in the labour market. Empirically, this is the case for Swedish model, the one Esping-Andersen refers to, and even more so for the Finnish welfare state (see Chapter 6). In Norway, however, a society whose welfare state policy also corresponds to the social democratic regime, policy did not orient with the idea of full employment of women until well into the 1980s; this is also evident from the data on women's labour force participation (see Figure 1.1 and Leira 2002, Ellingsæter 1999, Pfau-Effinger 2001). The discrepancy between the general principles of welfare state policy and policy regarding women's labour force participation in gainful employment is even clearer in the development of the Dutch welfare state. According to Esping-Andersen (1990), the general cultural principles that policy has been based on in recent decades corresponded to a significant extent to those of the social democratic welfare regime. With respect to the familial and gendered division of labour, however, practical policy tended to support the housewife marriage and promoted opportunities that allowed women to stay at home as long as their children lived in the household (see Chapter 5). In Esping-Andersen's theory the promotion of the housewife marriage is a feature of the conservative-corporate welfare regime. Hence his close theoretical connection of welfare regime and gender policy of the welfare state proves problematic. It should rather be assumed that for every 'regime type'

there is a certain range of policies with respect to women's gainful employment, as also Duncan (1998a) has argued.

2 Even though Esping-Andersen has declared the attitude of the welfare state to female gainful employment an important distinguishing feature of welfare regimes the explanatory value of this approach is limited with respect to women's labour force participation. The emphasis of the theoretical argumentation is on the relationship of state and market. The family and the fact that women use some of their labour to do unpaid family work are not sufficiently taken into account (Leitner 1999, Orloff 1993). In this sense, Orloff has argued:

Provision of welfare 'counts' only when it occurs through the state or the market, while women's unpaid work in the home is ignored. Furthermore, the sexual division of labour within states, markets, and families also goes unnoticed. (Orloff 1993: 315)

This also ignores that women's position on the labour market and the welfare state differs from that of men' although this can have significant consequences for the decision of women to be gainfully employed during the period of active motherhood.

3 There is also too much emphasis on the working class and its history in the socio-historical explanation of the differences between welfare states. If cross-national differences in the gender policy of welfare states are to be explained, it does not suffice to analyse the development of the welfare state only as the result of conflicts and negotiation processes between the state, employers, and employee representatives. They also have to be seen as the result of negotiation processes between the genders.

Due to such limitations of its explanatory power suggestions have been made for an extension of Esping-Andersen's approach. Orloff (1993: 307) suggested two further indicators for the classification of welfare states: the opportunity individuals have to live autonomously as parents, and access to paid employment since access to the labour market enables women to secure their livelihood and therefore has an emancipatory effect. It therefore has to be analysed in how far the state promotes gainful employment of women, 'the right to be commodified, if you will' (ibid.: 318). Such suggestions for an extension of Esping-Andersen's approach, however, face the dilemma that they are implicitly based on his theoretical foundation although that had been criticized as 'gender blind' (see also Duncan 1994, 1998a).

Suggestions that type welfare states on the basis of the 'gender' structure category go a step further. Jane Lewis and Ilona Osher (1994) developed a concept for the classification of welfare regimes from the gender perspective on the basis of the feminist critique of the resource-theoretical approach. The basis of their classification is welfare state policy with respect to women's position between family and employment system. Their typification orients with the extent to which the family model of the male breadwinner marriage is developed. Lewis and Osher assume that the male breadwinner marriage, with a dependent wife doing unpaid work and with dependent children, is an element of the welfare state that varies in degree from country to country; this has consequences for women's labour force participation (ibid.: 1). The main difference is in how far women are treated not only as mothers but

also as gainfully employed persons. On this basis the authors distinguish between welfare states with strong, modified, or weak male breadwinner orientation. The classification depends on the relation between the public sphere of paid work and the private sphere of unpaid caring and on the assignment of men and women to these two spheres as well as on the role the welfare state plays in assuming tasks of social care. The authors cite a number of examples to show how variations in the degree to which policies oriented with the male breadwinner model cause differences in the welfare states' gender policies.

This approach provides important starting points for the development of a theoretical model for an explanation of the differences in the institutional frameworks of female gainful employment. Its scope, however, is limited to welfare state policy; the connection with family and labour market structures is not covered. Moreover, the existing behavioural patterns of women are regarded as the result of welfare state policy while the question of the influence of other institutions and cultural values and notions is not pursued any further. Finally, the question should be asked whether the male breadwinner model is indeed the generally underlying pattern for gendered division of labour in European societies as this approach assumes. I will investigate these issues in Chapters 4 through 7 on the basis of an empirical survey.

The argumentation of Christel Lane (1993) takes a similar direction as the approach by Lewis and Ostner. The author has studied the reasons for the differences in the patterns of female labour force participation between the three largest Western European societies: the United Kingdom, Germany, and France. Lane concentrated on the gender policy practice of the state. She found that each of the studied societies has a specific gender profile with respective effects on the structuring of the labour market along the lines of gender (ibid.: 274). The assumption of specific 'gender profiles' expressed in a specific orientation of government policy is an appropriate basis for cross-national comparison and resembles the approach of Lewis and Ostner. However this explanation of the development of women's labour force participation and of female part-time employment is also restricted to the level of the regulatory framework set by the state.

Another type of approach studies how differences in the gender policy of the welfare state develop and which role the policy of collective actors plays in this respect. The importance of these approaches lies in the fact that they include an action-theoretical dimension in the comparison of the gender policies of welfare states. Jane Jenson (1988) analysed the history of government policy with respect to female gainful employment in France and the UK on the basis of maternity leave. She argued that the work experience of French women in the past century was characterized by their involvement in gainful employment while English women were systematically excluded from the same. When infant mortality dramatically rose at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, different political discourses developed: in the UK this discourse was held under the condition that a woman's place was in the family and that gainful employment was not compatible with that role; in France, on the other hand, maternity leave was enacted at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which enabled mothers to engage in gainful employment. For Jenson this is evidence for her thesis that capitalist societies develop differing 'political discourses of gender' which generate differences in government policy.<sup>8</sup> In the comparison she conducted Jensen explains this with the different contributions of trade union traditions to the

political discourse about the relations of the genders in the two countries. As the French unions have traditionally been more egalitarian in nature, equality was emphasized in the discourse about the role of women to a greater extent than in England (Jenson 1988: 35).

In this concept, differences in women's labour force participation, and especially the question whether women work part-time or full-time, are explained with the respective government policy as to female gainful employment, which is regarded as the result of the political discourse between organized capital and organized labour. In my opinion, an important aspect of this approach is that it includes the historical perspective and takes into account that government policies refer to collective discourses about gender relations. Collective patterns of women's labour force participation, however, are primarily regarded as an immediate reaction to government policy rather than something requiring a more complex explanation.

A further approach that also deals with the contribution of collective actors to the gender policy of welfare states was developed by Günther Schmid (1992). Schmid argued that female gainful employment was to a large extent due to the consequences of the (implicit) social contract with the help of which societies organize their welfare state and therefore also the labour market. Schmid's classification of government policies was based on two reference categories, namely wage settlement – which is reached either via the market or via negotiation processes between political and social forces – and job creation – either in the public or the private sector. From the four possible combinations of these two factors Schmid ideal-typically derived three scenarios or possible models of government policy: with respect to the model of the *integrated free market* the (implicit) social contract intends wages to be regulated by the market and the state hardly participates in the creation of new jobs. The effect on female gainful employment is low in this case. Gainful employment of women is at most promoted indirectly as due to the existence of a relatively large low-wage sector a comparatively high share of the resident population is forced into the formal labour market, which supports an increase in female gainful employment in the private sector. In contrast, the (implicit) social contract in the model of the *integrated welfare state* is based on the principle that all those gainfully employed have a right to a socially appropriate income, independent of their productivity and the market value of their work. Here the state significantly contributes to the creation of new jobs. This model involves a high rate of female employment. In the model of the *disintegrated welfare state* the wage system is also based on the postulate that all those gainfully employed are entitled to a socially appropriate income. Here the state does not significantly participate in the creation of new jobs, however, as it regards certain services as the responsibility of the private households and the informal sector. Due to their 'deviating' behaviour with regard to gainful employment women are structurally disadvantaged in this model. Schmid emphasizes that the policy of collective actors in the 'corporate triangle' is of central importance for government labour market policy and hence for the policy of the state with respect to women's integration in the labour market.

According to this theoretical approach, women's labour market situation and their labour force participation are the result of general societal regulations regarding the way the state influences the labour market. The approach provides important starting points for a differentiating description of the relations of state and labour market.

It enables a distinction between welfare states on the basis of the 'demand side' of the labour market as affected by the state and on the basis of jobs. Schmid considers that the way welfare states influence the development of the number of jobs orients with cultural models on the desirability of women's participation in gainful employment. For the question of the extent to which women participate in the labour force, however, the 'supply side' of the labour market and the influence of social policy on the labour market behaviour of women have to be taken into account as well.<sup>9</sup>

Lilja Mósesdóttir (1996, 2001) also emphasizes the importance of collective actors for government policy. From the outset the category 'gender' forms the centre of her approach. The author deals with the question of how the social forces can be identified that affect the nature of the state as a regulator of gender relations; she assigns particular importance to the women's movement. The state is here regarded as the producer and as the product of strategies. This approach takes into account that the strategies of collective actors not only refer to interests but also to cultural models. The relevance of the 'culture' dimension, however, is not explicitly described by this approach.

The following conclusion can be drawn. The available theoretical approaches to the relationship of welfare state policy and gainful employment provide important starting points for a theoretical framework suitable for cross-national comparative research on the social integration of men and women. They allow a differentiating examination of the policy of the welfare state with respect to female gainful employment, an analysis of these policies as the result of the strategies of collective actors, and the consideration of their cultural foundations. These approaches do not suffice, however, to explain cross-national differences in women's labour force participation. The understanding of the relationship of structure and practice they are based on is often problematic. What is lacking is an elaborated theoretical approach to the way welfare state policy affects the behaviour of individuals and social groups. It is often implicitly assumed that welfare state policy immediately determines the behaviour of individuals and the aggregate behaviour was the result of welfare state policies. Hence it is frequently argued that institutional constraints were responsible when women are not engaged in gainful employment or work only part-time. This ignores the influence of cultural models and values on women's decisions as to gainful employment. Some approaches take these into account – in so far as they affect government policy. The way culture and institutions are correlated is not discussed, however; the approaches rather tend to stick to the 'myth of cultural integration' (Archer 1995). Furthermore, the complex interactions within the institutional system are often not sufficiently considered or theoretically described. And finally, in most approaches the conditions under which social and cultural change takes place remain unclear.

### Explanation with the Interaction of Institutions and Structures

In the following I present theoretical approaches that provide starting points for an analysis and a comparison of the development of women's labour force participation in the context of the interrelations of social structures and institutions.

#### The 'Effet Societal' Approach

Some institutional oriented attempts at an explanation refer to the *effet societal* approach of the French LEST, in Nancy, that was developed on the basis of a comparative German-French study of the connection of education and employment system (Lutz 1976, Maurice/Sellier/Silvestre 1986). According to its originators it is a methodological framework for international comparative research in labour market and employment sociology (Michon 1992). Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre (1986) argue that individual social elements cannot be analysed without taking their respective specific societal context into account. Hence social practice takes place in the context of specific institutions of a certain society which influence behaviour but which are also affected by the behaviour of social actors. Emphasis is here placed on the interactions of education and employment system on the one hand and the system of industrial relations on the other. According to the *effet societal* approach every society functions on the basis of unique interrelations of its institutions. An explanation of differences hence tries to identify a coherent system or a certain social logic in every country observed (Maurice 1991: 89). It is therefore required, so the argument goes, to choose a holistic approach to the comparative analysis of social phenomena that always keeps an eye on the connections between the various elements of a social system. The significance of social forms therefore differs with the societal context and can be analysed appropriately only when this context is included in the analysis.

The approach contains important ideas for comparative research as it includes the context of the respective society in the comparison of developments in the sphere of work. Due to its assumption of coherence in the relations of institutions it is problematic, however. It also assigns relatively low weight to the importance of the role of social actors. For those reasons the approach has been criticized for its functionalistic and static view of society (Lane 1989). Neither does it consider the significance of cultural factors (Pfau-Effinger 1996). Although Marc Maurice later found that the approach has to be extended to include the aspect of cultural values, this did not result in its respective further development (Maurice 1995, 2000). Despite the further development of the approach I think that issues such as the significance of social actors, breaks and inconsistencies and social change in the societal context, and the interactions of culture and institutions have so far not been sufficiently taken into account. I also think that the benefit of this approach for the comparison of societies is limited as it exclusively emphasizes the uniqueness of the country-specific context. Burkart Lutz (1993: 104) points out this problem:

In the last instance the analytical recourse to the *effet societal* causes everything that originally seemed comparable to disappear in the respective national specificity of the conditions of society as a whole.<sup>10</sup>

As the approach places social phenomena in their societal context it provides important starting points also for cross-national comparison of labour market practice.

