

Systems of Social Provision and Regulation

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Introduction

Social provision and regulation has taken on many public and mixed public/private forms, from poor relief and publicly-subsidized charity, to “workingmen’s insurance” and pensions, “social security,” “the welfare state,” “welfare capitalism,” “the social state,” or “l’etat providence.” It has been a central focus of politics across the West in the centuries since modernizing states first began to challenge the Church for control of the functions of relieving those in distress, disciplining subjects and maintaining order, and found relief and other forms of welfare useful in larger projects of regulating and mobilizing populations. Indeed, some *public* (or quasi-public) form of social provision has been a distinctive feature of modern, Western capitalist societies for a very long time, although in the last half-century public social security systems have spread to all corners of the globe.¹ These systems have come to be the principal domestic undertaking of states in the West – and after World War Two have trumped even military operations, except in the US. Social provision has centrally defined the relations between states, capital and labor (the “social partners” in Euro-lingo), and between states and citizens/subjects, and has been critical to the viability of markets and the reproduction of populations. It is essential to the constitution of politically-salient groups, identities and goals, and of moral and cultural orders. Systems of state social provision and regulation are quintessentially modern in their linkage with capitalist industrial orders and the emergence and regulation of the realm of “the social.”

Social scientists, including sociologists at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries concerned themselves with the “social question,” elites’ problem of maintaining social integration and order as growing urban working classes emerged as political actors in the context of increasing democracy and the development of new forms of risk and inequality, against a backdrop of social provision in which relief implied a loss of citizenship rights. Indeed, sociology as an academic discipline developed alongside the “social question,” and its successors (e.g., the “urban crisis” of the 1960s or the “welfare mess” of the 1980s in the US; see, e.g., Steinmetz forthcoming). The varied answers to the social question, which centrally involved social insurance, pensions, other forms of assistance, and novel forms of state regulation, depended on the new knowledges produced by the social sciences (see, e.g., Horn 1994; Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991; Rueschemeyer and Skocpol 1996). Systems

¹ Outside the developed world, however, the proportions of population covered are quite small, usually limited to civil servants and, sometimes, members of urbanized working and middle classes. As industrialization proceeds, economies grow, and the model of state modernity spreads, social security expands, as has been the case in east Asia and Latin America – evidence that earlier theories of the expansion of social provision on the “logic of industrialism” model were not entirely incorrect (see Wilensky 2002), even as they must be modified to encompass the political and cultural concomitants of modernity.

of social provision and regulation have been an enduring focus of social scientific scholarship ever since. Yet take note that there are two (albeit not entirely distinct) veins. First, there is scholarship directed at helping states “regulate the social” through analyses of social problems and policy. Here, I will not here cover the vast bodies of information produced by the research apparatuses of various state systems of social provision or by the closely-related, government-funded university research projects, which might be best understood as varieties of state discourse. (Nor will I attend to the writings of political advocates.) Second, there is scholarship – including by historical sociologists -- that aims to understand the relations among capitalism, modernity, and systems of social provision; the contributions of welfare to relations of power, difference and inequality; and the character of modern institutions.

For many years – even before it was formalized in modernization theories -- changes in the character of social provision were seen as part and parcel of the development of “modern” capitalist societies. Responsibilities for social protection were seen to have shifted from families and communities to the national state, alongside a shift from deterrent and punitive poor relief to social protections as right of citizenship, which took the form of what was then thought to be an ever-widening and linked set of provisions which came to be called the “welfare state” in the post-WW2 era. This was captured in book titles such as *From Poor Law to Welfare State* (Trattner [1974] 1999). That story differed somewhat in accounts influenced by Marxism, in that these shifts were seen as the product of class struggle. But the progressive cast of the story was similar, with a similar end point: social citizenship and greater material equality, even if these were understood as a “ransom from capital” to maintain social stability and economic productivity. It was expected that all countries would eventually wind up with a “complete” set of programs to deal with social risks, because welfare states were seen to be essential features of modern democratic capitalism. There were also distinctive national subplots: the U.S. as welfare laggard (e.g., Rimlinger 1971), or egalitarian Sweden as a welfare state on the road to socialism, for example (e.g., Stephens 1980)

Things began to change after the 1970s, with various political attacks on core programs of social provision and more or less serious policy changes, variously described as dismantling or restructuring welfare states (Pierson 1994). The overarching progressive story has been unravelled, replaced by a more complex story of uneven changes. After decades of assuming the “irreversibility” of welfare states, a host of political, economic and social trends shook this assumption: the emergence of neo-liberalism and the elections of “anti-welfare warriors” Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan; the fall of “actually existing socialism”; the expansion of service sectors and decline of manufacturing; demographic, familial and gender changes leading to fewer breadwinner-full-time caregiver, marriage-based households and to more nonmarital births, and more single-person and dual-earner households; in the rise of newly-industrializing states whose competitive economic advantage stemmed in part from lower social spending; expanded capital mobility and concomitant concerns about employers’ increased capacities to demand lower taxes and social spending. This

progressive story was not undermined only by events, of course. Theoretical developments have been important as well. Many accounts of welfare states and social provision feature “new” actors (new to social scientists, that is) — women and men (as gendered persons), whites and blacks, natives and immigrants, pronatalists and eugenicists, and so on, in addition to workers, capitalists and political elites; for some of these actors the story of progressive expansion does not hold even for the period before the “crises.” Attention to discourse and culture has increased. And less benign visions of social policy have emerged: Piven and Cloward (1971) famously proclaimed that welfare was directed at “regulating the poor,” while a Foucauldian strain of work emphasized darker (if still “productive”) aspects of social policy: biopolitics, surveillance, discipline, classification.

In this essay, I will provide an overview of the theoretical battles that have raged across the terrain of modern systems of social provision and regulation – the “modern welfare state.” I will make the case that we could use some fraternization (that is, greater theoretical complexity) across the battle lines. I also argue that we need to exorcise more fully the Marxist spirits – particularly those of social determination -- which live on in this area of scholarship, but today as a mostly unacknowledged presence.

Hovering over these debates (something like the Heavenly Father in Veronese’s paintings of Venezia’s battles with their foes) is the spirit of Marx, whose vision of industrial capitalism and its social conflicts, if not his political doctrine, informs most accounts of modern social provision. Marxist influences abound, for it was Marxism in its political guises – the “spectre haunting Europe” -- which was one of the most important forces shaping developments of modern social provision and regulation. Indeed, one can read the development of the modern welfare state as “Marxism by other means,” the alternative to revolution. Early working-class movements inspired by socialism worried elites, some of whom turned to social policy to deter revolution; more mature movements staked their political fortunes on expanding social provision for their constituents; the Soviet bloc with its full employment and extensive welfare provision was to be combated by the Western welfare state along with the military means of the Cold War. Weber’s spirit appears as well, guiding our understandings of the development of state bureaucracies and at times, the cultural dispositions which guide our experiences of capitalism and risk. More recently, the dark jester of modern social theory – Michel Foucault – has come to haunt the field. His followers scoff at the Enlightenment modernism of the Weberian variety, while allowing the Marxisante vision of elites and populace, discipliners and disciplined to remain, and still hoping for “resistance,” if not revolution. Culturalist approaches to politics have emerged across a range of arenas, offering non-materialist understandings of the formation of identities and goals and the mobilization of actors. But the stolid mainstream studies of pensions, workers’ health insurance funds, and welfare bureaucracies continue, almost unaffected by these developments in the “superstructure.” The dominant perspectives in the field – most now identifiable as institutionalist -- mix different portions of Marx and Weber, sticking fairly closely to a materialist understanding of politics; a marginal

approach takes its Foucault more or less straight. This field would benefit from some theoretical hybridization, partly because it offers a way to break more fully with materialism, but also because there are insights to be gleaned from both mainstream and more marginal perspectives. Feminist work provides a model.

