

CHAPTER

20 Gender

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Abstract

This chapter traces how scholars have conceptualized the relationship between gender and welfare states, examining significant differences among mainstream, gender-aware, and feminist perspectives. We discuss how feminist scholarship has broadened scholars' understanding of social citizenship, how gender structures, and is structured by, the policies and institutions of the welfare state, and how women and men participate in social politics. We describe how insights from intersectionality theory and the adoption of more fluid conceptions of gender have shaped investigations of social policies and politics, bringing greater accuracy to analyses of the gendered effects of welfare states. Finally, we turn to analyses of how welfare states have reorganized in response to crises of care. We conclude by discussing normative debates over the role of welfare states in reducing gender inequalities and supporting people's choices about care and employment.

Keywords: [gender](#), [welfare states](#), [social policy](#), [social politics](#), [feminist analyses](#), [gender equality](#), [intersectionality](#), [care](#), [women's employment](#)

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Introduction

CAN welfare states promote gender equality, or are they mechanisms for recreating masculine domination? These questions have long defined how scholars examined the mutually constitutive relationship between gender and systems of social provision and regulation. Recent scholarship has embraced a more differentiated set of questions, spurred by theories of intersectionality or complex inequality (e.g. Williams 2018a), understandings of transformation and stability in state institutions (e.g. Morgan and Orloff 2017, Leibfried et al. 2015), and changes in political-economic, gendered, demographic, cultural, and racial contexts. Scholars examine multiple logics, trade-offs, and contradictions in how states shape gender relations and in turn are shaped by gender, in the context of a broader set of relations of power, difference, and inequality (e.g. Orloff 2017).¹

The comparative study of gender and welfare states and other systems of social provision and regulation has been an extraordinarily generative site for investigating the creation and transformations of relations and institutions of power, difference, and inequality. This area of scholarship has been favoured by two intellectual 'big bangs'—gender studies, from the 1970s, and an increasingly gender-aware regime analysis, from the late 1980s. After 1990, it was powered by the engagement of the two constituencies created by these explosions of innovation. Esping-Andersen (1990) promoted the concept of 'decommodification' to capture the potentially emancipatory effects of welfare states for working classes—a framing that was reworked by gender scholars such as ↵ Hobson (1990), Jenson (1997), Knijn (1994), Lewis (1992), Mahon (2002), Orloff (1993), Sainsbury (1996), Saraceno (1997), Shaver (1994), and Williams

(1995) to query the possibility of using politics against masculine domination, while remaining alive to the ways (welfare) states contributed to stratification and regulation.

Falsely universalizing (implicitly masculinist) analytic frames initially undergirded almost all comparative studies of welfare states, occluding the gendered underpinnings of systems of social provision, women's situations, and the gendered dimensions of the 'average production worker'. Yet something about Esping-Andersen's (1990) analysis encouraged engagement between feminist and mainstream scholars of welfare states. Perhaps it was his foray into analysis of how changing 'labour-market regimes' affected women's employment, or his revitalization of an emancipatory, yet still gender-blind, concept of social citizenship rights. This took him squarely onto the intellectual terrain that had been tilled by feminists without acknowledging that work. This simultaneously provoked women scholars and stimulated their creative expansions of notions of social citizenship rights, re-appropriations of the regime concept, and investigations of care services and shifting post-industrial employment patterns, leading to a revisioning of welfare states as core institutions of the gender order and gender as a fundamental structuring dimension of systems of social provision and regulation (e.g. O'Connor et al. 1999; Sainsbury 1996; Hook 2015; Shaver 2018).

Esping-Andersen and some scholars working in the power resources tradition have joined feminist scholars in developing concepts and empirical analyses of the significance of unpaid familial care work; the relations among family policies, women's employment, fertility, care work, and women's empowerment; and the partisan correlates of different family and gender policy models (on the 'power of feminist perspectives' in social policy and academic research, see Orloff and Palier 2009). Yet there has rarely been full 'gender mainstreaming', for even 'gender-aware' perspectives do not take up the deeper implications of feminist work and have difficulty assimilating concepts of interdependency and gendered power; care as relational and the basis of an ethical orientation, rather than simply a barrier to labour-force participation; intimate violence; and the regulatory power of gender categories themselves. Feminist scholarship, in contrast, confronts the whole edifice of gender hierarchy and masculine domination, as partly constituted by (welfare) states, now understood globally and as interconnected with other forms of inequality, that has secured women's 'compulsory altruism' (Finch and Groves 1983) and men's privileges—albeit unevenly distributed, depending on other positionalities—vis-à-vis employment, housework, personal autonomy, control over valued resources, and forms of domination, such as violence against women.

