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The Changing Gender Contract as the Engine of Work-and-Family Policies

JANET ZOLLINGER GIELE
Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, USA

ABSTRACT *This paper shifts the comparative analysis of gender and welfare states from a focus on differences to a search for common features. The rise in women's labor force participation and resulting tensions between time allocated to work and to caregiving have led to a search for policies to reconcile productive and reproductive roles and a quest for gender equality in work and family life. Two questions result: first, why are structural changes in postindustrial society associated with efforts to increase the compatibility of domestic and market roles? And second, how and why are work and family restructuring and related social policies linked to a more egalitarian gender contract? Parsons' AGIL paradigm of evolutionary change suggests four functional exigencies that pull the various components of work-and-family policy in the direction of gender equality: (1) working-time policies promote adaptation to new demands; (2) equal employment opportunity and provision of child and elderly care promote role differentiation that enables heightened goal attainment both in work and caregiving; (3) broader eligibility for entitlements promotes integration of formerly excluded groups; and (4) value generalization of an adult worker/carer ideal and work-family reconciliation accomplish the legitimation of the new order in the cultural system as a whole. This analysis classifies social policies according to their function in facilitating the work-family nexus and thereby suggests the key elements that are required to reconcile work and family life in postindustrial society.*

Introduction

With the coming of postindustrial society, the evolution of the welfare state has reached another turning point. Following industrialization that undermined class privilege (Marshall 1964), and growth in the elderly dependent population that called for new social insurance schemes (Wilensky 1975), the new demographic trend of women's rising labor force participation is running into conflict with the continuing reproductive work of the family. These far-reaching changes are leading to the restructuring of the welfare state, during which gender equality in work and care are beginning to take center stage (Myles and Quadagno 2002).

It is the task of this paper to pursue two lines of inquiry that are implicit in this postindustrial scenario of welfare state restructuring. The first is to ask what constitutes "restructuring". The second is to ask why new gender expectations ("the gender

Janet Zollinger Giele is Professor Emerita of Sociology, Social Policy, and Women's Studies in the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA, USA, She has published extensively on gender, changing life patterns of women, and modern family structure.
Correspondence Address: Janet Zollinger Giele, Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, 415 South Street, Waltham MA 02454-9110, USA. Email: giele1@brandeis.edu

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contract''), and specifically issues of gender equality have dominated the discourse surrounding work and family life. A rich literature comparing gender across the major types of welfare state has identified a variety of new social programs and policies ranging from anti-discrimination in employment to increasing provision of child care and elder care (Orloff 1996, O'Connor *et al.* 1999). But as yet there has been no concerted effort to conceptualize the connections between change in women's roles, the search for gender equality, and the invention of new mechanisms to reconcile work and family life. Much of the work on gender in the welfare state has focused on differences in gender regimes and welfare regimes and has therefore obscured the nature of the driving forces behind these trends.

Studies of how work and family institutions are being restructured and are connected to social policy are much more descriptive than analytic. There have been only preliminary and scattered attempts to conceptualize and codify what appear to be key new features in every welfare state (Daly and Lewis 1998, Sainsbury 1994, 1999). Even in these works the main point has been to show national variation along the lines of Esping-Andersen's (1990, 1999) paradigm for comparing primacy of state, market, or family as agents of social provision.