Feminists are gathered under diverse theoretical banners – no single theorizing woman to guide us – to disrupt the masculinist stories of welfare states as involving only capitalists, bureaucrats and workingmen, or the similarly masculinist if otherwise more perverse narratives of the Foucauldians. But gender scholars have raided many theoretical armories to fight their battles, and to develop understandings of how gender, class, “race,” and other forms of difference and power are implicated in the developments that have given us modern welfare states, and how in turn those relations are shaped by – indeed constituted with – welfare systems. Their approaches have tended to take culture and signification more seriously than have mainstream perspectives, while they are simultaneously more attuned to the classic issues of political economy, family, state than are many culturalists and Foucauldians (feminist or not). Yet while such theoretical cross-breeding might be useful, it is hard to imagine that all of the institutionalist mainstream, especially those portions drawing ever closer to rational-choice perspectives, will take this up. But for those willing to listen, I offer this narrative animated by hopes for hybridity, or, at least, tolerance.

Defining the Modern Welfare State

Before we enter the story of the various theoretical debates that make up the literatures on modern welfare systems, I want to stop for a moment to consider the object of our study – “the modern welfare state,” how it has been variously defined, and what problems attend to the possible alternative definitions. Among many US (and European) comparative and historical sociologists, the term “welfare state” has functioned as an accepted, if often anachronistic, shorthand for systems of social provision in the developed capitalist world (and sometimes even beyond). A typical definition of the welfare state was “a state committed to modifying the play of social or market forces in order to achieve greater equality” (Ruggie 1984, p.11, paraphrasing Briggs [1961]). Modernization theorists took for granted the political claim embedded in the very term “welfare state”: that states were committed to citizens’ welfare. More politically-critical Marxists and others might not accept that claim, but still tended to view the welfare state as a more or less unified project of state and bourgeois elites to secure their rule by extending material benefits to the less advantaged, notwithstanding claims about the contradictory demands of legitimacy and of accumulation. Yet this would seem to accept what should be proven – that social provision results in something that can legitimately be called “welfare.” Even if one does not wholeheartedly endorse the Foucauldian or “social-control” visions of welfare, these analysts have unearthed material which undermines any easy or unmodified acceptance of the modernist, progressive view of welfare, for example, the eugenicist policies which accompanied

positive welfare in almost every Western country (yes, even Sweden).

Perhaps as troubling is the inattention to the historical and national specificity of the term “welfare state.” The shorthand may be convenient, but it likely occludes the significant cross-national and historical variation in the meaning attached to and the content of the various programs that today scholars group together as “welfare states.” The British coined the phrase “welfare state” in 1939 to counterpose to the Nazi “warfare state,” grouping under this umbrella several heretofore separate social insurance, social assistance and universal citizenship programs (Williams 1976). Following the defeat of fascism, Britain and most other European countries reformed and expanded their systems of social provision in the direction of universal coverage for workers; at the same time, social provision was articulated with the political goal of “equality,” understood in class terms, in the concept of a “welfare state.” The modernism, statism and progressivism of the term are apparent. The gendered aspects of this articulation are also now clear; social insurance covered workers, who were mostly men, with spousal coverage for most women; protection focused on loss of income, not care. Even after the long Thatcherite attack, the “welfare state” still has resonance in the UK, while Western Europeans define themselves partly through their attachment to the welfare state: “social Europe.” The term certainly has never had similar resonance in the US, where “welfare” is politically despised although “social security” – initiated by Franklin Roosevelt – is still popular. And, looking back in time, before the term “welfare state” gained currency, social analysts, reformers and politicians referred to “relief,” “workingmen’s” or social insurance and pensions, or the “social state.” These terms, and the systems they referenced, reflected different politics, targets of policy and sets of state activities than do contemporary systems. Even if some of these might eventually have metamorphosed into today’s programs, it may be assuming too much to speak of the “origins of the welfare state,” and is certainly misleading to speak of the “early welfare state.”

Most analysts of systems of social provision and regulation have studied the origins, historical development or “crisis” of “the welfare state” by focusing on a standardized array of programs, given quasi-official definition by states and international organizations themselves (e.g., in the US, Social Security Around the World or the publications of the International Labour Organization): old-age and survivors’ insurance; disability and sickness insurance; workers’ compensation; unemployment insurance; family benefits; social assistance; and, sometimes, maternity insurance and parental leaves. Modernization analysts were interested in the relationship between levels of industrialization and “welfare state generosity,” the proportions of GNP devoted to “social spending,” that is, to this standard group of programs (or, even more crudely, to all non-military public spending). Even today some scholars use these measures, while others find the focus on spending inadequate (Esping-Andersen 1990, ch.1; O’Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999, ch.1), and have instead developed concepts such as decommodification, stratification, extent of public versus private provision, defamilialization, or personal independence. But these concepts are then almost

always operationalized from data on that same standard array of social programs.

In taking such programs as definitive of “modern welfare,” analysts also take on the embedded understandings of what is a “risk,” and which risks are legitimately *social*, against which states ought to provide protection. Modernization theorists assumed that systems of social provision are functional arrangements for dealing with conditions to which all humans are subject: old age, sickness, accident, which leave them with “needs” for protection and care that must be solved collectively. Once people are reliant on wages, these problems become understood as risks of income insecurity, and there is a new risk, unemployment; then interest centers on the social programs dealing with those risks: old-age pensions, workers’ compensation, unemployment and health insurance, survivors’ insurance. Of course, analysts do not accept even this minimal definition of “risks” as entirely unproblematic; indeed, the progressive narrative of the development of the welfare state assumes a transition from “traditional,” familized or communal ways of dealing with needs to “modern,” public and collective means. The more politically-oriented scholars of historical sociology’s second wave and their successors have seen the extent to which needs and risks are dealt with publicly rather than privately as reflecting the class (or gender, or other) balance of power (among other things). To some extent, this insight has become embodied in the notion of a “welfare regime,” which gained currency in the 1990s; rather than focusing solely on *state* provision, regime analysts examine the interdependent provisioning from states, markets (i.e., employer benefits and private insurance), and families (and, sometimes, communities) and argue that where different needs are dealt with reflects and in turn influences balances of power. One should also note the gendered dimensions of these definitions: the focus is on cash, and risks of losing income because of inability to find or undertake employment – but not on care or services, and risks of losing income because of having to undertake care or due to the dissolution of family relationships which underwrite caregiving.²

² Feminists have unmasked the ways in which discussion of “needs” for support

While mainstream analyses admit an irreducibly *political* component to defining need and risk, they have been less interested in their (simultaneously) *cultural or discursive* constitution. For some analysts, this is genealogical work on the modern system of social provision, its styles of thought and its (cultural) contribution to capitalism. For example, Francois Ewald (1986) describes the emergence of the epistemological transformation – the “philosophy of risk” -- which displaces juridical notions of fault and accompanies the birth of social insurance: “Insurance... signifies at once an ensemble of institutions and the diagram with which industrial societies conceive their principle of organization, functioning and regulation” (Ewald 1991, p.210) Moreover, there are classificatory processes which bring groups into political being, and further, the political and cultural discursive work through which their “needs,” “risks,” or, possibly, “rights,” are defined within existing systems of social provision, as in Nancy Fraser’s (1989) influential analysis. All take the very categories of analysis of the earlier-referenced authors as the objects to be explained. For many of these analysts, it is not “the welfare state” that is the object of scrutiny, but the invention and regulation of “the social,” a constitutively modern sphere or “arena located ‘between’ the economy and state” (Steinmetz 1993, p.55), or, “that modern domain of knowledge and intervention carved out by statistics, sociology, social hygiene and social work” (Horn 1994, p.4). This invention is constitutive of modern capitalism, rather than its functional byproduct or the effect of the class politics it spawns. And the welfare state became a primary mode of regulating this sphere in the twentieth century (whether it will continue is at least open to question).