A quick note on terminology is necessary. 'Feminist' scholarship involves studies of gender that contest gendered hierarchies and investigate political paths towards gender equality and women's emancipation, while taking critical stances on concepts such as 'equality' and 'reconciliation'. 'Mainstream' scholarship refers to research that does not thematize gender and accepts masculinist premises about actors, politics, and work. An in-between category of 'gender-aware' research takes into account gender gaps, but 'downplays [gender] equality in income, work and care ... as other diagnostics either write gender equality out, rename women as "mothers," or fold gender inequalities into a discursive frame of multiple and intersecting inequalities' (Jenson 2015: 1).

Scholars of the welfare state and other systems of social provision and regulation have been deeply affected by the changing global political economy, with the decline of Keynesian welfare arrangements and the rise of neoliberalism, austerity, retrenchment, and 'new politics' around welfare (e.g. Pierson 1994). In this new context, scholars forwarded arguments—to the European Union and others—about the ways welfare could sustain productive economies, through 'social investment' policies that promote capabilities and activation, particularly among women (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002; Hemerijck 2017; Morel et al. 2012). Indeed, Esping-Andersen (2016: 10) argues that family vitality—including marital stability, intensive attention to children's development, and fertility in line with citizen preferences—and social welfare demand a 'new gender egalitarian family equilibrium', similar to what has emerged in Scandinavia, which 'requires not only that social institutions (such as the labour market and the welfare state) become "women friendly", but also that men adapt within partnerships—in particular by equally sharing domestic chores and child rearing'. It is not yet clear whether this new equilibrium will emerge across all rich capitalist democracies.

Conceptualizing Gender for the Analysis of Welfare States and other Systems of Social Provision and Regulation

‘Gender’ represents a key theoretical and conceptual innovation in the study of systems of social provision and regulation. Feminist scholars of welfare states have served as ambassadors of gender studies, which emerged in association with feminist social movements and encompassed dazzling intellectual developments that moved across disciplines and challenged masculinist assumptions that reigned in the academy, as elsewhere. ‘Gender’ has been deployed ‘to contest the naturalization of sexual difference in multiple arenas of struggle. Feminist theory and practice around gender seek to explain and change ... systems of sexual difference whereby “men” and “women” are socially constituted and positioned in relations of hierarchy’ (Haraway 1991: 131). Groundbreaking work in the 1970s and 1980s established that systems of social provision and regulation are gendered to the core (for reviews, see Orloff 2009a; Shaver 2018). Feminists also raise questions about the androcentrism of many versions of ‘gender equality’ that seek to make women more like men without addressing how masculinities depend on the subordination and devaluation of women and the feminine. Gender is not simply an attribute of individuals, but a social relationship, historically varying, and encompassing divisions of labour, relations of power and legitimate authority, emotional investments, and cultural valuations; it crosses individual subjectivities, institutions, culture, and language (see, e.g. Connell 1987).

p. 349

Early feminist interventions around social provision—like most areas of feminist scholarship—started from premises about the uniformity and fixity of the category of women (and men). The key difference was between women and men, with policies reinforcing that binary division and politics reflecting women’s and men’s competing interests. Both premises have been critiqued by feminist theorists (see, e.g. Zerilli 2005), social scientists, and legal studies scholars (see, e.g. Cho et al. 2013; Collins 2015; McCall 2005). The fixity of gender categories has been replaced by more fluid conceptions of gender as process and practice, which allows for investigations of processes of gendering, regendering, or degendering in which welfare states are central influences and objects of influence. Social policies and politics are now investigated in terms of the complex and often contradictory interconnections among gender and other relations of power, difference, and inequality: ‘race’, ethnicity, sexuality, class, citizenship, migration status, and more, often understood within the concepts of ‘intersectionality’ (Williams 1995, 2018a) or ‘complex inequality’ (McCall and Orloff 2005). Moreover, the positions of men, of masculinities, and of fatherhood, are increasingly problematized, and the diversity of men’s positions vis-à-vis families, violence, care work, and employment is investigated as object of social policy and law (e.g. Eydal and Rostgaard 2016; Haney 2018; Hobson 2002; Hook 2006; Hearn et al. 2018).