Jill Rubery (1988) combined the approach of the *effet societal* with the approach of 'social reproduction' of the Cambridge Labour Studies Group. The latter had

been developed as a more comprehensive approach in comparison to the original segmentation approach because of the considerable deficits of conventional labour market-theoretical theory formation with respect to people's employment patterns; it was to consider the social and political conditions of the labour market to a greater extent and more emphasis was to be placed on the supply side of labour (Wilkinson 1981, Craig et al. 1985). According to this concept the developments of the labour market are structured by the productive system on the one hand and by the system of 'social reproduction' on the other hand, which is relatively autonomous in comparison (Rubery 1988). These are, in accordance with the assumptions of the *effet sociétal* approach, specifically and uniquely connected in every society. On this basis the supply of female labour is constructed by a variety of social and political conditions and the prevailing attitudes of the population as to gainful employment of women are among them. With the help of this approach differences between countries in the development of the female labour market can be analysed on the basis of country-specific characteristics. Rubery applied this approach to explain cross-national differences in the development of part-time work (1988). Moreover, Jill Rubery and Colette Fagan (1993, 1995) argued that certain institutional structures such as the organization and industry structure of social production, labour market conditions and regulation, the education and vocational training system, and the dominant cultural attitudes and values including attitudes to gender roles were decisive for cross-national differences in the gender-specific segregation of the labour market.

At the end of the 1980s the approach represented an important step in the development of labour market theory as it included the demand side and the supply side of the labour market into analyses of the development of new forms of employment such as part-time work. What I regard as unsatisfactory is the way Rubery treats the relationship of demand and supply side in her comparative analysis on part-time employment. According to the argument, companies – based on their market-related economic interests – determine the working-hour model under which women are employed. The economic interests of companies depend on the respective legal regulations as to part-time work and the tax incentives and restrictions with respect to part-time employment (Rubery 1988: 262, 277). This view neglects the effect the supply side of the labour market has on companies' employment policy. Actually, the working hour preferences of the employees in one segment may be a central issue from the outset when companies select from the available employment policy instruments. Empirical studies for West Germany have shown that many part-time jobs are not created out of companies' independent economic interests but exclusively as a reaction to the supply side, in order to keep hold of female workers with company-specific qualifications who would otherwise quit their jobs and look for a new one because of their preference for part-time work (Wiesenthal 1997). It is therefore important to analyse the preferences of workers as to part-time employment and how these change and which social developments affect them. The relation of restrictions and options of the employment system on the one hand and the behavioural patterns of individuals on the 'supply side' on the other hand should be elaborated. The fact that negotiation processes in the context of industrial relations play a decisive role with respect to the design of jobs should be considered as well.

Fagan and O'Reilly also suggested a comparative analysis of part-time work on the basis of the *effet sociétal* approach (O'Reilly 1996: 11; Fagan/O'Reilly 1997a). Anne Marie Daune-Richard (1997) referred to this approach to explain differences in part-time employment of women in France, the U.K., and Sweden. She describes the respective 'social configuration' from which part-time work originated and spread to a greater or lesser extent. The problem of how the – sometimes contradictory – interrelations between the various levels are to be conceptualized, how change can be explained and compared, and how differences can be explained without limiting the argumentation to national characteristics has so far not been satisfactorily solved on the theoretical level.

#### *Differing Paths toward the Service Society*

Hartmut Häußermann and Walter Siebel assume that cross-national differences in the development of women's labour force participation are of central importance for the explanation of cross-national differences in the way modern Western industrial societies transform into service societies. Although the subject of their study is primarily the development of the service society and not the attempt to explain international differences in women's labour force participation, the approach can provide important impetus for the conceptualization of a framework for the explanation of such differences.

The study focuses on the development of the economies of modern Western societies towards service economies. Häußermann and Siebel assume that this development is characterized by women's increasing integration in gainful employment and by the fact that in the course of this considerable shares of unpaid work in the household are professionalized and integrated in the formal employment system where these tasks are then again carried out by women.

The way into the service society is the way of women into the system of professionally organized work.<sup>11</sup>

According to the authors, the ways societies take into the service society differ. These differences depend to a considerable extent on the success of women's full integration in employment.

They argue that the extent to which women are integrated in employment depends primarily on the development of consumption services, especially social services as these are tasks that are culturally constructed as 'female' and hence move together with the women from the households into the employment system.

The authors regard the respective development of social services as the result of the interplay of cultural traditions, welfare state policy, and companies' practice. On the basis of a comparison of the development in the USA, Sweden, and West Germany they differentiate three paths into service society that differ mainly with respect to whether the market, the welfare state, or the family are primarily responsible for the production of social services. The authors point out the significance of the enlargement of the public supply of social services for a way towards women's integration into gainful employment that leads to greater equality in the gender relations.

The economic development is here not presented as a quasi-autonomous process determining all other processes of change but the interactions of social and political development processes and the development of the labour market are illustrated and conceptualized. Hence the approach of Häußermann and Siebel offers important starting points for the analysis of the connection of tertiarization and the development of women's labour force participation. As the subject of their work is a different one, it does not include an analysis of the contradictory dynamics in the development of the relation of cultural values and ideals on the one hand and institutional policies on the other hand nor of the development of women's orientation as to gainful employment that takes place in this context.

#### *Differing Stages of the Patriarchal Order as an Explanation*

On the basis of the 'patriarchy' concept Sylvia Walby (1990, 1994) developed a conflict-theoretical approach, which she further developed into a theoretical framework for comparative analyses of gender structures. Her theory follows the tradition of 'dualistic' theories of the socialist-feminist tradition. This means that she assumes a specific interaction of patriarchal and capitalist social structures. She further assumes that there is a comprehensive patriarchal system which is defined as a 'system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women' (Walby 1990: 20). The dominance of men results from their control of societal resources. Hence men control the work of women in the family as well as in the employment system. Walby applies this approach to the description of regional and international differences in gender relations. There are six dimensions with regard to the extent of patriarchal dominance: paid work, unpaid work, state, male violence, sexuality, and culture. Walby further differentiates between different forms of patriarchy: one is the private form in which women are assigned to the private sphere of the family and exploited by 'their' male breadwinner, and the other is the public form in which women are exploited either by the collective of men in gainful employment or by the state – it depends. According to Walby each of the two main forms of patriarchy can be classified by the degree patriarchal structures are realized. With respect to gainful employment the share of women working full-time is used as an indicator for the degree of women's independence or – from the opposite perspective – for the degree of patriarchal dominance. In this approach, social change in the relations between the genders is regarded as change between private and public patriarchy on the one hand and as change in the degree of patriarchy on the other hand (ibid.).

In the early 1990s Walby's studies contributed to the further development of the theoretical framework for research into the work of women as the patriarchal-theoretical assumptions are much more elaborated here than in earlier feminist theories. An important dimension this approach emphasizes is the dimension of power relations. However, I regard the usefulness of this approach as a basis for international comparative research into women's labour force participation as limited because it raises a number of theoretical problems.

1 First of all, the action-theoretical dimension is hardly taken into account. Women as social actors are systematically excluded in this concept. When they act it is for

the most part only as organized women's movements – as Walby explained in a further development of her patriarchal-theoretical approach (Walby 1997).

2 As the role of social actors is not systematically developed in this theory it remains unclear how social change can be brought about (see also Duncan 1995a).

3 Moreover, cultural values and models do not play a role in this theory. Culture is restricted to the level of institutionalized production of culture in the media, etc., and is only one of the six gender structures in Walby's approach. With respect to Walby's cross-national comparative analyses this generates problematic interpretations. The analysis of women's labour force participation and female part-time employment does not take into account that these social phenomena may have different meanings in different institutional and cultural settings (see also O'Reilly 1996, Fagan/O'Reilly 1997b, Bang/Jensen/Pfau-Effinger 2000).

4 If it is assumed that the significance of social phenomena can vary in the comparison of societies, the assumption of a continuum of more/less patriarchy in each of the six underlying dimensions – derived from indicators such as women's labour force participation – is also problematic.

5 The way the dimension of 'power' is treated in this theory is problematic as well. It remains unclear why it should always be men who have a monopoly on the important resources and why the resources available to men should always be superior to those women have. The value of resources is always constructed by society. Therefore the issue of the value of resources that are available to certain social groups and its cultural and social genesis should enter the theoretical framework as an open question.

6 The treatment of 'paid work' (gainful employment) and 'unpaid work' (housework) as relatively 'autonomous substructures' of patriarchy seems also problematic. In this regard research on women's issues has often argued that it is actually the combination of both forms of work, their connection and their complementary character, which is constitutive for the situation of women in society. This finds expression in central terms and approaches of gender research: in the terms 'gendered division of labour', 'dual socialization' of women (Becker-Schmidt 1985), 'female human capital' (Beck-Gemshelm/Ostner 1978), 'everyday life of women' (Jurczyk/Rerrich 1993), 'dual life planning' (Geissler/Oechlsle 1996) and in social-constructivist approaches (see West/Fenstermaker 1995, Fenstermaker/West/Zimmermann 1991). They emphasize not only the separation of both spheres of action, which is accompanied by gender segregation, but also their combination in the everyday lives and biographies of women. These theories assume that the structural allocation of women to both social spheres, family and gainful employment, and the specific combination of these two spheres in the biographies and everyday lives of women are of fundamental significance for the behaviour and the chances of women on the labour market. All these approaches argue that those persons who assume the tasks of the household and of child raising suffer structural disadvantages on the labour market. Hence a comparative analysis of women's labour market behaviour has to take the family situation of women and the work they perform there into account.

Walby's theory is actually rather a classification of forms of gender relations than an explanation. Altogether it remains open why there is private and a public patriarchy and under which conditions social change takes place.

John MacInnes (1998) also has tried to explain cross-national differences with respect to the differing degrees of integration of men and women in the labour market with the help of a patriarchal-theoretical approach. In contrast to Walby he assumes that the development goes in the direction of gender equality. According to MacInnes, such tendencies correspond to an inherent logic of capitalist development as capitalism undermines patriarchy in the course of its development. Gender was a form of conservative ideology that evolved only during the transition to the capitalist society. It was invented by men in order to defend the financial and ideological heritage of patriarchy against the sexually equalizing tendencies of capitalism that are due to the granting of individual rights (1998: 228).

MacInnes explains cross-national differences in women's labour force participation with capital having undermined patriarchy to different extents in different countries:

I have argued that we can understand inequality between men and women in terms of the extent to which the dynamics of modernity have undermined the previously existing patriarchal orders in various countries. (ibid.: 240)

The approach offers an interesting new perspective with regard to the relationship of capitalism and social inequality in the gender relations. It provides for that chance that there are trends in social development which transcend the existing structures of gender inequality.

In principle, the approach is based on the assumption that everywhere the development of gender relations takes place according to the same pattern. In the end, differences are shown only on a one-dimensional scale of different degrees of social erosion of patriarchal structures. However, it is not clear why and in how far the erosion of patriarchy, expressed in cultural change, takes different routes in different countries.

#### *The 'Gender Order' Approach*

The theory of the 'gender order' by Connell (1987, 1996) was a further development of theory formation regarding the structure of the gender relations. Already in the 1980s the Australian sociologist developed a dynamic theoretical approach for the analysis of gender relations in the historical and social comparison. He did not design his theory explicitly as a framework for cross-national comparative analyses, though.<sup>12</sup> The basis of his theory is explained in the book *Gender and Power* (1987). He refers to Giddens' (1979, 1984) 'theory of duality and structure' which is based on the theoretical assumption that there are close links between the behaviour of social actors and the reproduction and change of social structures.

With regard to the relations between the genders Connell differentiates three substructures that interact in the 'gender regimes' of the individual institutions. These three structures are division of labour, power, and 'cathexis', i.e. emotional and

sexual relations. Connell emphasizes that although the three structures are relatively autonomous they are on the other hand also closely linked. What differs are the respective dominant ordering principles: the most important organization principle of the division of labour is separation or division; the principle effective in power structures on the other hand is that of unequal integration (Connell 1987: 97). In the 'gender regime' of the respective institution the power relations, the division of labour, and the emotional and social relations between men and women are respectively formed in a specific way by the social practice of the actors.

With the term 'gender order' Connell describes the connection of all social institutions, the interaction of the substructures of the individual institutions, and the institutions' dynamics of change. Connell draws an analogy to the composition of a piece for an orchestra: just like a composition it is continuously reproduced and restaged.

It is a unity – always imperfect and under construction – of historical composition. I mean 'composition' as in music: a tangible, active and often difficult process of bringing elements into connection with each other and thrashing out their relationships. It is a matter of the real historical process of interaction and group formation. ... The product of the process is not a logical unity but an empirical unification. It happens on particular terms in particular circumstances. At the level of a whole society it produces the gender order. (ibid.: 116)

Tensions and conflicts between the actors may occur in the 'gender regime' when the actors' interests have changed due to processes of social change on other social levels.

In my opinion, the way Connell differentiated between the various social levels, structures, and the social practice of actors was a vital contribution to theory formation in gender research. It provided many starting points for international comparative research. He treated housework and gainful employment as complementary structures within the scope of the 'division of labour' structure, so the important links between the social spheres of gainful employment and family can be taken into account. I also think it appropriate to separate 'power' as individual structure from the division of labour. Actually there are many examples supporting the assumption that relations of power may to a certain degree be independent of the form of division of labour and that they also develop independently of the latter to a certain extent (see, for example, Pyke 1994). Although Connell's approach contributed substantially to the further development of existing theoretical approaches to gendered division of labour and to power relations, it does not satisfy in every respect:

1 I further think that the 'gender order' has been insufficiently conceptualized by Connell. The three substructures come into play primarily when he deals with the gender regimes of the individual institutions. This neglects those structures which are not within institutions but comprehensively link the different social spheres or institutions and which are relevant for the gender relations. This is especially the case for the social division of labour between private household and gainful employment.



2 The significance of cultural factors plays only a very small role in this approach. Therefore it is not made clear what the conditions are under which a common ground is found between the gender regimes in the numerous individual institutions.

In this respect I think the analogy of gender order and 'composition' does not really work. The composition of a piece of music is generally based on an idea about its basic character: the composer first of all determines what kind of music it is going to be, a waltz, a jazz piece or an oratorio. With regard to gender order Connell does not intend such a 'central idea' connecting the individual gender structures in the gender regimes of the many individual institutions. In contrast, I assume that every gender order is based on a specific complex of 'central ideas' as to gender relations which we can refer to when we ask about the cultural foundation of a gender order (see Chapter 3).