In this essay, when making general references, I will use the phrase “systems of social

on the part of “dependents” often conflate what feminists have called “inevitable” and “derived” dependency – the former refers to dependency that “flows from the status and situation of being a child, and often accompanies aging, illness or disability,” while the latter “flows from the role of caretaker and the need for resources generated by caretaking” (Fineman 1995, p.162).

provision and regulation” rather than “welfare states.” I include “regulation” as well as “provision” to underline that benefits are never delivered without some sort of discipline, regulation, categorization. But where one could make a reasonable claim that “welfare states” – states responding to the claims by citizens and denizens for protection against some of the risks of modern industrial and family life – do exist, I will use the term. And where I am describing theoretical perspectives that do not focus on regulatory issues, I will refer simply to their work on “systems of social provision or protection.” Finally, for variety and simplicity, I will sometimes allow myself the shorthand terms “welfare” or “welfare systems.”

Explaining State Social Provision and Regulation

Scholarship on modern social provision surely ranks as one of the success stories of historical sociology of the second wave and beyond. This work exemplifies the advances of the second wave and its friendly institutionalist successors in establishing that “politics matters,” historicizing accounts of social provision, giving greater attention to political processes and to states, and producing richer and less economic understandings of interests, goals and identities. Analyses of systems of social provision and regulation were not a theme of the classical theorists of the first wave (“welfare states” were not yet invented).³ However, they have been a major battleground in several major scholarly controversies involving historical sociologists since the 1970s: between modernization theorists and scholars interested in conflictual politics; between researchers in the “society-centered” power resources tradition and “state-centered” scholars; between institutionalists and ahistorical rational choicers (more prominent among political scientists than sociologists); and within the research community of institutionalists and advocates of power resources theory, between those who do and do not incorporate gender into their analyses. Some nationally-based narratives have been substantially altered in part due to the work of historical sociologists: a signal achievement here is the recasting of the US narrative, recognizing its lead in early-twentieth-century “maternalist” social politics and provision even as its

³ The classical sociologists did not develop theoretical interpretations of the legislation and programs now understood as precursors of modern welfare states. Indeed, Marx’s famously ambiguous musings on the state, or on the passage of factory legislation – seeing it as a kind of functional necessity for capitalist society – helped to give rise to wildly divergent orientations among neo-Marxists writing on the “capitalist state” in the 1970s and 1980s. Marx, suitably revised, was also a key resource for theorizing reformist social-democratic projects. Weber advocated certain types of protective labor legislation while opposing Bismarck’s paternalistic approach, but did not theorize social protection (Steinmetz 1993, p.23). Neo-Weberians have drawn on his more general insights about bureaucracy, war and rationality to develop accounts of social policy developments.

adoption of protections for workingmen took place later than in other industrialized countries. The gendered theme has also been pushed forward in studies of post-war welfare regimes, and has contributed to the reorientation of mainstream scholarship to incorporate relations among states, markets and families in examining work, fertility and politics. In addition, one can point to an historicizing transformation of the whole field of scholarship on social provision. The dominant paradigms in the field make historical arguments about the influence of factors such as class coalitions, patterns of partisan dominance, state structures, and policy legacies on past and contemporary social politics and policies (see, e.g., Myles and Quadagno 2002). Some analysts explicitly invoke the language of “path dependency,” but the historical move is even more widespread.

In tracing the lineage of contemporary debates, we should note the different statuses of the contending intellectual currents. The second wave historical sociologists were not displaced as the dominant forces within the field; rather, their new intellectual formation – institutionalism – became the new core of scholarship on welfare states and other systems of social provision. Feminists, those taking the cultural or discursive turn, and scholars arguing for the significance of “race,” ethnicity or nation are challengers, whose work has been taken more or less seriously by the institutionalist mainstream. And in this field of scholarship, one also sees the continuing deficiencies of institutionalism, even at its historicized, processual best: utilitarian assumptions about interests and identities; a focus on the political economy to the exclusion of other social arenas; a thin understanding of how culture shapes politics; exclusions of the sexual, “racial,” ethnic and national elements in welfare even as some limited headway has been made with respect to gender. Feminist scholars have introduced questions about informal labor, care, dependency, dominance, and bodies into work on welfare. But to the extent that work on gender has penetrated the mainstream, it has been on materialist grounds and on the terrain of work, rather than dominance, bodies or sexuality. And while continuing to resist analysis of “race” and nation, work on welfare systems is spreading beyond the (West) European-white settler society core to Latin America, post-socialist Eastern Europe and Asia, and East Asia, and the ways in which the multifaceted phenomena of “globalization” shapes contemporary welfare has attracted a good deal of attention (see, e.g., Esping-Andersen 1996; Pierson 2001; Scharpf and Schmidt 2000).

Culturist or disciplinary examinations of social provision have been in a quite separate intellectual space, identifying a different object of study and utilizing different analytic strategies than the mainstream, and locating their work on the broader terrain of “culture and politics” or “governmentality,” rather than on the ground of “the welfare state” *tout court*. (This may have contributed to lessening their impact on mainstream scholarship, although I believe it is more a case of mutual intellectual incompatibility.) Many scholars influenced by the cultural turns have shown how discourses about the poor, paupers, workers, the unemployed, teenage mothers and other problematized categories shape social welfare practices and social policies (e.g., Fraser 1989;

Steinmetz 1993; Mohr 1997; Mohr and Duquenne 1997).⁴ The shift from sovereignty to governmentality and associated changes in the character of power, with the emergence of surveillance, “biopolitics” and population as targets of state activities has fascinated Foucauldians. Sometimes these are associated with the “welfare state,” but more often with the regulatory or supervisory professional practices occurring on its outskirts (see the essays collected in Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991; Horn 1994). Historical sociologists have probed the interface of practices, discourses and institutions of welfare provision and the regulation of various deviant categories of individuals, as in David Garland’s (1985) work, Punishment and Welfare (in 19th-century Britain) or John Sutton’s (1984) examination of the emergence of juvenile courts and “justice” in early-twentieth-century America. But Francois Ewald, Foucault’s intellectual and professional heir, did subject the emergence of “*l’etat providence*” (in France, at least) to a fully Foucauldian analysis, arguing that the invention of the social, and of insurance as technique and discourse for regulating it, was constitutive of capitalist modernity; as Colin Gordon described it: “capitalism’s Faustian daring depends on this capacity [of insurance] of taking the risk out of risk” (1991, p.39). This may be. But these intriguing insights are lost for the mainstream when they cannot be (or are not) connected to the Marxist-Weberian apparatus of welfare states.

The culturalist challenge has mainly been ignored, even as institutionalism has accepted a greater role for “ideas” and the role of interpretation in the development of identities and interests. Institutionalists continue to neglect the deeper cultural foundations of social provision – such as the perceived “racial” and religious homogeneity of the Scandinavian welfare meccas in their “golden age,” or, indeed, “rationality” and “risk” themselves. Some mainstream analysts argue that these matters can be taken as settled for the purposes of their studies (e.g., Baldwin 1990, p.12, note 10), or simply carry on as if they did not matter. Yet one might well doubt the fixity of categories of risk, the status of citizenship and citizen claims based on even a cursory familiarity with contemporary political debates about immigration, Islam, and the (Christian) religious and (homogeneously white European) ethnic basis of the welfare states of Europe, or their counterparts in the US and other settler societies (where ethnic, racial and religious diversity has a different status). But while this potentially unsettling message falls on deaf ears in some corners of the field, culturalist and discursive perspectives are influencing feminist work in productive ways, a subject to

⁴ World system analysts in the John Meyer school take the spread of social security programs to all corners of the globe, often in purely formal terms, as evidence of cultural diffusion of the emblems of modernity and modern states, but show little interest in the capillaries of power that have intrigued Foucauldians.

which I return below.

