

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.¹

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.² 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.³ 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 Émile 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.⁴ 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.⁵

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.⁶

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

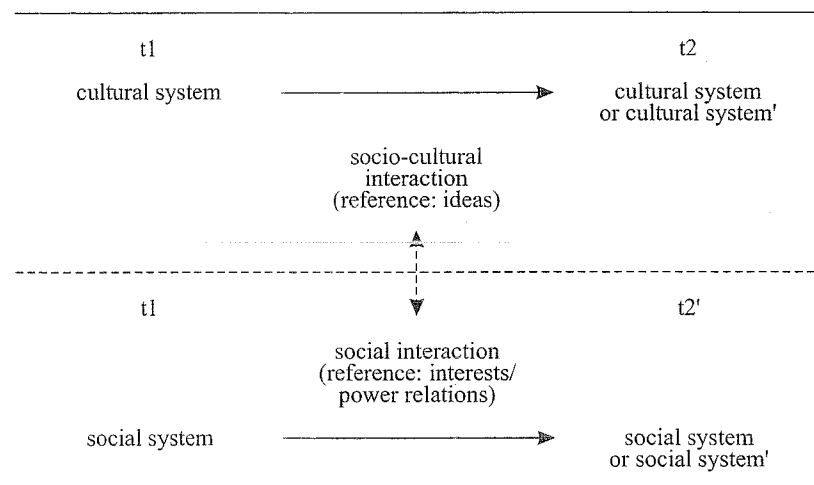


Figure 2.1: Sequence of Social/Cultural Reproduction or Change According to Margaret Archer

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.⁷

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.⁸ 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 (Pfau-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.⁹ 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/ Oik 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).¹⁰ 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.¹¹

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

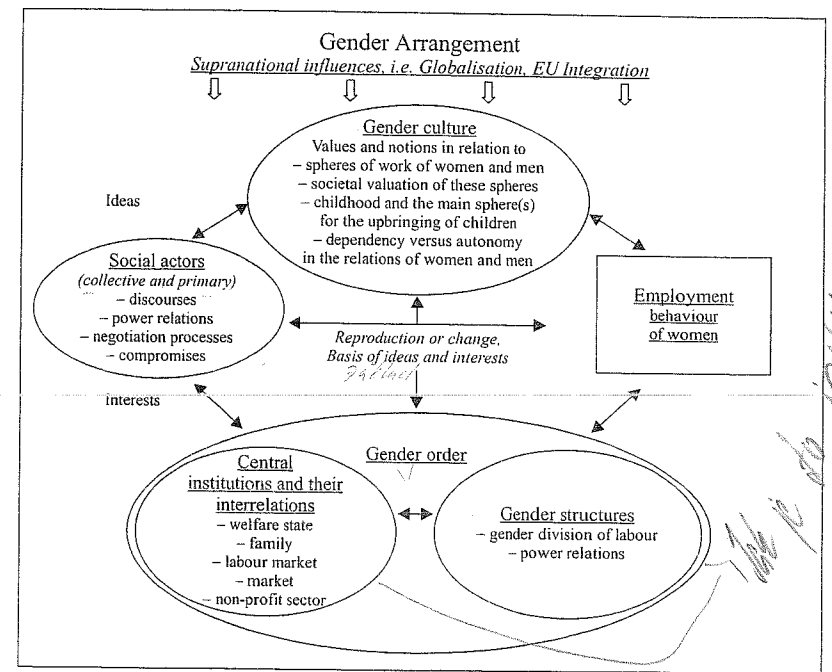


Figure 2.2: Employment Decisions in the Context of the Gender Arrangement

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 gender culture and gender order and the consideration of agency forms the basis for 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'.¹² 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, Krais 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, Krais 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 (Frieze 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.¹³

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 Mósesdóttir 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'.¹⁴ 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/Oechsle 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 Oechsle, 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/Oechsle 1996, Geissler 1998, Oechsle 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-structuralistic 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-structuralistic 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 *Geschlecht, 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 patriarchic form of marriage became the more female workers were recruited to provide caring tasks for free.¹⁵

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, Fagnani 1994) – form the centre of different gender arrangements (Pfau-Effinger 1998a, b, 2001).¹⁶ 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 private 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 their 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) – 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.¹⁷

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. (Seccombe 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.¹⁸ 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 19th 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 17th 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 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 Arbeitsteilung 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, arbeiteten die Männer auf den Feldern, während die Frauen das Haus verwalteten, Tiere aufzogen und pflegten, 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/Ostner 1994.