When we take a closer look at Connell's concept of the relationship of structure and culture we find a kind of basis-superstructure construction corresponding to arguments in the Marxist tradition. According to Connell there are certain gender structures that produce a certain cultural superstructure in accordance with the Marxist principle that social existence determines consciousness. He regards these structures as given and the cultural constructs as generated by these structures – they are a kind of add-on. According to his argumentation, the existing structures are the reason for the respective construction of femininity and masculinity (e.g. Connell 1987: 182). Although Connell confirms that change on the cultural level can also cause changes in the structures this is not a systematic element of his approach; he generally defines structures as the 'primary' element. Moreover, the significance of 'culture' for the gender relations remains rather vague and is not systematically studied. On the level of society as a whole the approach is based on just one element: the assumption of a global dominance of men over women (ibid.: 183). This argumentation is problematic as it ignores the various differences, interdependencies and possible discrepancies in the relationship of culture and the behaviour of institutional, collective, and individual actors. In a more recent paper Connell added a further structure to his three gender structures – that of 'symbolization', which represents a step towards a consideration of the cultural dimension (Connell 1996). It remains unclear, however, what this exactly means and what the nature of the interrelations with the other social levels is.

### *The 'Gender Contract' Approach*

A different route is taken by the 'gender contract' approach. The term 'contract' has been controversially discussed in the feminist discourse and its meaning varies in different national contexts and theoretical approaches (see Slinn 1993: 47). The 'gender contract' approach I here refer to originates from the Scandinavian discourse and was mainly used by the Swede Hirdman for her analysis of the historical development of gender relations (Hirdman 1988, 1990). With reference to the 'social democratic contract' between capital and labour she presents a theoretical concept of medium range that so far had been developed by her only as an analytical framework for the study of the historical development of gender relations but was used also as a

theoretical concept for spatial comparative analyses (Pfau-Effinger 1993, 1994a, b, 1995, Duncan 1994, Forsberg/Gonäs/Perrons 1999). The theoretical foundation is her approach of the 'gender system' (*genussystemet*), which she uses as the theoretical approach for a description of the nature of gender relations in a society. The gender system is a structuring, dynamic system that classifies people according to two basic principles into social gender categories; practically all spheres of life are subdivided into gender categories. This division is hierarchical and the masculine is regarded as the standard; the social status of the feminine is below that of the masculine. This gender system is maintained and reproduced on three levels: on the level of a cultural superstructure with normative views and cultural values for gender, on the level of social integration in institutions such as the labour market, and on the level of socialization, the learning of gender roles.

With the approach of the 'gender contract' (*genuskontrakt*) Hirdman operationalizes her approach of the gender system and brings in the level of actors. According to Hirdman, every society and every time develops a contract between the genders. This contains specific agreements about what people of different genders are to do, think, and be on the level of the cultural superstructure, that of social integration, and on the level of socialization.<sup>13</sup> The gender system therefore varies in space and time, both with respect to the nature of the gender contract and the degree of its rigidity. Hirdman uses the term 'gender contract' to express the general structural forces of segregation and hierarchy in the gender relations.

Hirdman's theory provided an important basis for the development of a theoretical framework for the present work (see also Pfau-Effinger 1993, 1994a, b). She includes the level of social actors and her approach allows an analysis of tensions and contradictions between the various social levels so that the dynamics of social change in the gender relations can be described. Nevertheless, some objections have to be raised:

- 1 The combination of structure-theoretical and contract-theoretical assumptions creates inconsistencies within the theory. On the level of the 'gender system' a validity of certain cultural principles – that of difference and of hierarchy – beyond space and time is assumed. Then again on the level of the 'gender contract' she postulates that gender structures can be changed by the behaviour of social actors. This should be assumed in relation to the cultural ideas about difference and hierarchy, which in her approach, however, represent the foundation of the gender system that applies always and everywhere.
- 2 Furthermore, the argument that the separation of genders is per se always accompanied by female subordination does not seem very plausible. The extent of the gendered division of the life spheres and the degree to which the separation is hierarchical should enter the theory as variables.
- 3 Altogether the theoretical framework is insufficiently developed. The empirical analyses in which Hirdman studied the development of Swedish gender contracts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are more elaborated and extensive in comparison. In her theoretical framework, for example, individual behaviour appears only as 'socialization in gender-specific roles' and therefore only as one that reproduces the existing system while the empirical analyses also point out the contribution of women's everyday practice to social change. In the theoretical framework

individuals' behaviour seems determined by the respective 'gender contract', hence social change takes place only on the level of negotiation processes of collective actors while the contribution of the majority of individual actors to social and cultural change is not taken into account.

Although Hirdman's theory of the 'gender contract' doubtlessly represents an important improvement in theory formation as to the comparative analysis of gendered division of labour (see also Duncan 1995a, b), its potential for providing some insight is limited to a certain extent.

#### *Context-related Approaches Taking Cultural Factors into Account*

Hakim in her approach of a 'preference theory' (1999, 2001) has argued that differences in the attitudes of different groups of women towards part-time work can be explained by different cultural orientations in relation to family and occupational career. According to Hakim, three groups of women can be distinguished who differ in the quality of their orientation towards waged work. One group of women, she argues, orient towards full-time work and a professional career; and the other group of women orient towards motherhood, the family, and part-time work, while a third group is most diverse and includes 'women who want to combine work and family, plus drifters and unplanned careers' (Hakim 1999: 51). Although Hakim's work has been criticized (for example by Crompton and Harris 1998), she has made an important contribution to the analysis of motherhood insofar as she considers that women are competent actors who pursue their own life plans with respect to the way they combine waged work and motherhood.

What is not clear in Hakim's argument is why women choose different strategies in combining waged work and a family. It is not clear why these three distinctly different groups of women have developed, and why an individual woman decides for one or the other. In contrast, I argue that differences in the employment orientations of women are connected to cultural ideals about gender, the family and motherhood at the macro level of society, and can be understood only by analysing these interrelations.

I doubt, however, that part-time work of mothers in general is connected to life plans that one-sidedly refer to a 'marriage career' (Hakim 1997: 43) rather than a professional career. A temporary phase of part-time work during active motherhood can be an element of a professional career biography of women, as is often the case in professional service jobs of women in West Germany (Quack 1993). (The role of part-time work of mothers varies with the societal context, the cultural and institutional framework for motherhood and waged work.)

Also Duncan and Edwards (1997, 1999) have stressed the central role of culture for individual action in their cross-regional research on how single mothers combine employment and unpaid work. They have developed a more open and complex approach to the explanation of variations in employment behaviour. They argued that it was 'gendered moral rationalities', that is cultural ideas about the 'proper thing to do' in being a good mother, which was dominant, not institutional or economic factors. In this respect, most single mothers in Britain see their moral and practical responsibility for their children as their primary duty, and for many this responsibility to be a 'good mother' is seen as largely incompatible with significant paid work.

According to their findings, single mothers of different ethnicity and social class differed with respect to the 'gendered moral rationalities' towards combining paid work and motherhood despite living in the same national policy regime (Duncan and Edwards 1999).

Besides, further approaches were developed that base the cross-national comparison of women's employment decisions on the interplay between cultural and structural factors at the macro level of society. On the one hand, these are relatively general approaches that point out the significance of institutional and cultural conditions for women's employment decisions but are not developed as a theoretical framework. Blossfeld and Hakim (1997), for example, published an international comparative volume on part-time employment; the individual articles mainly contain individual country studies. Blossfeld and Hakim assume that the differences in the development of part-time work can be explained on the basis of specific interactions of demand and supply side of the labour market and the political and ideological context of the country, but they do not provide any details. The approach of Rubery/Fagan (1995) and Fagan/O'Reilly (1997a, b) presented in the book *Part-time Perspectives* also belongs in this group; the volume is a collection of numerous articles on the international comparison of part-time employment. The authors refer to the *effet societal* approach. In their opinion the gender dimension should be added to this approach and the cultural level should be included.

In three further studies the significance of culture and its relation to institutions for cross-national differences in women's employment patterns was further developed. One of these approaches is that of the 'models of motherhood' by Arnlang Leira (1992). Leira compared government policies with respect to working mothers in Scandinavian countries. She differentiated between different country-specific 'models of motherhood' that governments' measures are based on. These include cultural ideas about the way a working mother is to organize her life between family and employment and on which the policy of social institutions and actors is based as well as the government's measures that are to support the respective model, which may actually be contradictory. Leira compared the government concept to that of the gainfully employed mother which women themselves try to put into practice in their daily lives. With this approach of the 'models of motherhood' Leira theoretically combined women's gainful employment with care work in the family-spheres that in her opinion are often wrongly conceptualized as separate in theoretical argumentations.

By this conceptualization of motherhood, I emphasize the necessity of breaking down or transcending the models of 'work' and 'family' that ignore or marginalize the interrelationship of production and social reproduction, of labour market organization and labour restitution, socio-cultural reproduction and care of children. (Leira 1992: 4)

Thereby it becomes possible to discover discrepancies and contradictions between the two spheres. The result of Leira's comparison of Scandinavian countries was that the policy of the welfare state with respect to working mothers is inconsistent and ambivalent. She nevertheless concluded that even in the comparison of Scandinavian countries, which culturally and historically have a lot in common, there are considerable differences in the social construct of motherhood (*ibid.*).

I regard Leira's theoretical concept as very useful for a comparison. It provides for a theoretical integration of the dual situation of mothers in life and work; it includes the social macro and micro level, the level of government policy and that of individuals' daily lives, and it takes the significance of cultural factors into account. Finally, it is designed as a dynamic concept and is to contribute to an understanding of social change in the relation of both female work spheres. With respect to the issues studied in this work, however, the approach is not comprehensive enough:

- 1 In my opinion, its major limitation is that assumptions about the relations between the genders are not systematically integrated into the concept. It is important, though, to know which concept of 'masculinity' and 'fatherhood' the cultural concept of 'motherhood' of a society was related and which relation between the work spheres of men and women is intended, is regarded as 'normal' by society and positively sanctioned by the welfare state.
- 2 Moreover, the analysis of women's employment patterns is not restricted to the period of active motherhood, so in this respect the concept needs to be elaborated.

The second approach was developed by Lydia Martens (1997) within the scope of her comparative study of the gender composition of British and Dutch labour. In her book the processes of change in the employment system are analysed on the basis of gender structure for the period from 1940 through 1993 on the aggregate level as well as for the banking sector. In her theoretical considerations Marten explains that the point was to analyse the cultural and historical context of the respective development. She describes certain cultural characteristics of both countries that help to explain the differences. The theoretical framework does not provide general reflections on the effect of cultural influences on gendered division of labour and on individual employment decisions.

(Per-Jensen (1996) developed a theoretical framework to explain the differences in women's labour force participation and changes in this respect in Denmark, Sweden, the UK, and Italy in the postwar period. The approach is based on the action-theoretical approach of Bourdieu. It is assumed that women's labour force participation can be explained on the basis of the relation of actors, practices, structures, and social system.

Jensen ideal-typically differentiates between different types of social systems. Following Pitirim A. Sorokin he calls them 'familial' or 'contractual' relations. Familial social relations hence become apparent in the traditional family, the residual welfare state, and closed labour market relations while contractual social relations become manifest in the symmetric family, the institutional welfare state, and open labour market relations.

Women's dispositions are structured in accordance with their position in the different systems of social relations. Following Bourdieu, Jensen differentiates between centrifugal and centripetal orientations. A centrifugal orientation is systemically associated with 'contractual' relations while a centripetal orientation is compatible with 'familial' relations. High female employment rates are therefore the result of the dialectic relationship between a centrifugal orientation and contractual relations while low female employment rates are generated by the dialectic relationship between a centripetal orientation and familial social relations.

Jensen assumes that in principle modernization goes from familial relations and centripetal orientations towards contractual relations and centrifugal orientations. Nevertheless, the author thinks that such orientations can coexist in various combinations in different societies. Therefore every society has to be analysed on the basis of its specific historical conditions.

Thereby Jensen chooses an approach whose major elements correspond to that of the present work. He assumes that the labour market, the welfare state, and the family on the one hand and women's orientations on the other hand provide important starting points for an explanation of international differences in women's participation in gainful employment. Women's orientations are treated as a complex set of attitudes with respect to familial obligations and with respect to gainful employment.

What is still an open question here is if there is one kind of modernization path with variations or if it makes more sense to assume from the start that the modernization of gender relations can take place along different paths.

### Summary and Conclusion

It is now time to take stock of the analysis of the above-described theoretical approaches. Some of the presented concepts provide starting points I would like to refer to in my suggestion of basic ideas for a theoretical explanatory framework suitable for comparative research regarding female employment. One of those starting points is the assumption that welfare state policy is of vital significance for women's labour force participation and that cross-national differences between welfare states can contribute to the explanation of differences in labour force participation rates. On the level of government policy the different cultural foundations of such policy have to be taken into account as well. Moreover, Hirdman's assumption that social actors bring about change by negotiating a new gender contract also offers important starting points. The theoretical considerations and empirical results of the comparative analysis of Häußermann and Siebel indicate that there is no single path of transition to the service society but a number of differing paths and that within the scope of these paths women's labour force participation may change in various ways.

Furthermore, the approaches of Arnlang Leira, Lydia Martens, Jane Jensen and Per-Jensen provide starting points for considering cultural factors in the analysis at different levels of society.