Historical sociologists of the second wave first entered the fray about welfare states in the late 1970s and 1980s, when apolitical modernization approaches focusing on the “needs” of “society” held sway, countered by a naïve pluralism or a radical structural Marxism that focused on the “needs” of “capital.” With allies among other political sociologists and scientists, they dismantled modernization accounts thoroughly, showing that social policy developments have not been “automatic” responses to social change, nor do they follow a progressive line of development. “Politics matters” for the character of social provision in modern societies, but in ways not fully captured by pluralism. They also argued against the structuralist Marxist account, along lines similar to their anti-modernization critique – especially in stressing politics and variation among capitalist countries. But they took structuralist Marxism more seriously than modernization theory – they were, after all, more or less on the same side of the intellectual and political barricades of the time, and also took for granted the “structural” and “instrumental” power of capital and capitalists. And Marxism still defined the puzzles they were trying to solve.

Second-wave historical sociologists were joined by others, who were as critical of the welfare state itself as of social science accounts of it. For example, Piven and Cloward’s influential analysis held that social provision “regulates the poor” in the interests of capital and political elites, though there are transitory moments – ushered in by “poor people’s movements” – when the poor could get something from the state (Piven and Cloward 1971, 1977).⁵ More important to a later generation of historical sociologists taking the cultural turn were the works of Michel Foucault and his followers, first appearing in the 1970s. These offered a much darker vision of what welfare represented, linking welfare with the penal system (Garland 1985), other disciplinary technologies and a eugenic concern with population. However, Foucauldians and their fellow travellers have remained at odds with the institutionalist successors to the second wave. For while second wavers, institutionalists and power resources analysts recognized that systems of social provision were initially created by political elites with the interests of business and state in mind, they have tended to stress the post-World War Two face of welfare as also significantly social right of citizenship, an

⁵ Piven and Cloward focused on English poor relief and U.S. “welfare” (AFDC) rather than the social insurance programs targeting employed workers that interested other analysts, especially in Europe. Their view can be understood as reflecting the peculiarities of U.S. politics and social policy, but it has been extended by some to refer to the “social control” aspect of all welfare systems. They were not historical sociologists in the vein of the second wave, for they used historical materials illustratively, rather than to assess alternative explanatory claims; indeed, their argument that state social spending expands and contracts in response to the rise and fall of popular disruption was more directly derived from 1960s welfare rights politics.

accomplishment of social-democratic politics, and linked to greater class equality and social protection. In short, they held to a modernist and progressive vision, however qualified. The second wavers battled modernization theory and quasi-functionalist Marxist accounts, but it was not because they saw welfare states in anti-enlightenment terms.

One could tell the story of these developments in a number of ways. I will tell it as I now understand my experiences of living through it, beginning my narrative with the second wave (where I began my scholarly career), then move to its institutionalist successors, and finally to some of its more successful critics – the feminists (among whom I'm spending my scholarly prime), who are creating a channel through which discursive and culturalist work may yet reshape the mainstream.

The key debates of the second wave around welfare states took off from Marxist “theories of *the state*” which posited that social policies would ultimately be functional for capitalism, if only by preventing revolution, and which assumed that “capitalist states” were fundamentally similar. This did not mean that the state was literally the “executive committee of the bourgeoisie,” for they also believed in the “relative autonomy of the state,” which allowed “state managers” to act against the explicit preferences of capitalists in order to pursue the long-range interests of capitalism. The autonomy, however, was always “relative,” for state managers would always ultimately be limited by “structural constraints”: the need to respond to the demands of “legitimation” and “accumulation” faced by all capitalist states. Structuralist Marxists posed welfare as a functional but contradictory and crisis-engendering solution to these demands; welfare bought off popular unrest, thereby securing legitimacy. It also promoted capitalist accumulation and the commodification of labor by ensuring labor force stability and productivity when welfare programs siphoned off unproductive workers and demanded discipline and steady work histories for entitlement. But it was expensive, triggering fiscal crises, or, if cheaper but inadequate, legitimacy crises. In these accounts, “crises” were more or less constant, or at least imminent, but in the meantime, critique of welfare was a necessary exercise of demystification.

These highly general and abstract Marxist accounts could not easily deal with the multiplicity of social policy profiles to be seen across the advanced capitalist world – why, for example, did Sweden’s workers demand so much higher a proportion of state spending than America’s to secure their (presumed) docility? Nor were these theories of much use in explaining instances of policymaking which seemed to go against the “interests of capital,” such as the Wagner Act which empowered US unionists to organize with some state protection. And what allowed state managers to be so much more far-sighted than the capitalists in whose ultimate interests they toiled? What political mechanism (as opposed to logically-induced necessity) actually guaranteed that state managers would not transgress the limits set by accumulation and legitimation? The problem of the state’s “relative” or “potential” autonomy – a problem that makes sense only within the Marxist theoretical frame that still animated the

second wave even as they attacked it – inspired a debate between so-called “society-centered” (social-democratic, or “power resources”) theories and “state-centered” (neo-Weberian, later “institutionalist”) analyses about the role of the state in social policy developments. The former drew upon a social-democratic reading of Marx, augmented by Karl Polanyi and T.H. Marshall, the latter mixed their Marx with large doses of Weber, Tocqueville and a dash of Hintze.

Walter Korpi, John Stephens and Gosta Esping-Andersen, the intellectual progenitors of the “power resources” or social-democratic approach, first mobilized to take on structural Marxism and political Leninism, which assumed that welfare states “serve capitalist interests,” and that social democracy is just a “milder version of capitalist politics as usual” (Esping-Andersen 1985, p.xiii, see also Korpi 1978, 1989, Stephens 1980; key texts of this analytic school and their critics are collected in O’Connor and Olsen 1998). For these analysts, the potential for state “autonomy” from capital was critical, but a fuller autonomy would be problematic: they wanted to assert that parliaments could control states, for workers through social-democratic parties could win control of parliaments, then progress down the parliamentary road to socialism. They drew on the social-democratic traditions of Marxism -- Bernstein, Kautsky, the Austro-Marxists and contemporary Scandinavian social democrats – along with T.H. Marshall and Karl Polanyi, iconoclastic scholars writing in mid-century Britain about the development of citizenship, the embeddedness of markets, and the need for social protection. Polanyi (1957 [1944]) was critical in revealing the centrality of the commodification of labor to the functioning of capitalist markets while simultaneously insisting on the social embeddedness of the market, which is “self-regulating” only in the fantasies of economists and ideological liberals. Social provision – partly in the form of what Esping-Andersen would later call “decommodifying” benefits – was necessary for “society” to protect itself from the market, even as the inherent tensions between the two would continue to influence politics (see also Block and Somers 1984). T.H.Marshall (1950) was called upon for his account of the historical development of citizenship rights, in which he argued that political rights (e.g., suffrage, rights to organize) could be used to claim social rights, which offer protections against the market. Thus, welfare states reveal the possibilities of “politics against markets”: social rights, won by workers in the democratic arena, work to counter capitalist economic power, and most importantly, affect the very character of the class structure, augmenting the power resources available to workers, who then push for even greater concessions – perhaps on into socialism. As Esping-Andersen (1985, p.33) put it, the “ultimate instrument of social democratic class formation... is state policy.” Here is one key source for the institutionalist approach to social politics, showing the constitutive role of state policy.

