Part I

1 The position of mothers in a comparative welfare state perspective

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1.1 Introduction

In most European countries welfare states developed after World War II. Until 1960 most countries developing a welfare state were led by the idea that families would be provided for by their male heads, and therefore the design of social security schemes was based on a household-with-bread-winner perspective. Since the 1970s, however, labour force participation rates for women have risen in some European countries, especially in the 1980s and 1990s. In addition, mothers increasingly have combined paid work and motherhood, even when children were still very young. Today, women's greater investment in education has resulted in their having equal levels of initial training. Although there are differences in men's participation rates across countries, the differences in women's participation rates are more significant, especially after children are born into the family. Women with a similar level of education behave differently in terms of both the age at which they choose to give birth to children and their labour force participation after childbirth. Moreover, the types of jobs women have vary considerably across welfare states.

In order to understand welfare states and the difference between welfare states across Europe, social scientists began to classify countries according to various welfare criteria. Typologies can be used for different purposes and can focus on variables related to causes, institutions and/or outcomes. The most influential attempt to create a welfare state typology has been that of Esping-Andersen (1990). He uses the concept of welfare state regimes to characterise and to describe the complex relationships between the state, the labour market and the family. By underlining the multi-dimensional nature of welfare state variation, Esping-Andersen's typology is innovative and useful, and it has stimulated much research. His three-fold clustering of welfare state regimes labels them according to their main ideological currents, which are Conservative-Corporatist, 'Liberal' and Social Democratic. Since Esping-Andersen's primary interest was to

describe the contours of the relationships between states, labour markets and families, his typology is based on a broad set of indicators that refer to outcomes as well as to institutions. The basic concepts used to motivate his typology are decommodification, social stratification and the state–market nexus (Esping-Andersen 1990).

Although critics have questioned the theoretical and empirical value of a welfare state typology based on ideal-types, Arts and Gelissen (2001, 2002) have clearly pointed out that ideal-types such as those created by Esping-Andersen are not goals in themselves. However, these ideal-types serve to represent a reality that cannot yet be described using laws, given the fact that the comparative macro-sociology of welfare states is still *in statu nascendi*. In welfare state research there is still a lack of theory, which ideal-types *à la* Esping-Andersen help to overcome. Therefore, typologies do play an important role as instruments in developing more general conclusions on the ways in which welfare states across Europe accommodate the specific needs of women with children.

Welfare state classifications have developed over time. Typology-builders have gradually needed to incorporate an ever-increasing number of variables in their analyses of welfare states in order to stay in line with social attitudes and ideas, as well as with political and economic reality. Indeed, the feminist literature has pointed to the numerous inadequacies of many typologies with respect to the new work/life balance of modern women who refuse to be confined to homemaking and thus challenge the traditional male breadwinner model.

In this chapter, we aim to contribute to the debate on the explanatory power of welfare state typologies, assessing the issue not just from the point of view of women but also indeed from that of mothers. While women's increased presence in the labour market results mainly from their emancipatory battle, which launched the move from the traditional male-breadwinner to a dual-earner model of the family, the labour participation of mothers combines both emancipation effects and time-sharing challenges.

In this chapter, we present different classification methods and assess to what degree they account for differences across welfare states regarding childcare provision, parental leave, family cash assistance, working mothers' time constraints, etc.

1.2 Welfare state typologies built around the concept of redistribution

A first cluster of typologies contains fewer complex typologies. Just one variable is studied in order to draw up a classification, be it the

proportion of tax receipts to GDP, the degree of corporatism, the proportion of GDP represented by transfers, the state's level of social expenditure, or still other relevant measures of social protection. In other words, the touchstone of the first cluster is the concept of social amelioration, focusing on measures of public expenditure and redistribution.

Examples of this first cluster are the welfare state classifications by MacFarlan and Oxley (1996) and Adema *et al.* (1996). MacFarlan and Oxley (1996) examined the level of transfers to the active population as a percentage of GDP. As a result, the Nordic countries scored best, while the Southern European countries were the least generous. Adema *et al.* (1996) constructed a typology based on net social expenditure and observed a great difference compared with a typology based on gross social expenditure as it figures in state budgets. Gross social expenditure overestimates the social effort of countries, and their ranking changes when net expenditure is considered instead. The Netherlands, for example, is ranked as one of the poorest performers on this measure.