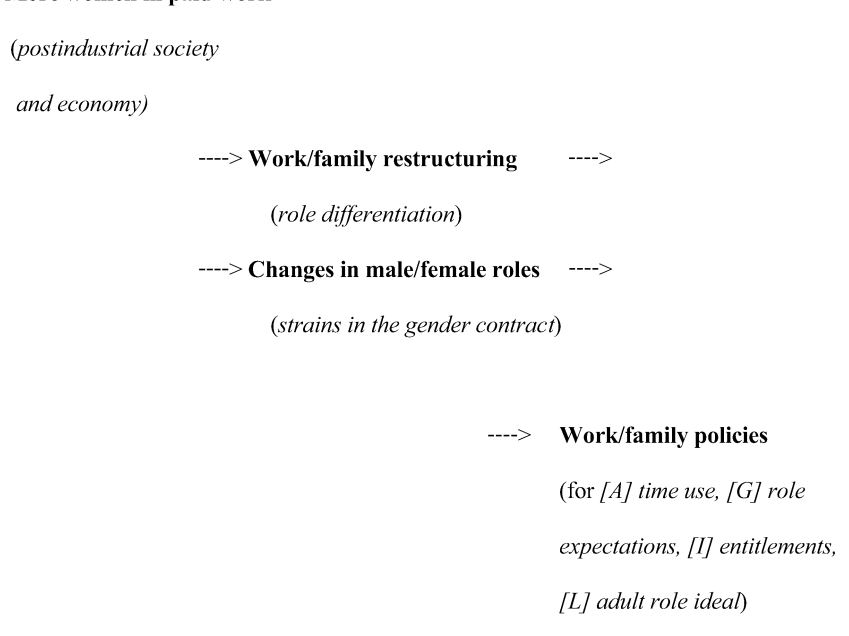
The central argument of this paper is that the postindustrial economy and family system that permits more women to enter the labor force has created a dynamic for renegotiating the relationship between work and family. At the same time, partly as cause, partly as result, the legitimate role expectations of men and women are shifting from traditional to more egalitarian (the changing ''gender contract''). The combination of structural change in the family and change in the life experience of women and men is fueling a new set of rules (work-family policies) to reconcile conflicting demands on adults with dual responsibilities for work and care. This process is represented in the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1.

The rest of this paper is devoted to supporting two propositions that follow on the observation that postindustrial society, in requiring both paid and reproductive labor of women, is creating a need to reconcile work and care and the once separate worlds of men and women. First, these changes are promoting a more egalitarian gender order in work and family life. Second, work-family restructuring and broadened gender roles have resulted in a push for work-and-family policies to institutionalize the change.

The Possibility of a More Egalitarian Gender Contract

From some of the earliest writings on gender in the welfare state (Ruggie 1984, Hernes 1987) to the present, a central issue has been the relative equality of women and how ''woman-friendly'' is a given regime. The focus of ensuing scholarship by O'Connor, Orloff and Shaver (1999), Orloff (1996), Lewis (1998), and others has been to evaluate which countries are more egalitarian as judged by the way their social policies affect women. By contrast, this paper asks instead why equality between women and men has become such an important issue, particularly with respect to their responsibilities for work and caregiving.[1] Despite recurrent warnings by some scholars that gender inequality will never disappear, there nevertheless appears to be a broad historical trend toward equality between the sexes as societies modernize (Ramirez 1987, Giele 1995).

Figure 1. Dynamics underlying the changing "gender contract"



Skeptical Views

A number of social analysts and critics have noted persistent beliefs that women and men are essentially different. Biological differentiation, socialization, and culture all conspire to "eternalize" any difference that then comes to appear natural. The male is larger, more active, instrumental, and rational; the female, more passive, emotionally sensitive, and oriented to the needs of others ("maternal"). Men are associated with the public world of politics, commerce, science, and women with the private world of the family. As these expectations are internalized, they are perpetuated in educational and occupational choices of individuals and labor decisions by employers (Bourdieu 2001).

In the most egalitarian societies such as the Scandinavian countries, the distinction between "male" and "female" jobs (horizontal sex segregation) is very high (Charles and Grusky 2004), either because individual choice leads to expression of what are felt to be essential differences between men and women or because the prevalence of part-time hours for women works against their assimilation into "male" and high status full-time occupations (Shalev and Mandel 2004). In the liberal capitalist societies there is a tendency for women either to assimilate their behavior to the "male" model implicit in paid work and public life (Eisenstein 1985, O'Connor 1999) or to drop out if they have sufficient income from other sources to do so (Belkin 2003).