Led by Theda Skocpol, the “state-centered” analysts – of whom I was one – broke with neo-Marxist views about the “relative” – that is, ultimately limited – autonomy of the state, and about the sources of group formation, using welfare states as a proving ground. As we note in the introduction, Skocpol’s 1980 article on the New Deal and

neo-Marxist theories of the state was a key switching point in the second wave, ushering in work on critical political junctures and the patterns of social policy development, without relying on the teleologies of Marxism. Following on the heels of States and Social Revolutions (Skocpol 1979), this work established Weberian- and Tocquevillian-inspired scholarship on states as a contender with academic Marxism or social-democratic approaches. It was not only the possibility for state policy to break with capitalist preferences or the “structural prerequisites” of capitalism that interested us, although we tried to examine this question empirically. We could agree with the social-democratic analysts that under some circumstances, working-class political forces might well affect policy developments, but viewed their understanding of political possibilities as too narrow and economistic. Rather, we looked at the ways in which state elites might pursue projects beyond any suggested by any “social” actors (that is, actors outside the state). State and other political elites, we argued, were situated not only with respect to domestic class structures, but also participated in transnational networks; considered the geopolitical situation; worried about electoral and organizational issues. They were influenced by the organizational or fiscal capacities and structures of the state: an institutional mediation of political strategizing. (This opening to geopolitical or “global” concerns has yet to be exploited fully.) We broke with economistic, socially-determinist accounts of the formation of collective political actors by examining what we would now call the institutional constitution of actors, that is, the ways states influenced patterns of group formation, including interests and political identities. All of this provided an opening to considering different kinds of politics not based on class – those of fraternal orders, religious groups, feminists or “maternalists,” and so on. Considerations of culture were not too far away.

The “state-centered” attack engendered its own critique, from those who would bring “class” or “society” “back in,” or from those who had remained steadfastly convinced of the explanatory power of US business interests (e.g., Domhoff 1996). Many historical sociologists insisted on the efficacy of capitalists’, or less often, workers’ political efforts vis-a-vis US social (and labor) policy, usually turning to different elements of the New Deal policy arena (Manza 2000 provides a review; see also Gilbert and Howe 1991; Jenkins and Brents 1989). Quadagno (1988) offered an intriguing explanation for US policy developments that relied partly on the power of capital, but even more significantly, the institutionally-mediated and historically-changing role of white Southern planter elites. Yet many single-case studies made no use of historical or comparative variation to check their explanations of policy developments (Orloff 1993a; Amenta 1998; but see Swenson 2002 for an exception); other institutionalist accounts challenged their interpretations (see, e.g., Finegold and Skocpol 1995, Hooks 1990). Ultimately, however, the charges and countercharges could not be resolved on the ground of the New Deal alone.

Walter Korpi and other scholars in the power resources group also struck back, emphasizing the determinative significance of social-democratic partisan strength in shaping welfare outcomes and the limits imposed on state officials by the “societal

power structure” (Korpi 1989, p.324). But like many other critics, Korpi’s specification of the key premises of the “state-centered” approach were inadequate at best; basically, it boiled down to a public-choice-style set of assumptions, including that “number of bureaucrats” tapped our construct of “state autonomy,” since increasing their own numbers allegedly represented state elites’ core interests. Luckily, institutionalism soon brought a more sophisticated understanding of states and other political institutions shaping policy, while moving beyond debates about state autonomy that were unlikely ever to yield to empirical resolution.

Institutionalism built on the intellectual innovations of second-wave analysis, particularly the break from economic determinism to a broader social and political terrain. At least implicitly responding to critiques of their work as lacking attention to process and agency, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, leading second-wave scholars of social provision developed new lines of research that foregrounded the development of social policy over time and the activities of political actors, contributing to historically contingent outcomes. The shift from the state-centered and society-centered perspectives of the second wave to institutionalism occurred against the backdrop of the intellectual decline of paradigms inspired by Marxism and the political demise of socialism after 1989. As Marxism lost force, the animating spark for the debates around “state autonomy” was also extinguished. Moreover, both sides relaxed the weakest parts of their arguments. “State-centered” scholars first moved to the terminology of “political institutionalism” in order to make clear our analytical interest in the whole range of political institutions (not just the state), and to legislate against misreadings of the perspective as being opposed to the influence of “social” factors. The “society-centered” group admitted the structuring and mediating role for the state and other political institutions on the influence of class actors (while remaining recalcitrant – or steadfast -- on the subject of potential state autonomy). Both sides could meet on “institutionalist” ground, the “Tocquevillian” issues of the institutional constitution of political actors, identities, and interests and of the variable conditions for successful institutional innovation or stability. Furthermore, different foes were emerging – neo-liberalism politically (from the Thatcher and Reagan elections of 1979, 1980), rational choice intellectually. Here, the debates pitted the former foes (state-centered and society-centered analysts), now friendly cooperators in the institutionalist project, against those assuming exogenous “preferences” and pre-political identities in political “games” seemingly undistorted by power asymmetries.

Institutionalist work on systems of social provision has been particularly strong in two areas: comparative and at least implicitly historical analyses of the modern, Western welfare states -- or “regimes,” and historical and at least implicitly comparative studies of the development of US social policies, which has overlapped significantly with studies of “American political development,” largely located in political science. And there have been as well two key intellectual orientations in explaining social policy developments, claiming ancestry from the social-democratic/power resources approach and the neo-Weberian or “state-centered” approach, respectively, although – as

outlined above –they are less sharply demarcated than in the past. Two spectacularly influential works of the early 1990s, Gosta Esping-Andersen’s Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (1990) and Theda Skocpol’s Protecting Soldiers and Mothers (1992) capture the new institutionalist spirit in these two streams and in the two intellectual idioms. All of this work reflects the interests of politically-engaged scholars concerned with social equality which could no longer be imagined to be reliably guaranteed – much less attained – through revolution; welfare states could be understood as contributing to an evolutionary version of progress toward equality, and were linked to the still-attractive politics of challenging groups. Yet there was a far broader understanding of those challenger politics. The social-democratic/power resources analysts, while retaining a focus on working classes and a basically materialist approach, broke with the notion that their interests could only be identified with socialism; under certain circumstances they might be identified with Christian-democratic or “liberal-labor” forces. The neo-Weberian institutionalists have made a stronger break with class determinism, if not necessarily material determinations, allowing for a very wide range of ways in which identities and political claims may be realized. All built on the second-wave insight that there are multiple forms of capitalism, exploring the conjunctural and multiple causation involved in distinctive policy and political outcomes. Finally, all have accepted the significance of history for explaining contemporary as well as past developments; this is often referenced in the phrase “policy creates politics,” or in the notion of “path dependency.”

Esping-Andersen’s (1990) innovative formulation of “three worlds of welfare capitalism” has set the terms for comparative and historical work on the eighteen-plus advanced capitalist democracies, drawing on power resources or social-democratic analysis but moving it in identifiably institutionalist directions (see also Esping-Andersen 1996, 1999, 2002; Huber, Stephens and Ragin 1993; Huber and Stephens 2001; Hicks and Misra 1993; Hicks 1999; Korpi and Palme 1998). Welfare is conceived as varying qualitatively; differences among states are not unilinear – more or less generous, as in older formulations -- but configurational.⁶ Building on the work of Richard Titmuss and his own collaborative work with Korpi, Esping-Andersen famously argued that capitalist welfare comes in three distinctive forms, or “regime types”: liberal, conservative, and social-democratic; these reflect the dominant political force in each and feature distinctive profiles of state-society, or public-private, divisions of responsibility for provisioning; stratification; and levels of the decommodification of labor. The concept of welfare regimes has sometimes given rise to typological arguments, thus continuing the “comparative statics” which characterized much second-wave historical work. But more significantly, there are also notions of policy feedback and path dependency, in which

⁶ This genre of work on social provision retains a quantitative analytic orientation, and has been the site for some of the post-positivist experimentation mentioned in the introduction (e.g., using Charles Ragin’s Boolean analysis, see Amenta 19xx; Huber and Stephens 2001; Huber, Stephens and Ragin 1993).