Another example of this cluster is the 1988 categorisation of welfare state regimes by Calmfors and Driffill based on the degree of corporatism. The 'hump shape hypothesis', first introduced by Calmfors and Driffill (1988), states that countries with highly decentralised (USA, Italy) and highly centralised (Sweden, Austria) wage-bargaining processes have a superior performance in terms of unemployment compared to countries with an intermediate degree of centralisation (Germany, France and the Netherlands). In the latter, unions are strong enough to cause major disruption but not sufficiently encompassing to bear their share of the cost of their actions.

1.3 Welfare state typologies based on the interplay between the state, the market and the family

1.3.1 Esping-Andersen as a catalyst for new comparative welfare state research

Until the seminal contribution of Esping-Andersen (1990), most empirical work relied on comparing the amount of social security expenditures with distributive outcomes. In the second cluster of welfare state typologies, the central object of analysis is broadened to the state–market nexus or the relationship between paid work and welfare. To study this relationship and, accordingly, construct welfare state typologies, a whole range of measures and policies is considered. The

most important example of the second cluster of comparative analysis is Esping-Andersen's three-fold typology of Conservative-Corporatist, 'Liberal' and Social-Democratic welfare state regimes (Esping-Andersen 1990). Four concepts are at the core of Esping-Andersen's three-fold typology: decommodification, defamilialisation, social stratification and the state–market nexus. Esping-Andersen understands 'decommodification' as the degree to which welfare states weaken the cash nexus by granting entitlements independent of market participation. A familialistic welfare regime is seen as one that assigns a maximum of welfare obligations to the household. As a consequence, the concept of 'defamilialisation' is to capture policies that lessen individuals' reliance on the family, and maximise individuals' command of economic resources independently of familial or conjugal reciprocities. 'Stratification' is defined as the unequal rights and perquisites of different positions in a society. Finally, the state–market nexus refers to the mix of state and market provisions within welfare state programmes. In terms of these four phenomena, first, at the lower end of the welfare spending spectrum or at the market end of the state–market nexus, Ireland and the UK are classified as liberal welfare state regimes characterised by a low degree of decommodification (given the important welfare role of the market compared with the residual responsibilities of the state), a narrow definition of social risks (predominance of means-tested social assistance versus a poorly developed social insurance scheme with limited eligibility and low benefits compensated by private insurance by the richest layers of the population), a high level of social stratification, and no labour market management (it is feared that disincentive effects would be introduced if the free play of the market were disrupted). Second, with an intermediate level of welfare spending or with a balanced state–market nexus, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain are the representative countries of Esping-Andersen's Conservative-Corporatist welfare cluster. They simultaneously implement a system of social assistance and insurance. Their tradition of etatism narrows down the welfare role played by the market. Moreover, led by the principle of subsidiarity, extended family ties are heavily relied upon in the provision of social protection (a low degree of defamilialisation). Finally, social protection differs according to work status and therefore Conservative-Corporatist welfare state regimes are characterised by a high level of social stratification. Thirdly, with the highest level of welfare spending or at the state end of the state–market nexus, the Social-Democratic welfare cluster includes the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) and the Netherlands. Here, the market intervenes little, given that a universal system of social

insurance is organised by the state with a broad definition of social risks, generous benefits and individualised social rights. The principle of universalism guarantees access to social protection based on citizenship and not on work status so that social stratification is low. In terms of labour market management, the major goal is to achieve full employment.

Esping-Andersen's typology has received different kinds of criticism that have paved the way for a whole set of alternative welfare state typologies.

1.3.1.1 The value of typologies First, critics have questioned the theoretical and empirical value of a welfare state typology based on ideal-types. However, it has been pointed out by Arts and Gelissen (2001, 2002) that ideal-types, such as those created by Esping-Andersen, are not goals in themselves but serve to represent a reality that cannot yet be described using laws, given the fact that the comparative macrosociology of welfare states is still in its infancy. In welfare state research there is still a lack of theory; ideal-types *à la* Esping-Andersen help to overcome this.

1.3.1.2 The contestable character of Esping-Andersen's three regime clusters Second, critics have contested Esping-Andersen's assumption that countries have crystallised into three distinct regime clusters with different underlying welfare state logics. As a result, a fourth cluster has at times been suggested or at least the reclassification of certain countries in another cluster than the one in which they were classified by Esping-Andersen.