Historical Links between Equality and Modernization

Although inequality never disappears entirely, the weight of historical evidence points to a long-term decline that is associated with modernity. A common thread

from Marx to Marshall to comparative scholars of societal development like Inkeles and Holsinger (1974) is that the breakdown of village parochialism or class insularity results in learning how the other half lives. Increased communication and rising incomes, together with novel working conditions, combine to create a shared consciousness and a capacity for identification across ethnic, regional, and class lines. Marshall (1964: 106, 113) describes the progress of citizenship as one that spread from patriotism to material enjoyment. The equalization that resulted was "not so much between classes as between individuals in a population that was now treated as *one* class", an equality of status more important than equality of income.

Inglehart and Norris (2003) provide an empirical demonstration that the equality trend extends to beliefs about men and women. Their World Values Survey examined 74 societies and states using a 100-item Gender Equality Scale. The postindustrial societies (and those with greater life expectancy and higher levels of energy consumption) were much more likely to favor egalitarian gender beliefs. Across all societies the younger generations were more egalitarian than the older people. Moreover, the gap *between* societies at different levels of development was bigger then between women and men *within* any given society.

But are egalitarian gender values the chicken or the egg of the work-family modernization process? Was it social democracy and feminism that led to modernization of the work-family system, or the other way around? This paper pursues a functionalist interpretation that sees the restructuring of work and family relations and gender roles, and in turn the invention of work-family reconciliation policies, as a key adaptation to the economic and reproductive demands of postindustrial society.[2]

Functional Theories of Equality

Rather than focus on ideas as the mainspring of action, functionalist theories focus on which behaviors and structures help a society to survive. Equality, according to this rationale, is more "functional" as a basis for integrating diverse individuals and interests and fits better with a commitment to science and technology and economic growth than rigid hierarchies with their prohibitions and privileges based on family origin, caste, and class. The seeds of this reasoning can be found as early as Durkheim's ([1893] 1964) classic on the *Division of Labor in Society* that connected the moral order of society to the degree of occupational specialization within it. The simplest societies are connected by "mechanical solidarity" of traditions and rules imposed by family elders or the higher ranks; complex societies are regulated by "organic solidarity" of functional interdependence. The highly differentiated modern society is one "where each individual will have the place he merits, will be rewarded as he deserves, where everybody accordingly will spontaneously work for the good of all and of each" (Durkheim [1893] 1964: 407–408).

Parsons (1966: 22) pursued these ideas in his paradigm of evolutionary change. He understood the modernization process to be one of "adaptive upgrading" in which specialized functional capacities are freed from ascriptive bonds and limitations such as imposed by the family or the village. The demands for higher productivity associated with adaptive upgrading require "more *generalized* resources that are independent of their restrictive sources". Differentiation and upgrading processes thus eventually require *inclusion* of previously excluded groups in the status of full

membership in the community, and the upper class can no longer monopolize the status of being "real" members while treating their inferiors as second-class citizens.

These functional theories of equality are relevant to the changing gender contract in postindustrial society. Kingsley Davis (1984), in his prescient analysis of the tensions between women's rising work force participation and their roles as wives and mothers, asserted that the "breadwinner system" was about to be replaced by an egalitarian system, with wide-ranging consequences for public policy. He foresaw that the unequal system carried the seeds of its own destruction because it could not easily reconcile women's work with childbearing and thus risked a fertility crisis in those nations that did not adjust to the new reality.

Parsons never directly addressed how his theoretical system of adaptive upgrading applied to the contemporary transformation of the "breadwinner system", although he frequently used Smelser's (1959) example of work-family differentiation during the industrial revolution to explain how the breadwinner system came about, as men went off to factories and women had to stay at home.[3]

In postindustrial society further structural differentiation of male and female roles does not result in still more specialization between gender roles, but rather greater within-role complexity, such that both male and female roles now typically entail both paid work and domestic work and become more similar to each other. Deconstruction of the old male breadwinner role reveals tasks that can as well be performed by women, thereby releasing "more trained capacity into the system" (Johnson, 1989: 111). The female homemaker role also comprises tasks that can as well be performed by men – putting a prepared dinner in the oven, watching children, doing the laundry.[4]

This loosening of the component tasks from a requirement that they be performed only by individuals with particular qualities (of race, class, age, gender) is analogous on the market side to the process that has been termed "de-commodification" (Esping-Andersen 1990: 21) and on the domestic side, "de-familialization" (Esping-Andersen 1999: 45–46). Structural differentiation in the contemporary work-family system is a process that loosens productive or reproductive tasks from being the particular responsibility of market or family or of male or female. The change makes room not only for social provision by the state and private services; it also frees men and women to cross old gender boundaries of working and caregiving.[5] Clues on how this process occurred can be found in functionalist theories of sociology that outline the ways in which social systems change to respond to new challenges.