I do not think, however, that the theoretical framework that has been developed so far is satisfactory with respect to the explanation of international differences in women's labour force participation rates. The theoretical explanation of the relation of culture, structure, and behaviour in the context of which change in women's employment patterns has taken place in various ways is insufficient.

Sometimes women's participation in gainful employment is one-sidedly regarded as practice immediately derived from welfare state policy. In so far as this refers to the argumentation in feminist theories it is generally due to the fact that these theories often – implicitly or explicitly – assume a general 'interest' of women in continuous full-time employment, which is also relevant for their behaviour. Such an approach is

of a highly normative nature. From the objectives of the women's movement – full participation of all women in gainful employment – the assumption that the large majority of women in the population share this political objective is unquestioningly derived. The question is, however, in how far women's orientations to gainful employment actually correspond to these assumed 'interests'. Therefore the field of cultural values and ideals has to be included in theory formation and in the empirical analysis, and the question of their significance for women's behaviour in different contexts has to be taken into account. The theoretical framework partly excluded women's employment orientations and hence the role of cultural values and models as well as the role of women as competent actors who orient themselves in the framework of the complex and often conflicting interrelations of culture institutions and social structures. When the influence of culture is taken into account this is often limited to the level of welfare state policy; at least the theoretical understanding of 'culture' and the interrelations of cultural and institutional influences and the behaviour of social actors is often not sufficiently worked out. The works of Arnlang Leira and Lydia Martens indicate that this relation can indeed develop inconsistently. Per Jensen's approach, which is derived from Bourdieu's theory, contains a theoretically more profound understanding of cultural conditions. The inclusion of culture, here refers primarily to women's individual orientations. What should be integrated more systematically is their relationship to more general cultural models of the family and gendered division of labour on the macro level. The cultural development of society as a whole, the way this affects welfare state policy and the way women refer to it, and the contradictions and discrepancies that might be created in the process should be systematically included in the theoretical framework.

A deficit of many of the presented theoretical approaches is their static nature or the fact that they at least theoretically do not systematically explain how social change with respect to the forms of social integration takes place and what its causes are.

These restrictions also apply to attempts of classifying societies with respect to gender relations. The suggested classifications either start with welfare state policy and apply the same theoretical restrictions as the underlying theoretical approaches by insufficiently considering the significance of cultural influences on employment decisions in the theoretical framework. Alternatively they assume a uniform type of gender relations in the initial situation (e.g. 'private patriarchy') that changes towards a different but also uniform type (e.g. 'public patriarchy'). It rather seems appropriate to develop a classification that is open for differing development paths.

The idea is to systematically explain cross-national differences in the gendered division of labour, expressed in women's employment behaviour, from the interrelations of institutional, structural, and cultural influences and the agency of social actors and to give theoretical reasons for the change that may be caused by the interaction of these conditions. Culture is not simply an element of social structures, but may have an independent existence despite the fact that it generally interrelates with social structures and institutions. It is essential to take into account that social actors contribute to the reproduction as well as to the change of the cultural, institutional, and structural framework. This is the context of the development of women's behaviour with respect to employment.

## Notes

- 1 '... zu einer ausdrücklichen Methode diszipliniert, die nun als der sichere Königsweg galt, auf dem das Fach sein Konzept der Gesellschaftsgeschichte ausführen werde.' (Mathes 1992: 16)
- 2 'Mit dieser Methode wurde nichts Verschiedenes verglichen, sondern eine Größe, die projektiv aus einem bestimmten gesellschaftlichen Zusammenhang abstrahiert und als "theoretisches" Konstrukt universalisiert wird, in der Welt der Erscheinungen auf ihre Variationen hin überprüft.' (Mathes 1992b: 81)
- 3 I would like to critically note that on the whole Mathes links the 'other', the 'difference' in his argumentation primarily to non-European societies with a 'totally different' cultural background although we can find a wide variety of cultural differences already at our West German doorstep in other Western European countries as I will show in this book by using the example of cultural models of the family and gender relations.
- 4 'As commodities, people are captive to powers beyond their control.... If workers actually do behave as discrete commodities, they will by definition compete; and the fiercer the competition, the cheaper the price. As commodities, workers are replaceable, easily redundant, and atomized. De-commodification is ... as Polanyi argued, necessary for system survival. It is also a precondition for a tolerable level of individual welfare and security. Finally, without de-commodification, workers are incapable of collective action; it is, accordingly, the alpha and omega of the unity and solidarity required for labor-movement development.' (Esping-Anderson 1990: 37)
- 5 The catch of this regime is that there is an inherent conflict of distribution between the employed and the non-employed.
- 6 Leibfried (1993: 141f) adds the 'rudimentary' type of welfare regime, which in his opinion dominates in South-West European countries. These are states that fulfil only a residual function, such as the Anglo-American welfare states. However, to some extent there are still traditional supply systems on the basis of the subsistence economy and a large informal sector.
- 7 See, for example, Jensen 1986, 1988, Koven/Michel 1990, Lewis 1992, Ostner 1990, 1995, 1997b.
- 8 She describes the concept as '... the universe of socially constructed meaning resulting from political struggle' (Jenson 1986: 25–26).
- 9 In labour market theory, the term 'demand side' of the labour market refers to the jobs offered by companies, the term 'supply side', on the other hand, refers to the supply of labour and their labour market behaviour.
- 10 'Der analytische Rekurs auf den *effet societal* führt in letzter Instanz dazu, daß sich all das, was ursprünglich vergleichbar schien, in der jeweils nationalen Spezifität gesamtgesellschaftlicher Verhältnisse verflüchtigt.'
- 11 'Der Weg in die Dienstleistungsgesellschaft ist der Weg der Frauen in das System beruflich organisierter Arbeit.' (Häußermann/Siebel 1995: 15)
- 12 Lane (1993) offers a suggestion for applying this approach to international comparisons. Constructivist feminist approaches argue that the system of two genders was a social construct itself and that the social definition of masculinity and femininity do not immediately correspond to biological differences; see West/Fenstermaker 1995 and for a critical discussion cf. Gottschall 1998, 2000.

## Chapter 2

# Constructing a Theoretical Framework for the Cross-national Comparison: The Gender Arrangement Approach

### **General Theoretical Basis for the Relations and Dynamics of Structure, Culture, and Agency**

The purpose of the following chapter is to develop a theoretical understanding of the relations of culture, structure, and agency that takes the dependencies as well as the relative autonomy of these levels into account. In a first step I will concentrate on the relations of structure and agency.

#### *The Relations of Structure and Agency*

Sociology has devoted considerable attention to the relations of structure and agency. According to a view that was increasingly supported, sociological theories whose arguments are – on the basis of Methodological Collectivism – one-sidedly structure-theoretical or – on the basis of Methodological Individualism – one-sidedly action-theoretical do not suffice for a description of reality and therefore a theoretical combination of the two levels is required. Especially Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration is often regarded as a solution for the challenge of linking structure and agency. With the term 'dualism of structure' Giddens emphasizes the close links between the two levels: structure is therefore

... the medium and the result of the social practice it recursively organizes; (the structural factors of social systems do not exist independently of social practice; they are rather continuously involved in its production and reproduction.)<sup>1</sup>

According to Giddens, features of structures, i.e. rules and resources, exist outside of time; their existence becomes 'concrete' only when they are 'called up' by the actors in their social practice. Each form of social practice contains the chance of social reproduction or social change: 'Change, or its potentiality, is thus inherent in all moments of social reproduction' (Giddens 1979: 114).

However, this theoretical understanding of the relations of structure and agency brings up specific problems. They are primarily related to the way Giddens includes the time aspect of structure and social action in his theory. According to Giddens, society is based on a constant flow of actors' practice. Agency may therefore be analysed only in conjunction with the structures that are realized through agency. A counter argument is that structure and agency have different time horizons (see also

Smith/Turner 1986, Archer 1996). Social structures and institutions are the result of social interactions of social actors that took place at a historically earlier date. They can survive for long periods and affect the actors' behaviour during this period at every point in time. The social practice of actors and the resulting reproduction or change of structures generally refer to shorter periods.<sup>2</sup> One example is school education. Children are enrolled in the existing school system that, due to the grading of school types, is designed to reproduce structures of social inequality. These structures determine the conditions faced by children at school. They are the result of historically earlier situations in which this type of school system was the result of a new compromise between different groups of actors; they are not just created today by children, parents, and teachers.

Social actors can either reproduce existing structures or, voluntarily or involuntarily, initiate a process in the course of which these structures change in a specific way. The social structures shape the context for these actions, for example, by dividing the population into social groups with different interests and opportunities. This pre-structuring does not mean, however, that the behaviour of social actors is pre-determined, as the actors are able to act reflexively; but certain behavioural patterns are sanctioned positively and others negatively and therefore a certain form of behaviour seems to be preferred to another.

In my opinion, Giddens' approach does not sufficiently account for the *longue durée* of social structures as in his theory social structures are primarily created by the actors living in that period. As social practice and structure are regarded as a unit, Giddens does not state under which conditions social practice leads to the reproduction and under which conditions it leads to a change of existing structures. For these reasons, the theory – as it is – is not a suitable basis for the development of a theoretical framework for the comparative analysis of social change.

In contrast to Giddens, David Lockwood (1964) assumed in his methodological 'dual analysis' approach that reproduction and change of social structures are based on the interaction of structure and social practice as well as on the relative autonomy of the relations of the two levels. This allows the identification of the conditions under which social change occurs. According to Lockwood, two structural levels have to be differentiated: the level of the relationships between groups of social actors, which can be characterized by harmony or conflict, and which he calls the level of social integration, and the level of the relationships between elements of the social structure, which can equally be characterized by harmony or contradictions, and which he calls the level of 'system integration'. The degree of social integration and system integration then varies with the degree of harmony and conflict. As maintained by Lockwood, the analysis of these relationships is highly relevant for the explanation of social change: it is most likely to take place when a low degree of system integration coincides with a low degree of social integration.<sup>3</sup> Lockwood's objective is to remedy the deficiencies of conflict-theoretical explanations of social change, i.e. their inability to determine why some conflicts lead to social change and others do not. I therefore regard his theory as better suitable for an international comparison than that of Giddens.

### *Culture and Social Practice*

Although the level of culture was comprehensively analysed by leading sociological authorities such as Max Weber, Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim and regarded as a central element of societies it was often assigned only minor significance by modern sociology (see the summary by Wimmer 1996). The question as to the relations of culture and agency, which in its significance parallels the relations of structure and agency, does not receive such close attention in sociological discourse. For these reasons, Margaret Archer (1996: xiii) describes cultural analysis as the 'poor relative of structural analysis'. However, even theories that include the relations of culture and agency, of culture and structure, sometimes advocate specifically narrow views.

In contrast to social structures, culture is often regarded as a coherent entity, as a harmonious unit providing for the integration of society. Sociology adopted this 'myth of cultural integration' (Archer 1996: xvii) together with the theoretical understanding of 'culture' from early anthropology. This does not take into account that the social system of traditions, values and ideals may be contradictory and that social actors are engaged in conflicts and negotiation processes about the dominant cultural systems of values in societies. Finally, the importance of relations of power for cultural processes of creating meaning are ignored.

Other researchers one-sidedly regard cultural systems of values as the result of power relations and conflicts between different social groups; this view can be found, for example, in ethno-methodology and in the modern post-structural discourse in gender research.<sup>4</sup> The approach to culture by Andreas Wimmer (1996: 407) is mainly action-theoretically oriented and represents a more recent attempt to define the term culture. Culture is here defined

... as an open and instable process of negotiating meanings ... which in case a compromise is found results in the closing of social groups.<sup>5</sup>

This definition of culture accounts better than the traditional one for the fact that it is not simply a system of values but that this system is also the subject matter of negotiation processes between actors. However, in my opinion this concept of culture does not sufficiently consider that social actors always act in the context of systems of cultural values and standards that have a rather long tradition. Although cultural value systems and the negotiation processes and conflicts between social interest groups about the dominant cultural values are closely connected they also represent relatively autonomous levels.<sup>6</sup>

Margaret Archer (1996) has developed a theory of 'dual analysis' which theoretically links structure and agency (1995) and culture and agency (1996). As I regard this theory as particularly useful for a cross-national comparative analysis I rely on it as the central theoretical reference point of this study. Archer refers to Lockwood's concepts of 'system integration' and 'social integration' and argues that it is possible to apply the 'analytical dualism' with respect to the relations of structure and social practice, also to the relations of culture and social practice. Just like social structures the cultural field may also show a higher or lower degree of integration (Archer 1996: xvii). Accordingly, she differentiates two levels: the level of the 'cultural system' and that of 'socio-cultural integration'. Similar to a 'library' the

cultural system includes all social knowledge and all cultural values. Its substance consist of doctrines, theories, and ideals and defines the 'ideational environment' for the actors' behaviour. The level of 'socio-cultural integration' refers to the mutual exertion of influence of social actors. On this level, the actors either come to an agreement or into conflict with respect to binding cultural values and notions. The degree of socio-cultural integration varies with the degree of social agreement on these issues. These two levels are interrelated and at the same time autonomous (Figure 2.1).

According to Archer, the degree of integration on the level of the cultural system depends on the degree of logical consistency between the elements of the cultural system. The degree of social-cultural integration, on the other hand, depends on the degree of 'causal cohesion', i.e. the extent to which inconsistencies and conflicts about the dominant cultural values and stocks of knowledge have developed among social groups (xvii). Cultural change in the time period t1 to t2 ('morphogenesis') is to be expected in particular when the degree of integration is relatively low on both levels, otherwise the existing cultural system is rather reproduced ('morphostasis'). Morphostasis can be reinforced by powerful social groups suppressing contradictions in an authoritarian way or blocking access to alternatives. On the other hand, social power groups can make contradictions or alternative ideas in society visible (Archer 1996: 286).