To achieve recognition that ‘gender matters’, feminists engage in a multifaceted critique, including not only concepts and theories specific to the study of social policy, but also the social theories, methodologies, and epistemological presumptions underpinning this area of political study (see, e.g. Orloff 2005; Shaver 2018). Rather than developing a new totalizing theory, they seek to understand men’s and women’s diverse gendered dispositions, capacities, resources, goals, and modes of problem solving deployed in gendered political action. Conceptual innovations and reconceptualizations of foundational terms have been prominent in comparative scholarship on welfare states, starting with gender, and including care, social reproduction, depletion, embodiment, body rights, autonomy, familism and defamilization, citizenship, (in)dependence, political agency, capabilities, intersectionality, and (in)equality. It is impossible to see—much less describe and understand—the mutually constitutive relation between gender and welfare states without these innovations.

Feminists begin their critical project with the very definitions of social citizenship and the ‘welfare state’. Citizenship has long been understood in exclusively white, masculine terms, linked to a particular conception of political subjects as rational, autonomous, unburdened by care, and impervious to invasions of bodily integrity (Lister 2003; Roberts 1999; Hobson et al. 2002). If, as gender scholars contend, the need for care is inevitable, given humans’ vulnerability, their dependence in infancy and old age, and often in between, we must reassess conceptions of citizens and political action (see, e.g. Fineman 2010). Women have often differed from men in the kinds of citizenship rights they have demanded; while working-class men may indeed aspire to ‘decommodification’ (when unemployment is not the pre-eminent threat), many women have found that the right to formal, paid work may provide new resources and organizational capacities. Men’s citizenship rights have been linked historically to military service and paid employment. Women citizens and feminist scholars have tried to expand the notion of social and political participation

p. 350

that undergirds citizenship rights to include mothering and care work, whether or not it is paid (Knijn and Kremer 1997; Lister 2003). Drawing on an understanding of interdependency as the basic human condition, gender scholars have enunciated new citizenship rights essential to emancipation, including capacities to form autonomous households (Orloff 1993); rights to time to care and to be cared for (Knijn and Kremer 1997); 'body rights' (Shaver 1994); and rights to procreate or to refrain from procreating (Luna and Luker 2013). Similarly, gender scholars question standard definitions of the welfare state. In industrial capitalist economies, in which people depend on the wage and most wage workers are men, systems of social provision and regulation responded to a particular social risk profile: loss of wages due to unemployment, illness, disability or retirement (the 'old social risks') (Taylor-Gooby 2004). Gender analysts stress state activities such as family and employment law, family policies, reproductive rights, the reproduction of nations and 'races', housing, anti-violence policies, and the simultaneous regulation (and, at times, punishment) of those who receive benefits, even redistributive ones.

Moreover, recent interventions foregrounding the 'many hands' of the state (Morgan and Orloff 2017) and the different vectors of state interventions make clear that these diverse activities may instantiate multiple and contradictory logics. Modern (welfare) states are no longer uniformly patriarchal (Orloff 2017). Control of states and particular units within states is a key stake in gendered power struggles, given states' monopoly over the collective means of coercion, their role in regulating individual violence (or not), and power over gendered political participation and citizenship rights (Connell 1987; O'Connor et al. 1999; Roseneil et al. 2013; Bernstein et al. 2016; Htun and Weldon 2018). For the most part, this does not translate into simple political divides between men and women, but into different political coalitions containing men and women with distinctive stances vis-à-vis family, gender relations, other relations of inequality (e.g. class, migration, religion, 'race') (McCall and Orloff 2017).