The low level of public welfare spending and the strong reliance on (tough) means testing in Australia and New Zealand has led Esping-Andersen to classify these countries as liberal welfare state regimes. However, in the case of Australia, its long-standing commitment to wages-as-welfare, with centralised wage-bargaining machinery that is reminiscent of post-war Sweden, cannot be ignored. Income guarantees through market regulation play a large role. Moreover, as Castles and Mitchell (1993) have pointed out, high thresholds result in a large part of the population receiving means-tested benefits. In the Antipodean countries, leftist political activity has pursued equality in pre-tax, pre-transfer income rather than equalisation through social policy. Korpi and Palme constructed a typology of welfare states based on the institutional characteristics of old-age pensions and sickness cash benefits (Korpi and Palme 1998; see also Korpi 1983, 1989; and for a similar analysis, see Lumen *et al.* 2000). They consider three aspects of these

benefits: targeting versus universalism, the extent of protection and the type of governance of the social insurance programme. While Australia was identified as a targeted model,[1] the liberal countries of Ireland and the United Kingdom were believed to belong to a basic security model with non-universal coverage.[2] In terms of women's choice it does seem to make sense to group Australia and New Zealand with the United Kingdom and Ireland: their fertility rates are very similar (below replacement level) and mothers of young children have very low work-force involvement (for more details, see Gornick *et al.* 1997). Moreover, weak financial incentives to work in the tax/benefit systems of Australia, Ireland, New Zealand and the UK contribute to only around 50% of single parents working (Adema 2005).

Esping-Andersen (1990) classifies the Netherlands as a social-democratic welfare state regime and gives the country a place within the same category as the Nordic countries. However, historically, the process of 'democratic pacification' (via pillarisation) in the Netherlands has led, on the one hand, to tolerance and accommodation, mainly in the public sphere, and to basic income policies, and, on the other, to a strengthened idea of family privacy and women homemakers. According to Knijn (1991), the Netherlands, like Germany, has a low level of individualisation, no equal access to the labour market, the polity or state institutions, and a very low state and market household service profile. Knijn, therefore, groups the Dutch welfare regime with Germany.

We could say there is some truth in both arguments: Wetzels and Zorlu (2003) confirm that Knijn (1991) is correct in classifying the Dutch system, as it existed before 1990, as being of the conservative, Christian-democratic kind. Welfare state policies were designed to induce mothers to take care of young children on a full-time basis. Nevertheless, they also support Esping-Andersen's interpretation of the Dutch welfare state as a social-democratic one by pointing out the profound changes that have marked the Dutch regime during the 1990s. Social policies have increasingly focused on facilitating the work/life balance for Dutch mothers, thus fitting in with the social-democratic welfare model. Moreover, Gustafsson (1994) has supported Esping-Andersen (1990) in noting the Netherlands as a social-democratic welfare regime as far as its outcome in terms of poverty alleviation is

[1] Targeted models are characterised by low levels of means-tested benefits.
[2] The basic security model of the liberal countries is non-universal because eligibility relies on the payment of social contributions (as opposed to Denmark, where citizenship bestows the right to various allowances and benefits). Moreover, allowances are either lump-sum or tied to very low income ceilings which exclude a large proportion of the population.

concerned. Finally, note that the particular expansion of part-time work in the Netherlands has also encouraged women with young children to participate at least on a part-time basis in employment, whereas in Germany social values are such as to put pressure on mothers to completely withdraw from the labour market in order to devote themselves to caregiving duties during their children's early years of life. In addition, in Germany the fertility rate has been adjusted downwards much more markedly than in the Netherlands.

Leira (1989) has shown that Esping-Andersen's idea of a Nordic welfare regime breaks down as soon as gender is given serious consideration. She found that the Norwegian model, which treated women primarily as wives and mothers, was closer in many respects to that of the UK than it was to the Swedish model. However, with its recent introduction of family-friendly policies, Norway seems to have secured its position in the Nordic cluster. Today, Norway no longer seems very different from Sweden in terms of its welfare state model. However, after considerable debate, Norway enacted a law which introduced a child-rearing grant in 1998 that provides a cash benefit to parents of children aged 12–36 months. It is provided on condition that the child does not attend publicly funded childcare. Norway's policy has been controversial. Although it was intended to give families more time to care for children and more choices in care arrangements, and to equalise the benefits offered to families who do, and do not, use publicly funded care for children under 3 years of age, the law has in fact led to an expansion in the use of private care and has eased the pressure to expand publicly funded care and, more importantly, it risks inducing women to stay out of the labour force longer. The difference with Finland, which was the first to introduce an early childhood benefit in 1985, is that Finland guarantees a publicly funded childcare place for all children aged 1 year or older whose parents desire one, so that the early childhood benefit gives parents a real choice between parental care, private childcare or public childcare. As for Sweden, a law introducing a childrearing grant was enacted in 1994 but was repealed the following year before it actually came into effect owing to concerns about the law's impact on the country's commitment to publicly funded childcare. This example shows that Norwegian policy-makers may still be driven by slightly different standards and ideas than their colleagues in the other Nordic countries.