On the basis of a modified constellation a new cultural consensus can be reached. It results from interrelations between changes on the levels of 'primary' actors, collective actors, and institutions. It is at the same time consequence and starting point

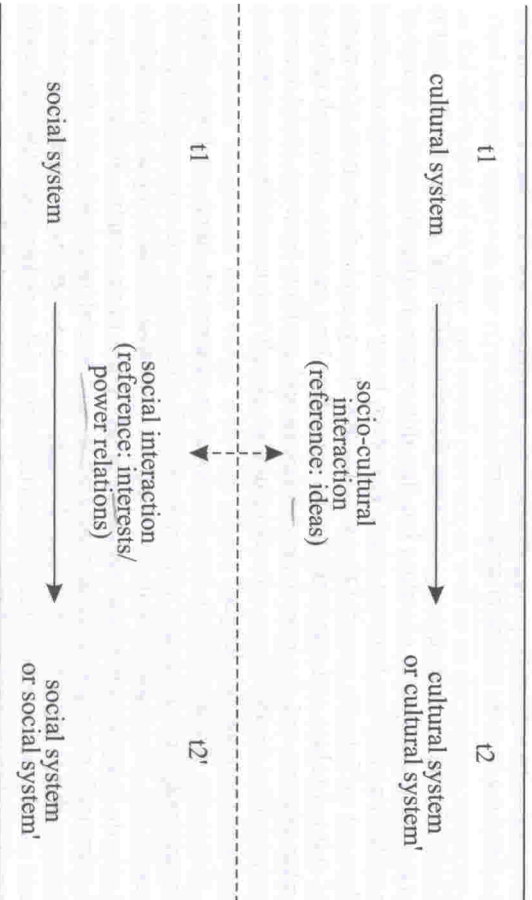


Figure 2.1: Sequence of Social/Cultural Reproduction or Change According to Margaret Archer

of a modified cultural practice. In contrast to Archer I would like to emphasize that this practice is not simply based on new ideas but the modified cultural values and ideas still contain elements of the old ideas, so change generally consists of a combination of continuities and breaks. The reason is that the behaviour of individuals involved in these processes is heavily influenced by traditional structures and ideas. Cultural change is interrelated, with change of the social system, but both processes are also relatively autonomous (see Figure 2.1).

#### *Interaction and Relative Autonomy in the Relations of Culture, Structure, and Agency*

According to Margaret Archer (1996), there are mainly two types of problems with regard to the theoretical analysis of the relations of culture and structure. In the case of 'central conflation' the significance of culture is reduced – it is simply regarded as an element of social structures. Even though culture is closely related to social structures and institutions it is nevertheless also independent of them to a certain extent. This is particularly important in periods of social and cultural change. In the case of 'upward' or 'downward' conflation, in contrast, a causal relationship is constructed according to which either culture determines structure or vice versa. Only when the mutual influences of the two levels are taken into account can the dynamics of social and cultural change be described.

The cultural and the social system are connected via the actors' social practice. The degree of integration, contradiction or coherence between the two levels may vary. Conditions for social change are most suitable when the degree of social integration on the cultural or the structural level is low and certain groups of actors try to initiate cultural or structural change (see also Archer 1996).

Two types of actors can be differentiated whose social practice may be decisive for the reproduction or change of cultural or structural conditions: primary and collective actors (Archer 1995). The primary actors are (potential) groups of actors who have similar social positions but do not organize or express themselves as collective actors due to their lack of resources or because the articulation of deviating interests is politically suppressed. These actors are therefore not strategically involved in the attempts to bring about change but they are nevertheless social actors.

Everyone is born into an ongoing socio-cultural system, and all have agential effects on stability or change, if only by merely being within it – physically and numerically (Archer 1995: 259).

If actors of similar social position react to the societal context in a similar way, the aggregate effects of their behaviour may exert a strong influence on society. In the course of processes of socio-cultural change the group of primary actors may shrink because increasing numbers of them are organizing themselves (Archer 1995: 265). Collective actors differ from primary actors such that they organize themselves for the pursuit of their structural or cultural interests and that they express these interests. Thereby they also establish the context for the primary actors' social practice and maybe create new structural and cultural options for their behaviour (Archer 1995: 268). As in the course of socio-cultural change the uncoordinated practices of both groups of actors interact it cannot be predicted how the modified structures or cultural

contents will look like and how far they actually correspond to the orientations of those groups who initiated the change.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Theory for the Cross-national Comparison: Culture, Institutions, Structure and Agency in the Gender Arrangement**

The purpose of the following section is to specify the general theoretical framework with respect to the central issue of this book. My objective is to define those complex processes on the social macro level on the basis of which the behaviour of women develops. The theory is to facilitate an analysis of the change in women's labour force participation and hence of the structures of gendered division of labour as a result of the interactions of cultural ideals and institutional conditions within the scope of the labour market, the family, and the welfare state. The two levels of agency – of collective and of primary actors – are given equal weight in this analysis. I here define institutions as ordered social relations designed for the long term. The degree and the way agency is institutionalized can vary. The closest equivalent to institutionalization is the formal organization as institution (Berger/Luckmann 1992, Giddens 1992). For the definition of culture I refer to the theory of Margaret Archer according to which the cultural system includes cultural values and the knowledge of society. Its substance consists of doctrines, theories, and ideals and defines the 'ideational environment' for the actor's behaviour. Due to power relations and negotiation processes between social actors certain stocks of knowledge and values reach greater societal significance than other, competing cultural matters. Institutions and culture provide the framework for individuals' social practice, which either reproduces or changes existing gender structures.

#### *The Basic Categories: Gender Arrangement, Gender Culture, and Gender Order*

The theory for cross-national comparison is based on the following terms: gender culture, gender order, and gender arrangement, with the latter being the theoretically most comprehensive. I would like to briefly outline the assumptions on which these terms are based.

In every society there are cultural values and ideals that refer to the forms of social integration and the division of labour between men and women.<sup>8</sup> These are closely linked to cultural ideas about the relations between generations in the family and obligations in these relations. Such ideas or models I refer to as *gender culture*. In every modern society there are one or more dominating models as a result of conflicts, negotiation processes, and compromises between social groups. They are generally established in the institutional system in the form of norms and therefore relatively stable. In this respect one can speak of a *longue durée* of cultural values and models. It can be assumed that in this case the social practice of the majority of the population and institutional policy in general refer to the 'cultural compromise' about the social division of labour and the way the gendered division of labour is embedded in it. The influence of the gender culture can be noticed on various social levels: on the level of social structures, in social institutions and discourses of social actors, and on the level of individuals, in their orientations and values. As individuals have reflexive

and creative abilities the influence of culture on their behaviour is not to be seen as a deterministic relationship. The existing cultural compromise can, under specific temporal and spatial conditions, be questioned by certain social groups and again become the subject of social negotiation processes. The gender culture is both the cause and the effect of the agency of men and women.

The social scope of the dominating models and values may be limited. The application of gender cultural models may vary to a certain extent between the different regions of a country; this has been shown by Sackmann (1997) for West Germany, by Duncan (1995b, 1998a) for the United Kingdom, by Forsberg (1998) for Sweden, and by Bühler (1998) for Switzerland. Bühler argued that the position of women in economic top positions is considerably higher in the French and Italian speaking regions of Switzerland than in the German speaking regions. Duncan and Smith (2002) analysed regional differences in partnering and parenting within Britain. They found different geographical levels of adherence to the 'traditional' male breadwinner/female homemaker family, and of 'family conventionality'. According to the authors these indicate geographical differences in cultural ideas towards 'good enough parenting'.

The variation between individual regions of Western European countries is usually lower than the variation between Western European societies (see Duncan 1995b). Germany is an exception as different cultural traditions have developed in times when each of the two societies represented a different state regime. Until today, the dominant cultural family model in the East differs from the most popular West German one (Přau-Effinger/Geissler 2002). There is also the possibility that certain social groups orient with different models from the dominant part of the population, e.g. members of a certain social class or milieu or ethnic minorities. According to the findings of an empirical study by Duncan and Edwards (1997), single Afro-Caribbean mothers in the UK have different attitudes to gainful employment and motherhood from single white mothers; they therefore participate in gainful employment to a greater extent even if that involves financial disadvantages. Dale and Holdsworth (1998) found that there are significant disparities in the UK between mothers from different ethnic groups with respect to their orientations and preferences as to part-time or full-time employment although the institutional framework is the same for all groups. Another important aspect is to differentiate between the general popularity of family ideals and their actual importance for the social practices of individuals: even for members of the social groups that orient with such a model there may be deviations in the family form actually lived as external restrictions prevent the realization of individuals' ideas.<sup>9</sup> The analysis of such non-synchronous developments and breaks is important because they can be the cause and a result of processes of change taking place in the gender arrangement. It has to be distinguished whether such differentiations represent a 'pluralization' of values and models or rather non-synchronous developments during the transition from an old to a new dominant model.

The *gender order*, on the other hand, describes the actually existing structures of the gender relations and the relations between the various social institutions with respect to the gendered division of labour. I use the term 'gender order' as defined by Connell (1987, mentioned in Chapter 2). For the issue of the gendered division of labour in modern Western societies the following institutions are particularly relevant: the labour market (and the education system), the family/household and the



welfare state, and the non-profit or 'intermediate' sector, which represents a sphere between these institutions (Effinger 1993, Evers/ Olk 1996). The structures of the gendered division of labour are rooted in a general system of division of labour between these institutions in the welfare mix in which they contribute specifically to the production of welfare. A particularly important question is how far the welfare state assumes the social tasks of childcare and nursing of older people and to what extent and in which quality it supplies these services or how far it delegates them to other social institutions (see Lewis 1998; Pfau-Effinger and Geissler 2004). Cultural values and models, including gender cultural ideas, are of major significance for the respective arrangement in a society as to the production of welfare. The way tasks in this area are distributed differs depending on whether married mothers are culturally assigned to the sphere of the private household to fulfil the respective social tasks there, especially of caring, or whether a consistent full-time employment of women and also mothers is intended.

While Connell does not analyse the specific importance of each of these institutions, I assume that particularly the influence of the welfare state on the gendered division of labour is highly significant in modern societies. It is the state that provides the regulatory framework for the functioning of the other societal institutions, as also Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999) has argued – for the way the labour market functions, the relationship of labour market and family structures, and the status of the various institutions in the system of social production of welfare. By affecting the distribution of social resources the state also exerts considerable influence on the structuring of social inequalities.

The *gender arrangement* stands for the specific profile of gender relations within a society. My application of the term refers to the 'gender contract' approach by Hirdman (1988, 1990) (see Chapter 2). My theory, however, is based on a more open and more sociologically oriented approach (Figure 2.2).<sup>10</sup> The cultural and institutional foundations of the arrangement are formed on the basis of the *longue durée* of such arrangements and on the basis of negotiation processes and compromises between social actors in the respective historical situation. It can be assumed that the elements of negotiation and consensus are always present when a certain gender arrangement is maintained in the long term. Negotiation processes are a central basis of social order:

Negotiation is not merely one specific human activity or process ... social orders are, in some sense, always negotiated orders. (Strauss 1978: 234f)

Thereby an important foundation is established for bringing gender culture and gender order together and for generating a greater or lesser degree of correspondence between them. The arrangement may show a higher or lower degree of social and cultural integration depending on the extent to which it is characterized by cultural and institutional inconsistencies or contradictions and the extent to which it is based on conflicts between social actors. Gender arrangements may be characterized according to the respective cultural models on whose basis they were created and according to the respective degree of cultural and social integration.

It should be considered that a gender arrangement is embedded into a broader context of an arrangement of work and welfare in modern societies (Pfau-Effinger

2002). In this context, the gender structures, and their institutional and cultural framework, overlap in specific ways with other structures of social inequality and the ways these are framed by the institutional and cultural configuration.<sup>11</sup>

When I speak of an arrangement I assume that individuals or social groups enter negotiations with different interests, resources and power. What does the term 'power' describe in this context? In my opinion, the understanding of power developed by Norbert Elias seems to be particularly useful for the analysis of social relations of power. According to Elias, 'power' is monopolistic control over resources. For him power is an element of all human relations, which are generally based on 'balances of power' and hence on mutual dependencies even if the resources are not evenly distributed in these relations. These 'balances of power' can vary in the course of social change (Elias 1986, 1987a; Elias/Scotson 1990). With respect to the term 'balance of power' I assume that an arrangement between two social groups, a 'figuration', can be stable even when it is based on fundamentally asymmetric relations of power (Elias 1986).