“policy creates politics” – the “implicit history” of this wing of scholarship on welfare provision, and here regime analysis encourages more processual thinking. Regime types can be seen as distinctive political-institutional “opportunity structures,” producing historically- and nationally-specific sets of interests or preferences, identities and coalitions (and, neo-Weberians would add, administrative capacities) that influence social politics in “path-dependent” ways. Moreover, the different “worlds of welfare capitalism” are the products of different political-institutional histories, featuring distinctive class coalitions, profiles of partisan dominance, and state structures.

Theda Skocpol’s (1992) pathbreaking revisioning of US social provision introduced social scientists to America’s “maternalist” reformers and their efforts to develop a maternalist system of social provision for mothers and their children; it further expanded knowledge about America’s “precocious” social spending program, Civil War pensions for a large percentage of the late-nineteenth-century nation’s elderly men (see also Orloff and Skocpol 1984). The book showed that US patterns differed qualitatively from European ones, rather than being simply a tardy, incomplete version; even while focusing on a single national case, Skocpol located it fully in comparative context. The book reoriented the field in multiple ways, notably in the encouragement given to the institutionalist emphasis on politics as process (especially through “policy feedback”).⁷ But perhaps most notable was the way gender was brought onto the same analytic ground as class, community, ethnicity – that is, as a potential basis for the development of identity and political goals, given specific social, cultural and political-institutional conditions. Skocpol’s work on maternalism proved to be inspiring for new generations of historical social scientists and historians (of women) to explore gender issues in welfare (about which, more below). My own work on the comparative politics of pensions (Orloff 1993a) examined the ways in which “needs” were constituted through the lens of ideology and mediated by existing social provision, and then were rendered effective politically in historically-specific ways, conditional on the particular political-

⁷ Theda Skocpol had consolidated her position as a leading figure in historical sociology’s second wave with her work on social provision (much of it collaborative; see e.g., Skocpol and Ikenberry 1983; Orloff and Skocpol 1984; Skocpol and Amenta 1985). The turn to “institutionalism” dates from 1988, with the publication of an edited volume of essays, many by her students, on the politics of social policy in the US (Weir, Orloff and Skocpol 1988). In this volume, Margaret Weir, Skocpol and I further developed the concept of “policy feedback,” which has come to be significant in institutionalist accounts of systems of social provision; policy shaped subsequent politics in terms of state capacities, understandings of social problems, and development of constituencies. Policy feedback was joined analytically with state structures and capacities, and patterns of democratic political involvements, related to patterns of class formation and mobilization. In the distinctive US political-institutional opportunity structure, the classic European patterns of class formation and political mobilization did not develop, and one could begin to make sense of some aspects of American social policy exceptionalism.

institutional context. Amenta (1998) questioned the dominant understanding of the US system of social provision as ever-lagging and stingy, showing that during the Roosevelt administration, the US was (briefly) the world leader in social spending, and developed a great deal of innovative social policy such as the Works Progress Administration. Quadagno (1988, 1994) explored the racial power and racism underlying the Southern political economy and its institutional mediation in Congress, and traced the ways that US welfare was racialized during the period from the New Deal through the Great Society. The institutionalist perspective also found adherents among political scientists examining, for example, the connections between policy ideas, policy feedback and state capacities in the area of employment (Weir 1992); the dismantling or retrenchment of welfare in a new era of crisis (Pierson 1994); the relationship between the “tax state” and the “expenditure state” (Howard 1997); the development of a gendered and “divided” citizenship (Mettler 1998); the interrelationships among public and private provision (Hacker 2002); or the shaping of US social provision by racial inequality (Lieberman 1998) -- to name only a few.

The fruitful line of institutionalist work continues today, making contributions especially in showing the relevance of historicizing analysis with the concepts of “path dependency” and “policy feedback.” It seems clear that the economic difficulties of the 1970s and the political attacks on welfare that followed, most spectacularly in the English-speaking world, helped to undermine the progressive story of expanding welfare states that had heretofore held sway. A number of studies have attempted to understand how programs unravel (Hooks 1990; Stryker 1989 ASR; Reese 2001; Soule and Zylan 1997). With reference to the most recent rounds of unravelling, it was soon clear that not all programs were equally vulnerable to attack, and that there was a great deal of resilience to modern welfare states. Paul Pierson’s Dismantling the Welfare State? (1994) subjected the patterns in the US and UK to systematic analysis, and concluded that policy had created politics in the sense of creating constituencies which would defend “their” programs from attack. Thus, politicians would engage in “blame avoidance” and stealth politics in order to cut certain programs, which, while popular, were tempting targets for budgetary savings or rolling back state activities which offended other important constituencies. Esping-Andersen used his regime analysis for similar purposes: regimes were understood as putting into place distinctive sets of constituencies and interests (anchored to what was referred to as “welfare state stratification”), which then produced distinctive patterns of social politics. Thus, for example, universalistic welfare states such as the social-democratic regimes of Scandinavia are seen to give rise to a broader-based popular support than the residual states of the liberal (mainly English-speaking countries’) regimes, in which the limited coverage of state protection leaves most citizens to depend on private provision and indifferent if not hostile to state welfare.

The phenomenon of policy creating politics has come to be encompassed in the broader concept of “path dependency,” the idea that once countries begin down certain trajectories, there is a kind of “lock in” created by constituencies with interests to defend

in the status quo. The concept, while promising in the encouragement it gives to examining the historical origins of modern programs and politics, is hardly above reproach. The Weir, Orloff, and Skocpol (1988) formulation of policy feedback – an ancestor or cousin of path dependency – insisted on the potential *multivalence* of reactions to past policies; to take only one example, US Civil War pensions certainly created a constituency devoted to defending the program, but also produced extreme reluctance on the part of elite reformers to enter into alliances with working-class organizations to enact new social spending programs (see Skocpol 1992, part 1; Orloff 1993a, chs.5,7,9). Path dependency has too often been interpreted as literally ensuring lock-in, and making it difficult to understand disjunctures in policy and politics. Kathy Thelen (2002) argues against analogizing to politics from the technological literature, which is the source of ideas of “lock-in” and cumulative advantage; not everything is contingent at the outset, nor are decisions, once made, sealed forever against recontestation, especially as losers do not, typically, disappear. And, as Steinmetz points out (this volume), the term obscures the fact that *all* politics (and policies) are dependent on the past, as the past gives us the only materials out of which we make the present.

Institutionalism could become more compelling if scholars address some continuing problems, particularly the thinness of understandings of culture in the construction of identities and goals, and in the very development of the categories of state welfare. The prevailing weakly utilitarian understanding of actors either should be discarded for a more fully culturally-situated conception of selves, or toughened up into a more explicitly utilitarian notion. Gender and race have begun to receive attention, but this could be more systematic, and the uses of welfare in building nation given greater play. And, finally, the global, geopolitical concerns affecting political elites and others – first noticed in the “state-centered” period, should be more effectively integrated with studies of American or Western developments. In particular, scholars could explore the ways in which Cold War commitments were significant for the postwar expansion of welfare, and the ways in which the demise of socialism has affected the welfare states which were importantly understood as providing alternatives to it.