Finally, critics have pointed to Esping-Andersen's misspecification of the Mediterranean welfare states as immature versions of the conservative continental model. Not only Esping-Andersen but also Katrougalos (1996) see the Mediterranean countries as an underdeveloped species

of the continental welfare state model. These countries have in common the immaturity of their social protection systems and a shared set of social and family structures. However, Ebbinghaus (1998) has derived a 'Latin' residual welfare state cluster by differentiating some countries from the conservative cluster. What distinguishes those countries is the fact that they are welfare laggards. The principle of subsidiarity prevails in these societies, and therefore, there is a more heavy reliance on traditional intermediary institutions such as the church and the family. The social security system of these Latin countries seems to be more fragmented and corporatist than the Bismarckian model common to the conservative cluster of welfare state regimes. Other proponents of a unique Southern European regime include Leibfried (1992), who distinguishes between a rudimentary policy model for the countries of the South of Europe, the modern model of the Nordic countries, the institutional model of the Bismarckian countries and the residual policy model of the Anglo-Saxon countries. He has justified the separate classification of the Mediterranean countries on the basis of the absence in those countries of an articulated social minimum and a right to welfare. Ferrera (1997) also identified a separate Southern European cluster characterised by a high level of fragmentation of the social protection systems (see Ebbinghaus 1998), the generosity of some benefits (old-age pensions, health care as a right derived from citizenship) despite the absence of an articulated social minimum, the low degree of state intervention in the welfare sphere, and the high level of particularism with regard to cash benefits and financing, expressed in strong clientelism. Bonoli (1997) used the low level of social expenditure as a proportion of GDP and the small percentage of social expenditure financed through contributions to support his preference for a separate Mediterranean cluster. Finally, Trifiletti (1998), in her comparison of family policies in Europe, argued that in Mediterranean countries family and employment continue to be in competition rather than in balance. The traditional division of care work relies both on the fact that time for caregiving remains a private matter and on the compulsive rather than the supportive nature of subsidiarity. These arguments are supported by the situation that today fertility rates observed in the South of Europe are amongst the lowest in the world. Women face the dichotomous choice either to have children or to pursue a career. Motherhood gives rise to severe employment penalties, which further dampen women's low employment rates.

Esping-Andersen (1999) has taken this claim for a fourth welfare state cluster very seriously. 'The case for a unique Southern Europe regime depends ultimately on the centrality of families. This was the weak link

in the original "three worlds" model ... [However,] as far as my choice of attributes and measurements is concerned, a simple "three worlds" typology may suffice' (Esping-Andersen 1999: 92, 94).

Esping-Andersen has a very reasonable point here. The question of how to identify and classify welfare regimes will remain open because researchers will always differ in terms of which attributes they consider vital and how they should be measured. If we allow too many cross-country differences to each give rise to new regime clusters or 'worlds', then we must be aware that the desired explanatory value of our typologies will, at least partially, be sacrificed. We must ensure that the additional value of typologies, as compared with individual comparisons, is safeguarded.

1.3.1.3 The omitted gender dimension In addition to receiving criticism on the looseness of his groupings' boundaries, Esping-Andersen was attacked by feminists accusing him of neglecting gender. Esping-Andersen has replied as follows: '[Feminists often argue] that models of welfare regimes that have been specified via a political economy perspective fail to hold up when subject to a gendered analysis. Alternative "gendered" typologies do, in fact, often contradict "political economy" typologies. But the contradiction may be spurious because different phenomena are being explained and compared' (Esping-Andersen 1999: 49–50).

Indeed, feminists have pointed out that in comparative welfare state research, women only enter the analysis as they become more visible as paid workers. Unfortunately, they are simply granted a place within the same paid work/welfare schedule that was primarily designed with male breadwinners in mind.

As mentioned above, the concept of decommodification plays an important role in Esping-Andersen's typology (Esping-Andersen 1990). 'De-commodification' is understood as the 'degree to which welfare states weaken the cash nexus by granting entitlements independent of market participation' (Esping-Andersen 1999: 43), or, in other words, grant benefit entitlements regardless of whether one participates in the labour market or not. The concept presupposes that individuals are already commodified. It may adequately describe the relationship between welfare states and the standard, full-career male worker, but it is not easily applicable to women, considering that their economic role is often non-commodified (Esping-Andersen 1999: 44). Much of the welfare work undertaken by women within the household has never been part of the market and continues to be performed outside the purview of the welfare state (Sainsbury 1994; Orloff 2001). The concept