The most important collective actors in modern Western societies are the established actors such as political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, associations, etc. as well as new social movements. As they regard themselves as

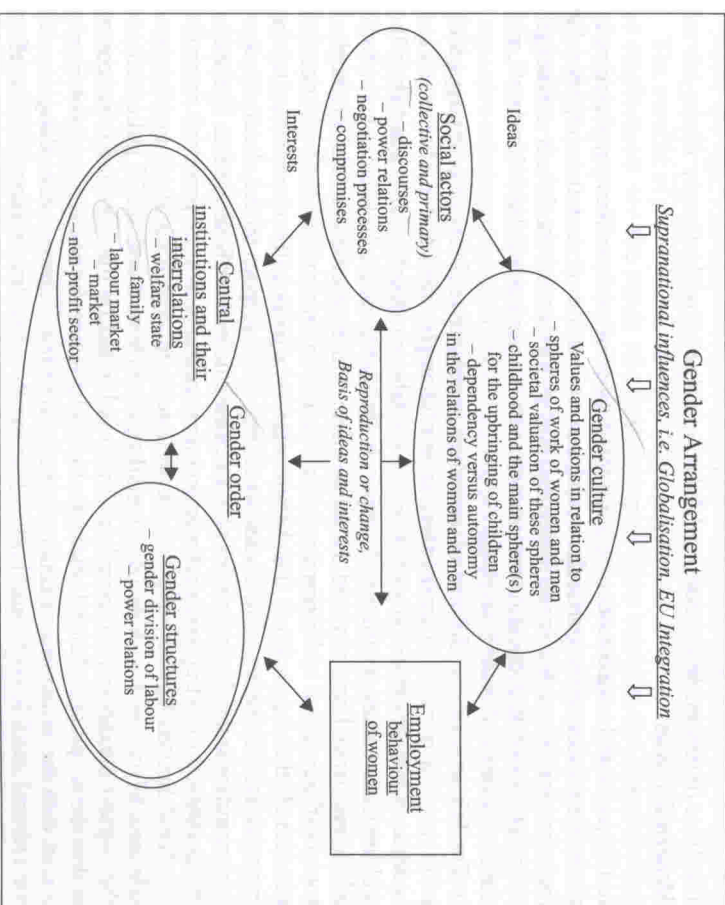


Figure 2.2: Employment Decisions in the Context of the Gender Arrangement

representatives of the interests of women or certain social groups of women, women's organizations and the women's movement play a special role in the processes of change in the gender arrangement. In modern societies the success of the women's movement is an important but not essential prerequisite for the establishment of a more egalitarian gender arrangement, as Mósesdóttir (1996, 2001) has argued: principles of equality in the gender relations can also be integrated as general interests in a male dominated government policy. In this case women's motivation to organize themselves in a women's movement is lower.

The analytical separation of revealing and explaining important aspects of the various connections and interlinks but also of tensions, breaks, and non-synchronous developments in the relationship of cultural and institutional context and social practice of gender in a society. It also provides a suitable theoretical starting point for the analysis of processes of change in the gender arrangement.

I argue that cross-national differences with respect to the scope and the forms of female labour force participation are better understood when they are analysed in the context of the gender arrangement of the respective country. There can be one or several dominating gender cultural models within one gender arrangement. It is important not to regard the classification as static but to consider the processes of change that take place within such an arrangement as well.

#### *The Most Important Institutions and Spheres of Agency of the Gender Order in Modern Societies*

In this part I will concentrate on central institutions of modern Western societies. In modern societies, three particular social institutions are of central importance for the reproduction of the social order and the gender order: the labour market (in conjunction with the education and vocational training system), the welfare state, and the family or the private household.

The *labour market* is the central institution in modern societies determining which sections of the population are involved in gainful employment and to what extent and conditions people are employed. Thereby the labour market holds – apart from the welfare state – a key position with respect to the distribution of resources in the form of income, social security and status position, which represent a vital element of social differentiation and hierarchy formation. In conjunction with the education and vocational training system the labour market significantly contributes to the reproduction of the existing social structure. With respect to the distribution of opportunities and risks companies play a central role in the labour market. The scope of operational or entrepreneurial management decisions in such processes is on the one hand limited by the policy of the welfare state, which regulates employment relations by law and with its labour market, employment and social policy affects the context conditions; on the other hand it is limited by the negotiation processes within the scope of industrial relations. In their practice the social actors not simply orient with the principles of economic rationality but – among other things – with the cultural models on 'masculinity', 'femininity', and 'motherhood'.<sup>12</sup> Therefore Edwards and Duncan introduced the concept of 'gender morale rationalities' (Duncan/Edwards 1995, 1997, 1999).

Jobs and activities are thereby also assigned a 'gender'; social constructs of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' are deeply entrenched in the companies' design of jobs (see Cockburn/Ormrod 1993). According to the findings of gender research, two processes are particularly relevant for the status of women in the labour market: the social appreciation and evaluation of qualifications, and the combination of tasks in one job (see Crompton/Sanderson 1990, Kraus 1993, Gottschall 1995). There are many examples of social conflicts about the design and evaluation of jobs and the combination of job tasks on the basis of stereotypes about gendered division of labour (see Cockburn/Ormrod 1993, Kraus 1993). Power relations on various levels play an important role as to the extent these processes benefit or disadvantage women. Companies' personnel policy is further influenced by the supply side of the labour market, by employees' behaviour on the labour market. They also depend on the type of workers who offer their labour, their conditions, the extent to which they are available, the kind of tasks they are willing to perform, and on their qualifications. It can be assumed that men and women – a certain section of mixed gender tasks apart – tend to offer their labour for specific 'male' or 'female' activities respectively and thereby actively contribute to the reproduction – or the transformation – of the gendered segregation of the labour market. The structure of gender-specific behaviour as to the supply of labour is also affected by the gendered structure of the vocational training system (Friese 1994, Krüger 1995).

Also, the way women combine employment with care responsibilities is relevant for the gender segregation of labour markets (Fagan/Smith/Rubery 1997).

The number of jobs offered or created by companies and the terms and conditions of employment are the result of adjustment processes between the labour market practice of companies and that of workers; to a considerable extent such processes can also result in mismatches. The course of these matching processes significantly depends on the extent the welfare state institutionally regulates such processes (see also Dombois 1986, Sengenberger 1985; Kolberg and Esping-Anderson) and on the respective relations of power between the parties involved. The collective negotiation processes in the 'corporate triangle' of trade unions, employers' representatives, and welfare state (Kreckel 1992) play an important role here.

With respect to the family there are two types of social relations, which overlap. Firstly there are the relationships and the division of labour between men and women, secondly the relations between the generations. Power relations play a significant role as well. The structures of the division of labour within the family are organized on the basis of cultural ideas of a 'good' or 'adequate' family form and represent an important basis for the division of labour between the family and gainful employment in society as a whole. Their development is therefore also of central significance for women's labour force participation and their participation in gainful employment especially with respect to the nature of the respective cultural constructs of 'motherhood', 'fatherhood', and 'childhood' and with respect to the social sphere that is regarded as the one responsible for bringing up children. Another important question is how care work within the family is appreciated and evaluated by society in comparison to other types of work. The role the family plays in the individual life cycles in the respective society in comparison to other lifestyles is a further interesting aspect.

Individuals in modern societies have a different relationship to the family than to

other institutions such as the labour market or the welfare state. Their influence on the form of the family is much higher than their influence on other institutions. Even though the family is institutionalized and regulated on the basis of normative guidelines, individuals in modern Western societies are relatively free in their decisions as to starting a family, the organization of the division of labour within the family, and whether to maintain this arrangement permanently.<sup>13</sup>

The *policy of the welfare state* is relevant for women's labour force participation on several levels: the state contributes to the reproduction or transformation of cultural models on female employment and the division of labour within the family. By influencing the distribution of main resources in society the welfare state regulates the structures of the gendered division of labour and the scope of social groups of women for action. Moreover, on the basis of legal regulations and political control in labour market and employment policy, family and social policy, it shapes the framework for the employment behaviour of individuals. Finally, the state is an employer itself and influences the activities in the labour market on this level. The welfare state therefore represents an important arena for social conflicts and negotiation processes with respect to the gender arrangement (see also Mosesdóttir 1996, 2001). For a comparative analysis of the influence of welfare state policy on women's labour force participation, the following questions have to be considered: to what extent does the state intervene in the market and which restrictions and options are applied to female gainful employment by government policy? And how does government policy intervene into the division of labour between the family and other institutions of society? These questions not only deal with the promotion of gainful employment but also with the general conditions the state creates with respect to 'caring'.<sup>14</sup> A further aspect that has to be considered in this respect is how government policy on the one hand and the employment decisions of individuals on the other hand relate to and interact with each other, in how far they match or in how far there are breaks and discrepancies (see Leira 1992, Bang/Jensen/Pfau-Effinger 2000).

#### *Theoretical Assumptions on Change in Gender Arrangements and the Role of Social Actors*

A gender arrangement can be stable and coherent in the long term if its cultural foundations are established as norms in the major societal institutions. However, inconsistencies may develop in the cultural or social system which then result in a falling degree of cultural or social integration. This, on the other hand, increases the opportunities for social and cultural change. Change, however, takes place only when these inconsistencies are taken up by certain social actors who then try to realize transformation processes on the level of gender culture or gender order. This can be the case when the 'balances of power' (in the sense of Elias 1986, 1987b) in the gender arrangement have shifted in favour or to the disadvantage of certain social groups. As a consequence of such processes, social actors make – under certain conditions – the existing arrangement a matter of debate and the subject of negotiation processes and conflicts about new values. In the 1970s, for example, many younger, educated, middle class women in West Germany questioned the existing cultural models on motherhood that were still relatively closely linked to the housewife ideal (Sommerkorn 1988; Sommerkorn and Liebsch 2002). The negotiation processes can

also refer to institutional conditions, e.g. legal regulations, through which certain groups feel disadvantaged. It can be assumed that the social groups that want to bring about change tend to start on the level (culture/ideas or structure/interests) where the degree of integration is lower and the contradictions particularly apparent. As a result, change may be marked by non-synchronous developments and already existing contradictions may become worse, or new discrepancies and contradictions may develop in the gender culture, the gender order or in the relations between the different levels. This can cause further conflicts and processes of renegotiation in the gender arrangement. The policy of collective actors and their relationship to those primary actors, who they claim to represent, play an important role in these processes. The conditions for a fundamental change are best met in periods of generally accelerated social change.

Processes of modernization in the gender arrangement represent a special type of change in the gender arrangement. They are here defined as changes that generate a higher degree of equality between men and women or restructure egalitarian gender relations in the course of general modernization processes in society.

How can social processes be defined that lead to greater equality in the gender relations? T. H. Marshall's (1965) theory about the historical development of citizenship provides a blueprint for an interpretation. The history of modern societies is here regarded as a process in which people were able to expand their elementary rights: in a first step formal equality under the law had to be granted, in the next step equality in political participation was implemented, then – on the basis of modern welfare states – followed equality in social citizen rights such as education and social security, and the final step was equality within the economic system. The assumption of such an evolutionary sequence has been widely criticized. It nevertheless provided fundamental ideas for the development of sociological theories in the areas of social policy (see, for example, Esping-Andersen 1990). Gender researchers sometimes used it as a blueprint to analyse inequality and injustice in the rights of women compared to those of men in the development of modern society (e.g. Hobson 1997; Knijn/Kremer 1997; Siim 2001; Lister 2003).

Apart from the various types of citizen rights, several principles of equality can be distinguished. The most important ones are absolute equality, equality at the start, equal rights, equal status, and equal chances (Lautmann 1990: 28ff). These differences are relevant also for the development processes in the gender relations – from the viewpoint of women's movements in different countries, e.g., ideas on justice and equality in the relations of men and women may vary considerably. The differences may be described as follows. According to the idea of *absolute equality* men and women are – as a result of social distribution processes – entitled to the equal shares in social resources. Lautmann points out that for society as a whole absolute equality exists only as an ideal and has never been actually realized in any society. It may occur in certain social situations, though (see Lautmann 1990: 29). *Equality at the start* means that the initial conditions for acquiring social resources and reaching social positions are the same for men and women. What was criticized about this idea was that men often had certain privileges that were continuously reproduced even when men and women start under the same conditions. Examples are provided by studies showing that women tend to reach higher professional positions to a far lesser extent than men with the same education (see, for example, Blossfeld 1991). The idea

of *equal treatment*, on the other hand, does not aim at equal status but equal treatment, as the term already suggests. The point is to prevent discrimination. Especially for the gender relations the term *equal rights* was developed; here again the focus is not on results but equal treatment. It is to ensure that the social situation of women, if they have been underprivileged, is modified such that it corresponds to that of men. The principle of *equal chances* finally refers to the idea that everybody should have the same opportunities for getting rewards and achieving attractive social positions. It is determined by the shares in attractive goods and positions various groups actually achieve. It is therefore a combination of the principle of equal treatment and that of equal results (Lautmann 1990: 37). It can be assumed that the principles of equality that play a role in the discussion about a modernization of the gender arrangement vary from country to country.

The state represents an institution that under certain conditions can provide starting points for processes of change towards greater equality. With the help of government regulations and political support for equality efforts, modified basic conditions for the distribution of social resources in favour of women can be created on the institutional and the cultural level. The state can thereby help to increasingly marginalize those who follow the traditional patterns and bring them into a situation in which they find it difficult to legitimize their behaviour and attitudes (ibid.: 13f). During change, however, new conflicts can develop. When women, if they represent a disadvantaged group, demand more egalitarian structures this can lead to the questioning of male privileges. Thus such processes generate new potential for conflicts (ibid.: 12).

Of specific significance in processes of change in the gender arrangement are the women's movement and women's organizations that claim to represent the interests of women or of subgroups of women. Apart from the women's movement and the 'collective' actors there is the large group of non-organized women as 'primary' actors, as defined by Archer (1995). Especially for social movements such as the women's movement, however, the differentiation is not very clear-cut. There can be active groups of women who commit themselves to women's interests only for the short term or as small, private groups. The role of the primary actors is important because the aggregate social behaviour of large groups of women significantly contributes to processes of social and cultural change. Even if the development of women's participation in the labour force can be explained by institutional and cultural factors, it should be considered that change in the behaviour of women in relation to the labour market itself can be causal for changes at the institutional or cultural level as, for example, change of welfare state policies or employment policy of companies. The development therefore has to be regarded as a dialectic process in which the results of change contribute to a modification of the societal context that caused this change.