Institutionalization of the New Gender Bargain

Davis (1984), a sociologist and demographer, says simply that the remedy to the weakness of the breadwinner system is to equalize the obligations of the two sexes in both workplace and home. This general formula is echoed by many others such as Okin (1989), a political theorist, who criticizes the prevailing work-family system as manifestly unjust; and Fraser (1997), a feminist philosopher, who envisions several potential ways to divide labor that one way or another equalize working and caregiving obligations across the gender divide. None of these ideal formulations, however, spells out how such changes will actually come about. Thus, the issue for this paper is to trace how more egalitarian obligations are actually built into social

structure, what conditions precipitate this change, and how these changes are in turn related to the emergence of work-family reconciliation policies. The general sequence of events is first a sense of strain in the current system, then a series of transformations in actual time use, role obligations, normative expectations, and cultural values, and ultimately the further solidification of these changes through the adoption of explicit social policies.

Strains in the Current Gender System

One can find ample description by journalists (Crittenden 2001) as well as feminist scholars (Hochschild 1997) of the many contradictory expectations that plague contemporary workers who happen to be parents or caregivers for elderly parents. If a woman works part-time in order to be home when needed, she fails to get ahead in pay and promotions. But the woman who works long hours and rises in her career often delays or forgoes childbearing altogether. Persons who try to have a career and a family must cobble together child care arrangements that are scarce and expensive, with the result that most women sacrifice their own advancement in order to provide needed care at home. It becomes a prudent decision for the household to send its more highly paid worker (usually the husband) into the workforce and to employ the worker with lower earning potential (the wife) in unpaid labor in the home (Becker 1981).

Over two decades ago Davis (1984) summed up the problem very simply: economic production and family regeneration are organized into two separate systems that are different in location, institutions, and personnel. As the breadwinner system gives way to the dual-earner family, the challenge for society is to equalize the rights of the two sexes in the workplace and the home. In the face of biological specialization related to childbearing and the breast-feeding of children, it is the role of public policy to lessen the conflicts between work and child care.

The pre-industrial family combined economic production and familial reproduction in one place. Industrialization differentiated these two functions and located work (and men) in the factory and women (and children) in the home (Smelser 1959). The postindustrial economy, with its rising participation of women in paid employment, does not simply de-differentiate work and family life by pulling them back into one place again. Instead, the new splitting that occurs is within every adult individual (male and female) who is now obligated to be both worker and caregiver. The great difficulty in accomplishing this change is not in getting women to leave the family to go into the workplace – that pathway is already familiar and well worn – but to get men, who were told their main job was to be breadwinners, to split off a larger part of their time for caregiving and the household. As Daly and Lewis (1998: 4) have noted, *care* is one of the truly original concepts to have emerged from feminist scholarship, and the family has been the most central provider of welfare. Thus, the central problem of the postindustrial era is provision for *caregiving*. There is scattered evidence that some progress is occurring, even if slowly, in both the US and Europe in getting men to contribute more time to the family (Bianchi and Mattingly 2004, Bonke and Koch-Weser 2004). But overall the pace seems rather discouraging, and some say that the trend is being reversed, as evidenced by those highly trained career women who have left their posts to be mothers at home (Belkin 2003).

Structural Adaptation in the Work-Family System

In the face of these puzzling and contradictory signs about whether the gender contract is actually continuing as of old or is changing in an egalitarian direction, it is helpful to turn to theory about how lasting social change is likely to occur. Parsons (1966) conceived his "paradigm of evolutionary change" to explain how societies modernize. The theory has yet to be applied to the question of how a more complex and egalitarian structure of work and family relationships comes about in the postindustrial era. When so translated, it turns out that the paradigm reveals an underlying logic in recent changes in the work-family system that tend toward growing gender equality between men and women in the workplace and husbands and wives in the family.