Innovative feminist analyses revealed the role of women and men as political actors pursuing gendered goals vis-à-vis social policy (see, e.g. Skocpol 1992; Koven and Michel 1993; Htun and Weldon 2018). For example, we see state officials' stakes in the production and regulation of nations or 'races', citizens and soldiers; men's concerns to gain or maintain family-supporting wages; women's interests in combating poverty or discrimination linked to caregiving. Gendered actors may be identified with social movements—women's equality movements, 'maternalists', or anti-feminist groups, or with political parties and state administrations, such as 'femocrats'/women in specialized gender equality units. With the expansion of supranational organizations, feminist and other groups have made strategic and tactical use of openings—such as the mandate for gender mainstreaming—at different levels of governance to press their demands (see, e.g. Walby 2004; Mahon 2015; Bedford and Rai 2010).

Welfare States and Social Politics: Gender, Labour, Care

p. 351

Care is central to most feminist understandings of gender, social politics, and welfare states. Care is work, predominantly done by women, not a 'naturally' feminine emanation of familial love; care is embedded in relationships characterized by interdependence, power, and conflict; it is a socially necessary, but often unrecognized, activity. Women's responsibilities for care and unpaid domestic labour underpin gender hierarchies and women's unequal inclusion in politics and markets. As Williams (2018b) points out, there are 'different but consanguine' intellectual lineages for understanding these 'activities of care and domestic work that contribute to human flourishing, repair and sustenance'. First, there is a focus on the activities and consequences of giving care itself as the source of many of women's disadvantages, but also of distinctive identifications, resources, and ethical commitments (see, e.g. Jenson 1997; England 2005; Daly and Lewis 2000); second, there is a socialist-feminist perspective linking 'social reproduction' to 'production' in capitalism and investigating household care practices in a global context (see, e.g. Bedford and Rai 2010; Parreñas 2000). Williams argues for drawing on both lineages, studying care 'by making connections across the micro, meso and macro scales of analysis', linking households, nation-states' migration regimes and social policies, globally-situated political economies, transnational migration, and 'global care chains'. Understanding the social organization of care in this way forces us to think across conventional political and academic divides between economy and family, public and private, paid and unpaid work, emotion and commodity, culture and state social policy, state provision of services and indirect support for caring in households, local care practices and global networks of labour.

State systems of social provision and regulation offer different forms and levels of support to families—cash transfers, tax incentives, and/or directly provided services, parental leaves, and/or part-time work. They recognize and support some forms of caregiving and family organization, while sanctioning others that may vary across social groups defined by class, ‘race’, ethnicity, or educational and skill level. Policies may help to maintain strongly gender-differentiated family forms, with women assuming responsibilities for care, or may encourage the ‘outsourcing’ of care responsibilities to market or state. These policies may have heterogeneous effects on different mothers based on skill or educational level (often a proxy for class) and other positionalities (Hook and Pettit 2016; Boeckmann et al. 2015).

p. 352 For most of the post-Second World War era, the dominant model was what Lewis (1992) memorably called the ‘male breadwinner regime’—the heterosexual nuclear family with breadwinning man and his wife performing the domestic and care labour (even if also employed). This arrangement is often called ‘traditional’, although its full realization was limited to the ‘Golden Age’ between the Second World War and the early 1970s. States also sustained men’s advantaged position in labour markets, and welfare institutions did not ameliorate fully the economic and other vulnerabilities that attached to women’s caregiving in the context of heterosexual nuclear families dependent on men’s wages (Orloff 2017). Although this was the normative model, not all families had access to the resources and rights that made it possible; in particular, the position of single mothers varied considerably, by marital status, ‘race’, or ethnicity (Lewis 1997; Hobson 1993; Roberts 1995).

Since the 1970s, women’s rising participation in paid work has helped change some aspects of the division of caring labour. Yet women are still more likely than men to shape their employment around the requisites of caregiving and, to a lesser extent, domestic work, and do a disproportionate amount of this labour; these arrangements are key drivers of gender inequalities. Thus, gender analysts focus on welfare institutions that bear on the gender division of labour, especially care services and parental leaves. Many feminists are convinced that the way to move towards gender equality is by changing men’s practices, rather than simply reconciling women’s care responsibilities with paid work and offering care services outside the household (see, e.g. Gornick and Meyers 2009).