In the past century, women in Western industrial societies have – mainly by organizing themselves as social movements – made considerable progress with respect to equality in political and social citizen rights. Through the 'first wave' of the women's movement they gained access to educational institutions, there were improvements in the legal protection of married women, they acquired the right to vote as well as other rights and resources. With the 'second wave', women in many countries gained access to contraceptives, liberal abortion laws, and better control about their reproduction. Women's discrimination in the employment system and in

educational institutions was prohibited by law (Gerhard 1995b). How can the role of the women's movement in these processes of change be described? An important instrument used by social movements to put pressure on elites – force – was not employed. I argue that the women's movements started with the contradictions in the gender arrangement that had developed or intensified during general institutional or cultural processes of change and that also altered the balance of power between men and women or certain groups of men and women. Women's movements were therefore often not the initiators of the change, as Chafetz emphasizes:

From this vantage point, women's movements do not in fact produce change as much as they manifest and expedite a process already in motion. (Chafetz 1989: 150)

The special significance of the women's movements therefore stems from the fact that in the name of the vast majority of women they formulated suggestions for change and developed a doctrine that could legitimize such changes. Women's movements are able to influence public opinion and thereby exert pressure on the ruling elites to alter their policy in favour of women. Thereby women may step by step acquire more and more resources of power, for example as consumers, employees or voters, and the ruling elites are less and less able to legitimize their exclusion from elite positions. It cannot be assumed, though, that every women's movement pursues the same political objectives. Certainly, there were a number of similarities in the first and even more so in the second wave of the women's movement as an international discourse about the discrimination of women had developed. Depending on the space-time context, however, women's movements pursued different objectives (see also Chapters 4 through 7). Such differences can be explained through their respective reference to the cultural and institutional context. They may also be the result of differences as to which social groups of women represented the major actors in the women's movement and in which practical-political way they related to those women who belonged to the group of the 'primary' actors.

#### *Conditions of Women's Labour Force Participation in the Context of the Gender Arrangement*

In their everyday lives and in their biographies working women in modern Western societies combine various forms of work in different spheres of social practice and in specific ways (Geissler/Oechle 1996, Geissler 2000, Krüger 2000). Changes regarding one of these spheres cause changes in other spheres of social practice. The decisions made by women in relation to the ways they combine the various types of work in this respect relate to a significant extent to the dominant cultural models about the family, which may vary from country to country. Moreover, pressure, opportunities and room for manoeuvre in making decisions are also structured by the institutional setting which is influenced by the education system, the labour market, and welfare state policy and which is also based on cultural ideas about the family. Both the cultural and the institutional conditions do not influence decision-making processes in a deterministic way but leave room for individual deviations, depending on the context of space and time.

Especially in times of apparent change in the gender arrangement considerable discrepancies and contradictions may develop between the cultural and the institutional level. As a result women's biographies may deviate from their original orientations. The currently observable practice is therefore not necessarily a suitable indicator for culturally determined behaviour. According to Kluckhohn this is a general principle of the analysis of behavioural patterns, which has to be observed:

The anthropologist arrives at behavioral patterns by discovering what people do in fact do – the central tendencies in ranges of behavioral dispersion. The cultural conceptions of how persons of specified status ought to behave in given situations (normative patterns) are obtained from regularities in statements and from evidences of approval or disapproval of certain acts. (Kluckhohn 1951: 94)

The degree to which cultural models and attitudes correspond to observable behaviour provides information about the coherence of a gender arrangement and about the stage of cultural change this arrangement currently experiences. There may be 'institutional lags' due to which women fail to realize their changed employment orientation as desired because the institutional conditions represent significant obstacles. Such breaks were pointed out, for example, by Haller/Höllinger (1994) who analysed the data of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) for eight Western industrial countries. There may further be 'cultural lags' which develop when the policy of social institutions refers to new models that until then have not corresponded to the cultural orientations of the vast majority of the population. The analysis of such differences may contribute to an understanding of the dynamics of change in the gender arrangement.

However, considerable ambivalences and moral dilemmas may also arise in the orientations of women; they are the result of contradictions and non-synchronous developments of cultural models about the family, femininity and gender relations on the one hand and institutions on the other. Geissler and Oechle, for example, have argued that the change in female biographies has created contradictions and ambivalences in the orientations and life plans of young women because the institutional conditions have not changed to the same extent as the cultural models (Geissler/Oechle 1996, Geissler 1998, Oechle 1998). For an appropriate interpretation of the orientations and social practice on the individual level it is therefore important to analyse the profile of the gender arrangement of a society as a whole. On the other hand, an analysis of the orientations and behaviour as well as of possible contradictions and breaks in the daily lives of the individuals is necessary if the dynamics of change are to be aptly described. It has to be considered that the orientations of women may change during their lives, when they become mothers, during the period of active motherhood and beyond.

### Cultural Differences and Classification of Gender Arrangements

The functional-structuralist and large parts of the socialist-feminist theory formation assume that a uniform cultural model about the family and gender relations, i.e. the housewife model of the male breadwinner marriage, had historically become the

standard with the evolution of modern Western industrial societies. It therefore was an integral part of the modern industrial society and historically inseparable from its development. According to this assumption, there exist only variants of this model in modern capitalist societies but no other, fundamentally different models.

As indicated by the *functional-structuralist theory* of Parsons the transition from the traditional extended family to the modern nuclear family was a functional component of the process of differentiation in modern societies. In modern society the nuclear family represents a specialized sphere that is indispensable for this social system (Parsons 1955: 9, 16). The division of labour that involves different roles for men and women in the nuclear family in accordance with the idea of the housewife marriage is regarded as functional for modern societies.

The arguments of some of the *socialist-feminist* oriented theories go in the same directions as those of Parsons: a decisive prerequisite for capitalism to function is the separation of work related to production and work related to reproduction – a separation that had inevitably developed in the course of the evolution of capitalist societies. This argument was used, for example, by Ursula Beer in her book *Geslecht, Struktur, Geschichte* (1990). During the transition to the capitalist industrial society it became necessary, according to Beer, to find new solutions for the generative reproduction of society. Beer argued that in the pre-industrial society the reproduction of the population had been controlled by government regulations (marriage bans) but these restrictions were lifted in the capitalist society. In accordance with her argument, capital was per se not interested in ensuring individual and generative reproduction. The solution was seen in a gendered division of labour requiring women to provide housework and care in the private household for free. According to Beer, state legislation was used to realize this division of labour:

The process of gendered division of labour was emphasized by the social necessity of finding new social solutions for generative reproduction. The more widespread the patriarchal form of marriage became the more female workers were recruited to provide caring tasks for free.<sup>15</sup>

If it is assumed, however, that social actors play a decisive role in shaping social and cultural change then the assumption that one and the same model of gendered division of labour quasi 'automatically' became dominant everywhere in the course of transition to industrial society is not very plausible; it could equally be possible that different models developed in different societies. For the classification of gender arrangements this means that no 'presettings' should be made, for example, it should not be assumed that there were different variants of patriarchy or the male breadwinner marriage in every country. Rather the classification should be open for variations. Central dimensions of the gender culture should be named that may vary from country to country. In the following I will present a suggestion for a classification. With the help of this concept the arrangements can be classified with respect to their specific profile and the dynamics of change they involve.

*'Gender-Cultural Models' or 'Family Models' – the Concept for a Classification of Gender Arrangements*

With 'gender-cultural models' or 'family models' I describe differing cultural models that refer to ideas as to the 'right', 'appropriate' spheres for the social integration and fields of work for men and women. They are linked to cultural values on generativity and the relations between the generations. The term 'model' here refers to ideal-typical social ideas and values with respect to family and the social integration of men and women. The respective gender arrangement in a society can be based on one or several of such models. These models can be classified on the basis of five theoretical dimensions that refer to the structure of the gendered division of labour. These five dimensions are described on the following pages.

(a) *Societal ideas about the main spheres of work of men and women and about the nature of the relationship between these spheres (symmetric or complementary)*

The cultural values and models with respect to the main spheres of work of men and women (household/family and employment system) play a central role in the context of the gender culture. The ideas with respect to the gendered division of labour are embedded in general cultural values regarding the relationship of these spheres and their contribution to the production of welfare.

(b) *The social value assigned to the different spheres in society (equal valuation or hierarchy in valuation of the spheres)*

The value assigned to the family on the one hand and to the employment system on the other significantly affects the quality of work in both spheres, the social status of those working there, and the resources of power men and women can gain from their work. The valuation of the different spheres of work in a society on the other hand is based on the power relations between the main social groups who are involved in the processes to ascribe a certain value to the fields of work in the different spheres.

(c) *The cultural notions about generativity and the relations between the generations, i.e. childhood, motherhood, and fatherhood*

Of particular importance in this respect is the question of which societal sphere is regarded as central for bringing up children. Available options are the family/private household, the state, the market, or the non-profit or 'intermediary' sector, which combines regulation principles from these three areas (Evers/Olk 1996). The question of which sphere raising children is allocated to is closely connected to the cultural constructions of 'childhood', 'motherhood', and 'fatherhood' and to the question of which kind of social relation between mothers and children is regarded as adequate. Although the issue of caring for older people is relevant in this context, too, it is ignored by the scope of this study.

(d) *The way dependencies between men and women are constructed (autonomy or mutual/one-sided dependency)*

This is a question that is closely linked to the options and scopes of decision making of individuals and power relations. Whether a family model provides for asymmetric power relations depends on whether the cultural priority is on the individual autonomy of men and women within the family or on

dependencies, and on whether these dependencies are mutual or rather one-sided.

(e) *The cultural significance of the family in comparison to other private lifestyles*

The focus here is on the status society assigns to living in a family, to children, and to generativity. This dimension also deals with the question of which notions and values predominate with respect to living together with children in other forms than the nuclear family (extended family, single parent families).

With the help of this classification the historical development of the gender arrangements in different countries can be characterized in relation to changes over a certain period, i.e. 'longitudinally'. The classification is also suitable for a 'cross-section' analysis, a cross-national (or cross-regional) comparison of actual gender arrangements.

*Gender-Cultural Models in Western Europe*

At least five gender-cultural models can be distinguished according to the above introduced classification in Western Europe alone; these models – either individually or in combination with each other (as in reunited Germany and in France, see Pfau-Effinger/Geissler 2002, Fagnant 1994) – form the centre of different gender arrangements (Pfau-Effinger 1998a, b, 2001).<sup>16</sup> I differentiate between (1) the family economy model, (2) the housewife model of the (male) breadwinner family, (3) the (female) part-time carer model, (4) the dual breadwinner/state care model, and (5) the dual breadwinner/dual carer model.

- 1 According to the ideas characterizing the *family economy model*, men and women work together in their agricultural or craft business and both men and women play an important role for the survival of the family economy. Children are regarded as elements of the family economy and therefore expected to work in the family business as soon as they are physically able to do so. Even though there may be a gendered division of labour, men and women are allocated to the same social sphere of the family economy and not to different spheres, as in the male breadwinner model. Men and women relate to each other with their work and also reciprocally depend on each other. The contribution of women to the family economy is generally regarded as equally important for the survival of the family as the work of men so women's position and their social recognition may equal that of men, as also Scott and Tilly (1981) have argued.

- 2 The *housewife model of the (male) breadwinner family* is based on the assumption of a general separation of 'public sphere' and 'private sphere' and on complementary fields of work and action for both genders: The man is primarily responsible for work in the 'public' sphere where he provides for his family through gainful employment; the woman is primarily responsible for the private household including childcare, and she is financially dependent on her husband. This arrangement is based on a cultural construct of 'childhood' according to which children require special care and extensive individual support. Care and support are first and foremost regarded as the responsibility of private households. Complementary to this concept there is the cultural construct of

'motherhood' according to which it is mainly the task of the mother to raise her children and care for them in the breadwinner household.

Within the scope of the male breadwinner model as the cultural model of the family several variants have developed historically. There are two forms in particular. In a 'traditional housewife marriage' the woman permanently gives up gainful employment upon marriage or after the birth of her first child at the latest. Then there is the 'three phase model' of the housewife marriage, which in the 1960s was regarded as characteristic for female employment biographies (Myrdal/Klein 1956). In this model the woman suspends gainful employment after the birth of her first child until her youngest child has reached adolescence and then returns to the employment system.

3 The (*female*) *part-time carer model of the (male) breadwinner family*, on the other hand, is based on the idea that women work full-time apart from periods of active motherhood. According to this model mothers should return to their jobs after a relatively short break and combine their responsibility for childcare with part-time employment until the child no longer requires care. The idea about childcare is that it is shared between the mother/family on one hand, and the state, the market or the non-profit sector on the other.

4 The *dual breadwinner/institutional care model* is based on the idea of complete and full-time integration of both genders in gainful employment. Even as a married couple man and woman are regarded as individuals who provide for themselves independent of each other on the basis of gainful employment. As in the male breadwinner model childhood is constructed as a phase of life in which people require special care and support. In contrast to that model, however, the welfare state, the non-profit sector or the market rather than the family is seen as primarily responsible for childcare.

5 The *dual breadwinner/dual carer model* is based on the idea of a symmetric – and equal – integration of both genders into society; childcare is to a significant extent regarded as the responsibility of the private household. According to this model men and women equally participate in gainful employment and private childcare. The idea is that they share there responsibility for childcare with the welfare state, the non-profit sector or the market. With respect to the organization of the employment system this means – in contrast to the dual breadwinner/state care model – that the 'dual responsibility' of parents for work in the family and in their jobs is structurally supported by the employment system.

The degree to which the models are connected with the idea of a gender hierarchy can vary in the context of time and space. Within the gender arrangement of a society one or several of these cultural models may dominate. It can be assumed that – depending on which model or which models dominate in the gender arrangement – societies differ with respect to the way women define themselves as workers and mothers and to their attitudes to gainful employment in the various phases of their lives. This classification can be used for cross-national analyses of gender arrangements. An increase of the scope of the study to include Central, Eastern and non-European societies would certainly prove that there are further gender-cultural models. According to findings of an empirical study of Claudia Weber (1996) on Japan, for example, the modern Japanese family model is a combination of a

traditional Japanese family model (Samurai family and Confucian gender morals) and a bourgeois family model adopted from the West.