Feminist work on systems of social provision first emerged concurrently with the second-wave historical sociologists, offering a parallel critique and revision of Marxist accounts. Feminists (usually also “socialist” in this area of scholarship) highlighted “social reproduction,” gender, and family as sources of interests and solidarities, along with the class and production politics which concerned Marxist analysts of welfare (for a pioneering analysis, see Jenson 1986; much of this work is reviewed in Laslett and Brenner 1989). By the late 1980s and early 1990s, historical investigations of women’s politics pushed scholars beyond the deductive, materialist and naturalistic understandings of “women,” “men,” and their interests that characterized socialist feminism. Skocpol’s work on “maternalism” reflected the conceptual broadening of gender scholarship on policy developments in the US and elsewhere. Around the same time, a number of feminist (historical) sociologists critiqued mainstream comparative

institutionalist scholars, notably Esping-Andersen, unveiling the gendered (masculinist) assumptions about actors and political goals parading as (universal) class actors and interests, and specifying the ways in which gender shaped social provision (Orloff 1993b; O'Connor 1993; Lewis 1992; Hobson 1990). (Thus, paralleling gender-free institutionalist work, there are two hubs of activity among feminists: historical investigations of US social policy development, with a focus on "maternalism" and its successors, and comparative work on welfare regimes.) Research on welfare and men -- as gendered persons, rather than as "universal" citizens or workers -- is still in its infancy (but see, e.g., ; Hobson 2002; Orloff 1991; Orloff 1993a; Orloff and Monson 2002 -- I see, in retrospect, that this has been a continuing concern of mine). Yet as in the task of "provincializing Europe," or other analytic moves to investigate dominant and unmarked categories, this work will need to be pushed forward to develop a fully gendered understanding of state social provision and regulation.

Theda Skocpol (1992), Seth Koven and Sonya Michel (1993) and Susan Pedersen (1993), among others, developed the concept of "maternalism" to describe women's political activities around the turn of the century in a number of industrializing democracies, in which women entered politics on the basis of "difference," made claims to citizenship based on their capacities to mother, and idealized a "maternalist" state that could care for its citizens, especially mothers and their children. This sharply contrasted with presentist notions of "women's interests," common among mainstream researchers, as consisting solely in entry to the paid labor force and the development of public provision of care services; it further insisted on understandings of gendered "difference" as socially and culturally-constructed. These works provide a model for comparative analyses sensitive to national and regional (or, in the US, state-level) differences in how women were understood as, and encouraged to be, "mothers" as opposed to "workers," a theme that has continued into investigations of contemporary social policies and politics. To explain divergent policies about maternal and infant health, public provision of child care, or maternity leaves, scholars call upon factors such as employers' demands for women's labor, trade union men's capacities to command a "family wage," state officials' interests in promoting fertility, and women's organizations' demands for economic independence, protection of motherhood, and/or entry to particular occupations -- all of which are simultaneously discursive or "cultural" as well as "material." In the contemporary period, some would argue that we are collectively saying "farewell to maternalism," with the shift to social policies encouraging employment for mothers as well as others and citizenship claims made on the basis of gender sameness, or employment (e.g., Orloff forthcoming).

Many feminist analysts of US policy history have built on Skocpol's work on maternalism and work on the gendered US welfare state, with masculine and feminine "streams," "channels" or tiers, shaped by gendered assumptions about work, citizenship, and supervision and reflecting and recreating a pervasive gendered inequality (Nelson 1990; Fraser 1989). There has been a good deal of research on the development of the "feminine" policy stream that flowed from the state-level mothers'

pension programs initiated in the 1910s and 1920s to the establishment, expansion and recent demise of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC, or “welfare” in American terms), and the successor program, Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF, still “welfare”). This research has uncovered the gendered – and simultaneously raced and classed – assumptions guiding US social policy, especially with reference to motherhood and (paid) work, and policies’ gendered, and stratifying, effects.⁸ Indeed, a number of scholars have been concerned especially with the racially and sexually exclusionary character of mothers’ pensions (and other “maternalist” social provision) and AFDC, arguing that welfare has been constitutive of (historically variable) racial and ethnic inequalities and differences (Bellingham and Mathis 1994; Glenn 2002; Quadagno 1994; Naples 1997; Reese 2001).

Work on “gendered welfare regimes” and comparative gender policies emerged in the context of an interdisciplinary, international community of gender scholars, including many historical sociologists (among whom I am happy to count myself). Inspired by mainstream comparative analysis, institutionalist work, and gender studies, and building earlier work on social reproduction, analysts have carried out both feminist critique and empirical research on programs and policies seen as especially relevant for the political construction of gender. I would call attention to several aspects of this work: its inductive and historicizing approach; its insistence on the continuing significance of central state institutions in constituting gender relations; its qualified modernist embrace of emancipatory feminist goals; its doggedly comparative approach; its provisional acceptance of the regime concept; its simultaneous engagement with gender studies and the institutionalist mainstream of comparative welfare state scholarship; its opening to culture and discourse (see, e.g., Hobson and Lindholm 1997; O’Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999; Bergqvist et al 2000).

Since many scholars use the regime concept, it may be worth assessing how this compares to mainstream work. Welfare regimes are understood as reflecting particular political configurations – class coalitions expressed in partisan alliances above all – of predominant liberalism, Social Democracy or Christian Democracy (conservatism/corporatism in the original formulation); they express more or less unified “logics” with respect to (de-)commodification, stratification and the institutional locus of welfare provision (state, market, or family). Gendering the regime concept has not left us with a

⁸ Yet in certain respects some of this scholarship – unlike the works that inspired it – seems quite decontextualized: it relies on the idea of a gendered, “two-tier” state, but does not situate the US feminine stream with respect to any sustained analysis of the “masculine” stream, which is treated more or less as an ideal-typical foil to demonstrate gender inequality. Nor does it pay attention to the comparative or historical context. In this way, it parallels some of the research on state autonomy and class politics in the US New Deal. Both suffer from a ferocious US-centrism.

strictly parallel notion, however. Unless one accepts the deeply problematic notion of a “gender contract” between men and women, there are no gender analogues to class coalitions, only the unmasking of the gendered aspects of the political forces explicitly involved in legislating welfare provision and, sometimes, the bringing to light of previously ignored actors.⁹ And yet we have all looked for ways to compare, systematically, across difference. In my own work (e.g., Orloff 1993b), I have tried to develop some understanding of what would be a dimension of analysis and political intervention that would allow for such systematic comparison, and would simultaneously index the emancipatory potential of welfare states vis-à-vis women -- parallel to Esping-Andersen’s decommodification for workers. Eschewing the deductive, Marxist approaches of my youth, I instead attempted to read the historical record of women’s demands on state systems of provision across a number of Western countries; while feminist political claims differed cross-nationally and over time, especially with respect to questions of mothers’ paid work and (unpaid) care, it struck me that there was a common core in demands for the means to ensure personal independence, and the capacity to enter or leave familial or marital relations on the basis of choice rather than necessity (to be secured in different ways, to be sure – state benefits or access to paid work and services – but with similar aspirations).¹⁰ Moreover, the notion of “gender logics” may be a useful analytic tool – revealed through explorations of the articulation of policies, as for example, Julia O’Connor, Sheila Shaver and I (1999) carried out vis-a-vis biological and social reproduction and the labor market in four “liberal” regimes. But our approach is not at odds with Adams’ and Padamsee’s (2001) warning that one cannot assume that each nation-state has a single, coherent regime – a simplifying shorthand rampant in all the literatures on modern systems of social provision and regulation.