The relatively higher poverty rates of lone mothers and elderly widows in most rich democracies across both the ‘breadwinner’ and later eras attests to the vulnerability of caregivers lacking access to men’s incomes. As Hobson (1990) pointed out in her ingenious application of Hirschmann’s ‘exit, voice, loyalty’ framework to women’s situation in marriage, the conditions of lone mothers affect married mothers as well, for they reflect something of what their ‘exit options’ would be; the better the situation for solo mothers, the more power partnered women have. Solo mothers’ conditions reveal the extent to which welfare states address women’s economic vulnerabilities; their poverty is alleviated—to a limited extent—only by generous welfare programmes or employment supported by care services, and in best-case scenarios, a combination of these (Christopher 2002; Kilkey and Bradshaw 1999; Huber et al. 2009). Indeed, recent policy transformations towards supporting women’s employment, to be discussed below, are partly justified by their poverty-reducing effects.

p. 353 The ‘breadwinner model’ was embedded in Keynesian economic policies and welfare states addressing the economic insecurities of wage-earning men, but this political-economic context has shifted radically. Social policies aimed at the economic insecurities associated with the ‘old social risks’ were subject to cutbacks or recalibration (e.g. recommodification), while there were increasing demands to address ‘new social risks’: aging populations; higher rates of cohabitation, separation, and divorce; greater precarity of employment—in short, phenomena that lead to increased caring demands (Bonoli 2005; Taylor-Gooby 2004). Indeed, in striking contrast to other parts of the welfare state, there was expansion of programmes that may be grouped under the rubric of ‘family policy’ and partially overlapping with the new social risks (income support to families with children, family-related leave, early childhood education and care), which may encourage maternal employment (Daly and Ferragina 2018). Orloff (2017) characterizes these shifts as processes of ‘destruction’ of institutions and policies organized around the logic of the breadwinner/caregiver household and ‘construction’ of institutions and policies organized around the logic of maternal employment. New policies to support maternal employment are diverse, reflecting the imprint of the timing and sequence of destructive and constructive processes, political compromises, policy legacies, and long-standing social, partisan, and institutional differences.

Lewis (2001) has called the new institutional logic the ‘adult worker model’, as both men and women are expected to be in paid employment. However, she and other gender scholars have pointed out continuing

gendered differences in patterns of participation in paid and unpaid work (Lewis and Giullari 2005). Discrimination against women in employment has lessened considerably, but mothers continue to experience inequalities in employment, linked to caregiving responsibilities, to a far greater extent than childless women (Boeckmann et al. 2015). Mothers' participation rates are lower than fathers', unless there are state- or market-provided care services and/or other means of 'reconciling' employment and family work, and employed mothers work at part-time positions at far greater levels than men or childless women. Taking time out of paid employment to do unpaid care and cleaning work in families—even when it does not add up to full-time and lifelong housewifery—imposes costs on caregivers, notably lifelong lower incomes and pension entitlements, economic dependency, and vulnerability to poverty (England 2005; Hobson 1990; Joshi et al. 1999). In addition, mothers suffer a 'motherhood wage penalty' due to effects of motherhood on productivity and discrimination by employers against mothers in hiring and promotion (Budig et al. 2012). But even when mothers' participation rates equal fathers', as in the Nordic countries, employment patterns differ, with women taking more parental leave, working reduced hours, and working in sex-segregated occupations (Ellingsaeter and Leira 2006; Misra et al. 2007; Pettit and Hook 2009; Hook and Pettit 2016).