The classification can be used to analyse processes of change within gender arrangements as well. This requires an analysis of the direction of change and of the degree of social and cultural integration of the arrangement during the different stages of change.

The role of these family models in the historical development of Western European societies has varied.

In many countries the *family economy model* was the historical forerunner of the (male) breadwinner family; in some regions, for example in France, both models still coexisted in the 1990s (see Fagnani 1994). According to Scott and Tilly (1981: 106) the family form lived by farmers was surprisingly homogeneous in many European regions. The family formed the basic organizational unit of the farm, which – if it was owned as property – was regarded as owned by the family. The family was organized on the basis of absolute dependency and functional solidarity (see also Anderson 1971). The principal unit of production was the household and all family members contributed their share by working in or outside the home. In many cases there was a division of labour according to gender – men and women not only performed different tasks but also worked in different rooms. Women tended to assume the domestic tasks while men concentrated on work outside the home.

Often, albeit not always, men worked in the fields while women managed the household, raised animals, planted the garden, and sold excess dairy products, poultry and vegetables on the market.<sup>17</sup>

It would be misleading to describe these activities as 'housework', though. The tasks of the peasant woman had little in common with those of the housewife in the bourgeois family model. Scott and Tilly provided a number of examples showing that this family type was the major pre-industrial family form in many countries, also in urban working-class families and those of tradesmen (Scott/Tilly 1981: 109). This division of labour within the family did not automatically generate a uniform form of hierarchy between men and women. The general authority of women over the household and family life has in many cases probably provided them with a basis of power equal to that of men since the public sphere – which only slowly developed during the transition to modern society – did generally not enjoy a higher social status than the family economy.

The domestic labour of medieval peasant women was not divorced from goods production, nor from money-generating commodity production. They thus appeared, in a straightforward sense, as indispensable members of family production teams with their own sphere of competence and jurisdiction ... Many historians have characterized the peasant household as a co-managed unit, with the wife an equal partner, noting that she was in a position to inherit holdings and her husband's testamentary power. (Secombe 1992: 86)

For a number of feminist anthropologists and social historians, however, this assumption remains controversial (see Wunder 1993). Apparently, there were also differences between countries and regions with respect to the question of whether

this family form entailed hierarchical relations between men and women and to what extent (ibid.). In some Mediterranean countries or regions the family economy model is still dominant today while in modern Western European industrial societies it has been marginalized.

The (*male*) *breadwinner model* was and is – mainly in the modernized version of the male breadwinner/female part-time carer model – the central reference point of the gender arrangement in many modern Western European countries such as the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium, and West Germany.<sup>18</sup> The separation between housework and gainful employment was an 'invention' of bourgeois societies several centuries ago. Scott and Tilly also date the origin of the male breadwinner model at the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The hierarchical division of labour within the family which assigned the husband the role of breadwinner and the wife the role of domestic manager and moral guardian emerged clearly only in the nineteenth century. (Scott/Tilly 1981: 97)

In this general form, however, this assumption is not valid. In the Netherlands the housewife model of the male breadwinner family had become the dominant cultural model of the family and even a very popular family form already in the 17<sup>th</sup> century although it was still an agrarian society (see Chapter 5).

The *dual breadwinner/institutional carer model* is a modern model. In Western European societies it exists mainly in the form of a dual breadwinner/state carer model and in conjunction with a developed welfare state; it is the dominant model in Finland, Denmark and to a great extent also in Sweden (Pfau-Effinger 2001).

The *dual breadwinner/dual carer model* characterizes the innovative cultural ideas about the family which are becoming increasingly important in the gender arrangements in some other European countries, especially in Norway and the Netherlands (Pfau-Effinger 2002).

### Summary and Conclusion

The theoretical framework for cross-national analyses of social change in this book is based on general assumptions about the relations of culture, institutions, structure, and social practice. Hence there are long-term cultural traditions – as well as long-term characteristics of institutions – which are the result of earlier processes of interaction of social actors and which affect the current agency of social actors. Although there is generally a set of socially dominant cultural values and models, cultural 'coherence' cannot be assumed. Alternative and competing value systems may exist. At the respective historical date social actors influence the cultural system by relating to it in their social behaviour and reproducing or changing it through their actions. In how far this creates social change depends especially on the balance of power and the constellation of interests between social groups and on the way social actors deal with contradictions and alternatives in the value or institutional system. It can be assumed that the actors tend to start on the level – the cultural or the institutional one – that shows the lower degree of integration and where contradictions are more pronounced.

With respect to social actors it is essential to differentiate between collective actors, who organize and express themselves to pursue the interests of social groups, and primary actors, who exert influence through the aggregate effects of their and behaviour and attitudes. The relationship of these groups is significant for the course of social change and whether it takes place at all. Through their agency social actors link cultural change to institutional and structural change. The various levels are at the same time related and relatively autonomous.

The theoretical approach of the study is based on the assumption that there are dominant cultural norms, values and models in every modern, Western industrial society that refer to masculinity, femininity and childhood, and parents and children living together in the family and the division of labour between men and women. This is what I call 'gender culture'. The policy of welfare state institutions and companies with respect to female gainful employment as well as the individual behaviour of women or parents by which they solve problems of reconciliation of work in the family and in employment refer to a considerable extent to the gender cultural basis of the gender arrangement. In order to analyse the actual gender structures existing in society as a whole, with regard to the gendered division of labour and the institutional framework I use the theoretical concept of the 'gender order'.

Within the scope of a 'gender arrangement' generally binding elements of the gender culture are dominant in a specific context of time and space, but also new ideas can be negotiated. My argument is that the cultural values and notions on the family and gendered division of labour underlying institutional regulation more or less match those cultural values and notions to which individuals in their social practice refer. They can be seen as the result of cultural compromises between relevant social actors. Nevertheless, contradictions and non-synchronous developments may occur on the various levels or in the relations between the levels which may prove the starting point for social change in the gender arrangement. It can be assumed that such discrepancies, breaks and non-synchronous developments become even more pronounced in periods of social and cultural change. The empirical structures of the relations between the genders do therefore not necessarily correspond to the type of relations that are regarded as 'normal' or 'correct' by the gender culture. Numerous other social influences create further conditions for social practice that either compete with or dominate each other in certain contexts.

In my opinion, cross-national differences with regard to the structuring of gendered division of labour are better understood when they are analysed in the framework of the respective gender arrangements and the gender culture they refer to. I have therefore presented a suggestion for a classification of societies according to gender arrangements. They can be classified according to the respective dominant cultural models on the family and gendered division of labour and characterized with regard to the degree of social and cultural integration in the respective arrangement.

There are five different cultural models that represent ideal types: the family economic model, the housewife model of the (male) breadwinner family, the (female) part-time carer model of the (male) breadwinner family, the dual breadwinner/institutional carer model, and the dual breadwinner/dual carer model of the family. Each of these models may vary in their specific forms with respect to the ideas about the degree of hierarchy between men and women or whether they are based on the idea of equality of the genders.



In this book – in contrast to existing approaches to the comparative analysis of women's labour force participation – cultural aspects are systematically taken into account. Moreover, the influence of individual and collective actors on social change is emphasized as cultural values and notions, the profile of the major institutions, and social structures are regarded as the result of conflicts and negotiation processes. The approach finally takes the process character and the dynamics of the division of labour in society into account. The discrepancies, non-synchronous developments and contradictions in the area of conflict between culture, institutions, social structures and agency are regarded as the central basis for the dynamics of change in the gender arrangement. Social change may lead to a modification of the dominating family and gender model(s) or to its (their) replacement by (a) new one(s).

## Notes

- 1 'das Medium und Resultat des Verhaltens, das sie in rekursiver Weise organisiert: Die Strukturmomente sozialer Systeme existieren nicht außerhalb des Handelns, vielmehr sind sie fortwährend in dessen Produktion und Reproduktion einbezogen.' (Giddens 1992: 430)
- 2 A counter argument here was that social groups (such as 'the working class') may have a longer lifespan than social structures. Archer, on the other hand, argues that groups themselves have changed by the end of a transforming sequence so we can no longer speak of one and the same group (Archer 1996: 74f).
- 3 In Lockwood's theory, the theoretical understanding of these terms differs specifically from the way Habermas uses these terms in his *Theorie des kommunikativen Handelns* (1981); see also Archer 1996: 288–315.
- 4 For a critical discussion of these tendencies in gender research see Gottschall 1998.
- 5 'als einen offenen und instabilen Prozeß des Aushandelns von Bedeutungen ... der bei einer Kompromißbildung zur Abschließung sozialer Gruppen führt.' (Wimmer 1996: 407)
- 6 After Ernest Gellner (1979) this was also pointed out by Margaret Archer (1996): 'If ... an adequate theoretical stance is one which acknowledges the interplay between culture and agency, then it must be predicated on some autonomy or independence being assigned to each.' (Archer 1996: xv)
- 7 An important aspect is that social actors themselves change in the course of socio-cultural change; Archer speaks of a 'dual morphogenesis' that affects both the socio-cultural conditions and the actors. Collective actors may extend their groups or reorganize themselves (Archer 1995: 65).
- 8 With the term 'forms of integration' I refer to Geissler 1989.
- 9 Bourdieu (1987: 291) described the kind of gainful employment women from the socially underprivileged families are forced into as 'taste of necessity'.
- 10 In the West German context the term 'gender arrangement' has also been used by Brigitte Aulenbacher but as a theoretically rather unspecific concept primarily referring to the company level, see Aulenbacher 1998.
- 11 Blossfeld and Drobnic (2001a) have published a collection of articles which include elaborated cross-national analyses on the ways gender and class are linked. An interesting and new finding of the study is that the increase in women's labour force participation has contributed to an increase in social inequalities. This dimension of change in structures of inequality is often ignored in policy interventions aiming to prevent growing inequality between social class. According to the findings of the study, however, there are

- considerable cross-societal differences in the way gender and class are linked (Blossfeld/Drobnic 2001a).
- 12 Mahnkopf (1994) has argued that the assumption that economic rationality was the dominant behavioural principle in the economy is a myth anyway.
- 13 Cf. the results of a study on the life plans of young women by Geissler/Oechsle 1996. The authors show in great detail the variations in the ideas on the preferred family form young West German women have.
- 14 Knijn and Kremer (1997) have argued that two different social rights are relevant in this respect: The right of individuals to take care of people in need and the right to receive care if this is required.
- 15 'Seinen Nachdruck erhielt der Prozeß der geschlechtsspezifischen Arbeitsreilung durch die gesellschaftliche Notwendigkeit, neue gesellschaftliche Lösungen zur Regelung der generativen Reproduktion zu finden. In dem Maß, wie sich die patriarchalische Eheform verallgemeinerte, wurden weibliche Arbeitskräfte für unentgeltliche Versorgungsarbeiten rekrutiert.' (Beer 1990: 246)
- 16 These are 'ideal types' as defined by Max Weber. In his essay 'Die "Objektivität" sozialwissenschaftlicher und sozialpolitischer Erkenntnis' (1904) he constructed the definition of ideal types as a formal tool for analysing empirical realities. The point is to realize not the generic features but rather the peculiarities of cultural phenomena (Weber 1973: 202). He argues that the actual existence of the pure form of the ideal type cannot be expected; it is rather produced from a 'one-sided abstraction' of elements that can be found empirically. It was therefore constructed as a measuring instrument for historical research to find out how close reality came to this ideal (ibid.: 191).
- 17 'Meist, wenn auch keineswegs immer, arbeiten die Männer auf den Feldern, während die Frauen das Haus verwalteten, Tiere aufzogen und pflégten, einen Garten bewirtschafteten und überschüssige Milchprodukte, Geflügel und Gemüse auf dem Markt verkauften.' (Scott/Tilly 1981: 107)
- 18 For the differences in the gender policy of the welfare state in countries dominated by the male breadwinner model, see Lewis/Osmer 1994.



ASHGATE

# Development of Culture, Welfare States and Women's Employment in Europe

BIRGIT PAU-EFFINGER

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This refreshing volume introduces a theory for explaining cross-national differences in the social practice of women (and men) in the areas of family and employment. This provides a theoretical framework for the ensuing comprehensive cross-national analysis of the degree and forms of labour market integration of women in three European countries – Finland, West Germany and the Netherlands – from the 1950s until 2000.

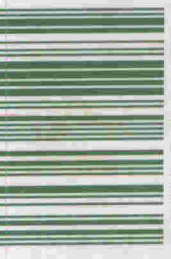
Cross-national differences are explained with a focus on cultural change and the development of welfare state, labour markets, the family and social movements. It is evident that change took place along different development paths that were based on deep-rooted historical differences in the cultural ideals of the family. Such historical differences and their explanations also form part of the analysis. The results of this survey contribute to the further development of cross-national sociology on social change, social and gender inequality, welfare state, labour markets and family structures.

*This book is truly revolutionary. It shows how comparative differences in women's labour force participation result from deep-seated features at the level of social cultures, in how understandings of motherhood, childhood, gendered divisions of labour and family are represented in how women and men behave. This means we can no longer see social policy as simply providing financial incentives or support, it both reflects and must intervene on a much wider and deeper social canvas.*

Professor Simon Duncan, University of Bradford, UK

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ISBN 0-7546-1693-2



Ashgate Publishing Limited  
Gower House, Croft Road  
Aldershot, Hampshire  
GU11 3HR, England