The conversation between feminist and mainstream institutionalists has been a relatively productive one, and many of the leading figures of institutionalist welfare regime analysis have of late incorporated gender into their analytic models, with Esping-Andersen (1999, 2002) taking up feminists’ concept of “defamilization,” exploring the “household economy,” and arguing for a “new gender contract”; Korpi (2000) investigating the politics of different gendered family models in social policy; and Huber and Stephens (2000) exploring the political sources of the “women-friendly” provision of public services. Interestingly, this is one of the few substantive areas in

⁹ For example, Bismarck is Bismarck, Roosevelt is Roosevelt, the Social Democrats are the Social Democrats, whether understood in terms of class, gender, or some other characteristic.

¹⁰ This approach has been referred by some, dismissively, as modernist. Perhaps so; it certainly does (deliberately) recognize the link between modernity and contemporary Western feminism.

which mainstream political analysts have explicitly acknowledged the significance of feminist work on women's political participation, paid work/unpaid care work trade-offs and family dynamics, however inadequate their appreciation of the full significance of gender. Perhaps this is because there are such notable and unsettling "postmodern" or "postindustrial" changes in labor and capital markets, with the decline of the standard [male] industrial worker and the increase in capital mobility; families, with the decline of male breadwinner/female full-time caregiver households and the increase in different household forms; and states, with the decline in national state capacities vis-a-vis capital. And women service workers may be the next best hope for the social-democratic project.

Yet the conversation has not been entirely satisfactory, not simply because certain voices are "heard" (cited) more than others. Mainstream scholars' conceptions of gender are fairly thin – and especially when it comes to bodies, violence, sex, dependency, or the cultural concepts of masculinities and femininities, which are notable by their absence (Adams and Padamsee 2001; Brush 2002). Men appear not to even *have* a gender. Mainstream analysts rely upon a particular conception of political subjects: as rational, autonomous, unburdened by care, impervious to invasions of bodily integrity – and therefore (heterosexual and) masculine. Indeed, their work on women shoehorns them into this ill-fitting conception (which may be a slight improvement in recognizing women's agency, but falls short in other ways). We see this, for example, in their writings on the new "gender contract" we are now supposed to need (Esping-Andersen 2002). This calls upon the notions of freely-choosing individuals of liberal social contract theory – individuals whose existence is as illusory as that of self-regulating markets (which – being good institutionalists and social democrats -- these analysts do recognize as fantasy!). The complexities, burdens and joys of care, about which feminists have written so eloquently, are simply dissolved in the assumption that we can simply commodify care sufficiently to allow all adults to enter paid labor. Such a "solution" to women's disproportionate share of the household division of labor and concomitant difficulties in entering the labor market or family relationships could not hold up under serious scrutiny: it would be far too expensive given current budgetary constraints, even if it were "optimal" for those doing the caring and being cared for. And, of course, these conceptions are innocent of the deeply gendered historical developments through which modern political subjects were birthed. Citizenship has always been, and remains, gendered, and neither past nor contemporary social politics can be understood without reference to the (diverse) masculine and feminine characters of different political identities. But, unfortunately, the mainstreams' thin concept of gender is likely to be stretched even thinner as these scholars draw closer to rational choice formulations of risks, preferences and agents. Meanwhile, many feminist historical sociologists seems poised to move in quite opposite directions – precisely to understanding the cultural and discursive processes which are integral to gendering welfare.

Feminist historical sociologists of welfare are increasingly open to analyses of culture,

discourse and signification, through interchanges with historians of women and gender, political theorists and others. Nancy Fraser's (1989, 1997) work on the (discursive, cultural) "politics of needs interpretation" and, with Linda Gordon, on the genealogy of key welfare concepts such as "dependency," "contract" and "citizenship," has been especially influential (Fraser and Gordon 1994, 1995). Opening up to scrutiny the "risks" and "needs" to which welfare is addressed has been immensely productive, allowing scholars to examine the creation of categories of clients or beneficiaries, as well as the creation of demand for the services and expertise of various professionals connected to the welfare and disciplinary bureaucracies. (Scholars would do well, however, to pay more attention to the agency of the "discipliners," as Steinmetz [1993] argued.) Lynne Haney's (2002) work on "the invention of the needy" in postsocialist Hungary develops these ideas, showing the ways in which understandings of women's needs and associated policy strategies and administrative organizations changed over the course of several distinct phases of social politics from the 1940s through the present. Haney's combined ethnographic and comparative historical project, like her work investigating the local implementation of AFDC-related programs (Haney 1996), also highlights the payoffs of analyzing the different levels of welfare politics and administration, with their potentially contradictory exigencies and effects. These are not exactly Foucauldian analyses of the "capillaries," but do draw on the insights about the normalizing techniques of power – while remaining open to the structuring role of national state policies. Adams and Padamsee (2001, p.16) have suggested a systematic reworking of the regimes concept to highlight signification and culture, and encompassing "signs, subjects, strategies, and sanctions:" "A state policy regime, then, can be defined as a set of policies with accompanying sanctions, which are in turn the precipitates of subjects' actions undertaken on the basis of ordered signs" They offer illustrations from the literature on maternalism, arguing against various socially-determinist accounts, and contending that "initially, making the claim that maternalist ideas matter in politics involves showing how the sign of 'motherhood' organizes and links together a number of otherwise separate and subordinate signs" (p.11), then going on to investigate the "hailing" or recruitment of subjects, their strategic policy making, and the sanctions or capacities they may call on to enforce strategies.

The historical construction of gendered divides between public and private – which changes over time -- is a critical moment in the gendering of welfare, fixing (temporarily) which "needs" may be addressed through public social policy, and which are to be left to the family, charity or the market (O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver 1999; Gal and Kligman 2000). A number of scholars have examined the provision of child care through this lens; when the care of children is understood to be women's "natural" vocation, or a "labor of love," state provision is ruled out and women must find private solutions if they must or want to enter the paid labor force (see, e.g., Michel 1999; Hobson 1993). Meanwhile, when masculinity is defined in opposition to caregiving activities, changes in familial divisions of labor are stymied and fathers may resist taking up parental leaves – even those designed to encourage their participation (Leira 2002; Hobson 2002). In taking up the cultural turn, these scholars have not, it would seem, abandoned

progressive understandings of welfare as a potentially emancipatory weapon in the political struggle for gender equality. While the insights of Foucault and others have proved useful in calling attention to the significance of discourse and categorization, and to the capillary and productive character of power, they reject the political implications of Foucault's analysis – which leaves us with “resistance” and little else.

Conclusion

In studies of modern systems of social provision and regulation, Marx has met Weber. I want to suggest that we need to perform a kind of collective exorcism of Marxism, if I can call on Marx to signify the whole set of socially-determinist analytic approaches that have held us back from making a cultural turn in this field as well as a politics which takes for granted the identity, goals and goodness of working-class mobilizations. Yet I also want to historicize the Marxist contribution to the development of modern welfare: to investigate how certain sets of ideas derived ultimately from (more or less adulterated versions of) Marx have guided both the politics and analysis of welfare states; how the threat of socialism, socialist movements and parties; and actually existing socialist states – and then their demise -- shaped Western welfare provision. I would also like to encourage an encounter between Weber and Foucault, if I can call on Foucault to signify the whole set of regulatory, capillary, disciplinary and discursive analytic themes that have enriched studies of politics in many areas. I have no single woman to invite to the party to enliven studies of welfare with considerations of bodies, gendered identities, reproduction, and care, so we may need to perform a sex (or gender?) change operation or two – at least on the theoretical apparatuses bequeathed to us by our canonical thinkers. Nor is there a single figure to signify the need to situate modern social provision more fully with respect to nation, “race” and ethnicity. In short, here I am repeating the calls I made as a co-author of the introduction to this volume for more talk across theoretical and analytic divides, and especially more openness to subjects formerly excluded or repressed.

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