Public policies influence gendered divisions of labour, either promoting gender-differentiated arrangements, 'one-and-a-half-earner' or male breadwinner households, or more symmetric arrangements between men and women, with both partners working full-time. Countries vary in which model predominates, and some are polarized between dual-full-time earners, most often among the households of highly skilled women, and male single-earner families, with fewer one-and-a-half-earner households (Lewis et al. 2008; Hook 2015). There is wide agreement on different countries' profiles. (Note that this discussion applies to couples, rather than to single mothers.) Some, mainly Nordic countries, have policies encouraging mothers' employment through childcare services, reduced work time, and paid leaves attached to prior employment. These countries have high levels of female labour force participation and most households are formed by partners working full time, even if women's hours are slightly less than men's. The Nordic countries, except Denmark, have also been notable for their efforts at incentivizing men's care through 'use-it-or-lose-it' parental leave set-asides (Eydal and Rostgaard 2016). Yet some incoherence has been introduced into most of these countries through 'cash-for-care' programmes that allow parents—mainly mothers—to stay out of paid work for extended periods (Duvander and Ellingsaeter 2016).

p. 354 France and Belgium long differed from other 'conservative' regimes (Misra et al. 2007) for providing extensive professional care for young children (Morgan 2006), but they also support periods of full-time caregiving (Morel 2007). In theory, this policy mix allows for choice between employment and stay-at-home care; in reality, Hook (2015) finds that polarization in France between dual full-time earner and single-male earner households has a class gradient. The policies of most continental European countries and Japan are congruent with traditional gendered divisions of labour, but have been 'modernized' to enable more women to work for pay by accommodating women's continuing responsibility for care work, as in 'reconciliation' measures such as part-time work and long maternity leaves. Some, such as Germany and the Netherlands, have significantly expanded early childhood education and care. Overall, however, the one-and-a-half-worker model remains common: labour force participation levels have increased, but do not reach the levels of the Nordic countries. And others still—the United States, the United Kingdom, Ireland, and the southern European countries—do less to help families sustain women's employment or care, implicitly relying on family households or the market. Here, there is a polarization among households that 'is driven, in part, by class. Dual full-time is the norm for families with high maternal educational attainment and male sole earner is the norm for families with low attainment' (Hook 2015). In these countries, labour force participation levels are quite mixed. In the United States, which had relatively high levels of women's labour force participation around 1990, reflecting the availability of market services (Orloff 2006), employment rates have stagnated owing partly to the lack of employment-supporting family policies (Blau and Kahn 2013).

'Politics matters' for the character and effects of these policies. In the 1990s and early 2000s, many analysts focused on policy 'regimes', assuming that regime types were associated with different gender or family models (e.g. Esping-Andersen 2009). Feminist scholars, however, argued that class-based regime types and political configurations did not fully determine the gendered dimensions of systems of social provision and regulation (e.g. Lewis 1992; O'Connor et al. 1999). Regime analyses were important for understanding the topography of variation in welfare states, yet the typology-based analyses these have often spawned have probably reached the point of diminishing returns. Still, we might want to retain the regime concept with a focus on the articulation of different policies in order to provide more accurate pictures of the effects of

systems of social provision (Orloff 2017). Korpi (2000), for one, favours disaggregating the regime concept—into driving forces, mediating institutions, and outcomes—to investigate specific components in a causal analysis.

p. 355

Korpi et al. (2013; see also Korpi 2000) link the predominance of different political parties in the post-war years with different family policy models that reflect ideals about care arrangements, family types, and preferred institutions for delivering support—states, families, or markets. Social democratic parties, sometimes helped along by affiliated women's movements, have embraced the model of dual-earner families, women's equality via employment (especially public jobs), and public care services (see also Huber and Stephens 2000; Lundqvist 2011). The dominance of secular and religious ↪ right parties has different effects on gender relations. Religious parties have been the principal exponents of subsidiarity and 'traditional' gender ideology in the form of 'familism', which is compatible with state spending, but supports families in ways that reinforce gendered labour divisions and block autonomy-enhancing provision. Secular right parties are concerned to restrict state spending and public services, and while not necessarily hostile to women's employment, are uninterested in alternatives to commodification and prefer tax-based incentives for women's employment. Regulatory measures, such as anti-discrimination legislation, were critical in the United States and Canada for furthering women's employment fortunes (O'Connor et al. 1999), but opposition to regulation is now part of the neoliberal mantra. Given that none of the rich democracies has unbroken single-party rule, partisan alternation or coalition governments can introduce incoherence to their policy mixes. Ellingsaeter (2014: 555) notes that in the Nordic countries:

In contrast to convergence and stability in regard to moderately long parental leave at high replacement rates and in the provision of universal publicly funded childcare services, daddy quotas, i.e. earmarked leave for fathers, and cash-for-care benefits are contested and in flux ... the main source of instability ... is party competition over values of 'equal parenthood' versus 'parental choice', largely following a left-right divide.

There has been considerable debate about the gendered effects of different welfare state profiles, and also advances in how to conceptualize and measure policies (see Hook and Ruppner, Chapter 43 in this volume). Mandel and Semyonov (2006) identified a 'welfare state paradox', in which well-developed welfare states, as measured by a 'welfare state intervention index', increase women's labour force participation but simultaneously hinder women's advancement in employment (as indexed by wage gaps, occupational sex segregation, access to top positions, etc.). In contrast, less 'developed' welfare states were associated with better occupational outcomes for employed women. Moreover, while generous welfare states benefit less advantaged women, less generous systems are associated with labour markets in which highly skilled women have made headway (see, e.g. Estévez-Abe 2009; Mandel and Shalev 2009). Other scholars have challenged this interpretation on several grounds. Defenders of the Nordic model argued that the 'welfare state paradox' ignores the gender-equalizing effects of drawing most women into the workforce, the relatively good conditions of female-dominated public-sector employment, and relatively low gender wage gaps (Korpi et al. 2013; Shalev 2008). Korpi et al. (2013) adduce evidence that the Nordic systems are beneficial for less-advantaged women but not at a cost to highly-educated women.

p. 356

The 'welfare state intervention index', like generic discussions of 'family policy', mistakenly groups policies that vary in their impact (Pettit and Hook 2009; Korpi et al. 2013). Pettit and Hook (2009) argue that policies encompass two dimensions, whether they promote labour market inclusion or exclusion and whether they discourage or promote equality among those in the labour force (in terms of wage gaps, occupational ↪ segregation, hours worked). Only some programmes are 'work-facilitating' for women—principally extensive public support for non-familial care services and short, well-paid leaves conditioned on prior employment. Widely available public childcare is significant for the levels and quality of mothers' employment and is beneficial for both well-educated and less-educated mothers. Other family policies are 'work-reducing' by disincentivizing employment and negatively affecting women's occupational opportunities through long leaves, 'cash for care', and part-time employment (see also Keck and Saraceno 2013). Pettit and Hook note that, to date, there have been 'gendered trade-offs' between those measures bringing women into labour force and measures affecting women's fates once in paid employment; no country ranks high on every measure of women's employment equality.

With rising levels of women's—especially mothers'—employment, 'crises of care' or 'depletion' have emerged, as demands for care among aging populations, people with disabilities, and small children outstrip the supply of familial caregivers (Williams 2018a; Rai et al. 2014). Allowing for (paid) workers to

have time to care is one response, and finding new supplies of care workers is another, to which some states have responded by encouraging immigration or migration from rural to urban areas within states. These developments have interacted in complex ways, with moves towards the marketization of care services, encouraged by new tax incentives.

Care migration, especially among women, is a significant development. 'Global care chains' bring (predominantly) women from less-developed areas to richer areas to supply care; many of these are mothers leaving behind their own children and other kin to be cared for, often by women (relations, usually) from even poorer regions (Parreñas 2005; Lutz 2008). While 'care deficits' in richer areas of the globe are filled, new deficits among children and others in the sending countries have emerged, and migrant care workers face further difficulties with migration and citizenship regulation (Williams 2018b). Significant empirical and normative debate concerns the use of immigrant labour for tasks once carried out largely by housewives, focusing on whether such arrangements are inherently exploitative or can be made into 'good jobs' (see, e.g. Meagher 2006; Bowman and Cole 2009; Gavanas 2010). Moreover, care, employment, and migration arrangements have implications for the quality and quantity of care (Morgan 2005; Williams 2018a, 2018b).

Future Trajectories for Gender, Family, and Care

p. 357 Which models or ideals of gender, family, and care will be promoted by social policies in the future? Mothers' employment is widely accepted, but cultural and political attitudes about the gendered division of labour and care differ across different groups of women and men (Pfau-Effinger 2005; Orloff 2009b). These care values inform partisan and individual orientations to maternal employment and family policies, which play out across different political-economic contexts. There are demands for greater levels of 'social investment' and citizen 'choice' with respect to services and care arrangements, promoted by 'Third Way' and 'recalibrative' projects, and connected in complicated ways with increasing social diversity (Ferrera et al. 2000; Hemerijck 2017). Where 'choices,' but not public services, are on offer, usually mothers rather than fathers have opted to stay at home for a period of time, reflecting a class gradient. Feminists are divided on how to respond: keep pushing for greater involvement of fathers in care, even if it means less time for mothers who may want it? Or support women's and men's options to decide, but attempt to make the choices about at-home care versus employment more 'real' by insisting that cash-for-care policies be accompanied by guaranteed rights to spots in childcare centres?

An emphasis on 'choice' might allow for pluralism among heterogeneous populations as to which models of care and gender they prefer, but the extent of marketization and public subsidization determines whether choices are realizable and how care quality and gender equality will fare (Orloff 2009b; Brennan et al. 2012). Some women's care-sector jobs are professionalized, or at least unionized and relatively well paid, but others are classic 'bad jobs', expressing 'racial' and ethnic hierarchies (Glenn 1992; Lutz 2008; Williams 2018a). How ongoing trends towards marketization and privatization—in the context of greater flows of migrant labour and reactions against it—will play out is, of course, a matter of which political forces manage to gain hold in this era of political uncertainty and upheaval.

Women's presence in politics has revolutionized policy and will likely continue to do so. Today, women's equality movements press for policies to support women's employment, particularly anti-discrimination and affirmative action, parental leave, and childcare services, and higher proportions of women 'holding key positions in governmental and political organizations' positively influence social spending and adoption of equality policies (Bolzendahl 2009). Yet these developments occur against a backdrop of neoliberalism, post-industrialism, and individualization that press upon us both mandates and incentives for commodification and 'choice'. Still, there is resistance, both normative and practical, to achieving the realization of 'employment for all' based entirely on the commodification of care (Lewis and Giullari 2005). Some strands of feminism embrace formalistic choice that relies on private resources, but others, particularly those linked to social-democratic or labour forces, demand substantive public support for women's freedom.

The broader shifts in the political economy—more precarity, less well-paid industrial work, more pressures on family caregivers, political turns to neoliberalism—do not always lead to demands for greater social policy development. Anti-feminist groups promote ideals of 'traditional' gender institutions in marriage, sexuality, and reproduction. Even as full-time housewifery declines and runs afoul of neoliberal mandates

for women's activation or instrumentalist concerns with declining fertility, right-wing populists and social conservatives draw energy from nostalgic longings for the days when women's care could be supported by breadwinners in well-paid industrial jobs. ↵ Yet already many tenets of legal and substantive gender equality have been institutionalized in social policies. Moreover, we see the emergence of new forms of feminist mobilization, linked to the continuing dilemmas of care and paid employment, economic and political participation, and freedom from violence and harassment, and aimed at restructuring systems of social provision and regulation. The promise of welfare institutions that promote feminist objectives may yet be more fully redeemed.

The transformation of mainstream scholarship by the full integration of gender analysis is necessary to understand the ongoing development of systems of social provision and regulation, as gender has been at the centre of transformations of welfare states, families, and capitalist economies. Gendered insights—particularly around power and politics—radicalize and transform the comparative study of welfare states, a necessary component of projects to ensure that systems of social provision promote equality and care—in other words, welfare, broadly understood.

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Notes

- 1 We focus on gendered dimensions of ‘welfare states’ in rich capitalist democracies, where global dominance, state capacities and economic resources have allowed for well-developed welfare institutions. In the Global South, civil society and the informal sector are more important (Béland and Mahon 2016: 36–41) and states are more subject to the hegemony of the ‘great powers’ and the international organizations that enforce their preferences.