Parsons' theory of evolutionary change posited four key processes: adaptive upgrading, goal differentiation, integration, and legitimation ("value generalization") in the culture. *Adaptive upgrading* is the opening wedge that brings about a more efficient use of resources and incorporation of new technologies. Such adaptation promotes *goal attainment* that aims toward innovation and higher productivity. It is change in this second function ("upgrading" of goals) that is the focal point of Parsons' scheme and results in further structural differentiation, by which Parsons meant greater specialization among units of the larger society (such as work and family) and a redefinition of tasks and roles of individuals (so that women, for example, can be construction workers and serve in the army and men can be nurses or child care workers). Following such specialization, social systems have to reintegrate their many different units, and *integration* takes the form of "inclusion" of the newly differentiated units (e.g., admitting women to formerly "male" occupations and men into domestic caring roles). Finally, these changes as a whole gain cultural *legitimation* through "value generalization" that connects the new ways with members' basic values, like rewarding good work regardless of who does it, or appreciating the gift of caring and being cared for, no matter whether the caregiver is male or female. In Parsons' words (1966: 23), the "value pattern must be couched at a higher level of *generality* in order to legitimize the wider variety of goals and functions of the sub-units".

Social Welfare Policy as Response to Work-Family Change

Just as Smelser (1959) showed that new social institutions had to be invented in the 1830s and 1840s to accommodate the strains of the new breadwinner system, so also contemporary societies have responded to the strains in the new work-family system by developing social programs and policies to ease role and time conflicts for parents and workers and caregivers in general. Up to now, however, there has been little attempt to analyze systematically the functional connections between work-family conflict and the policies that have been devised, although there are certainly lists and descriptions of the major kinds of programs and provisions that are available. Early statements like that of Davis (1984) mentioned a laundry list of possibilities: shorter hours, part-time work, more efficient housing design, culinary activity, health services, shopping, child allowances, free services for children, day-care centers, pregnancy leaves, and seniority retention. Recent lists group these policies under several main rubrics: working-time policies, equal employment opportunity, benefit

plans and pension policies, child care and elderly care, and family and medical leave (Blau *et al.* 2002; Jacobs and Gerson, 2004), but the groupings lack any clear theoretical rationale.

Several other analysts have developed promising classification schemes that group policies according to their generic functions. Daly and Lewis (1998) focus particularly on the need to provide for social care; they distinguish between macro-level cultural and institutional policies that divide responsibility between family, market, state, and the voluntary community and micro-level policies for organizations and individuals that define who is doing caregiving work and where. Two features of this work are particularly valuable. First, these authors push analysis "down" from macro-level national comparisons of state/market/family responsibility for income maintenance to give special attention to care activities and who will produce the labor and services that are needed at the micro-level. Second, in addressing the question of who will do the actual work of caregiving, Lewis (2003: 108) emphasizes that the important question now is not so much how the various European countries provide similar forms of support differently. More important is "what they have in common [which] is a recognition that the massively changed circumstances of family form and family life require public policies for care".

A focus on common features of the postindustrial welfare state leads both Sainsbury (1994, 1999) and Lewis (2003) to a functional classification of social policies that converges with the Parsonian scheme. Sainsbury (1999: 78) begins with [L] ideology about the ideal model adult, then turns to [I] entitlements, and [G] tasks of work and care, but does not mention time and resources [A]. Lewis (2003: 106–107) also begins with [L] the question of the ideal adult and proposes to move beyond a "one-and-a-half" model adult to a "fully fledged adult worker". She then suggests [G] compensation to encourage more equal sharing between men and women of unpaid care work, adds [A] regulation of hours of paid employment, and concludes with [I] redistribution of transfers between different types of work, paid and unpaid, over the life course.

This convergence is very promising between the empirical classifications of emerging welfare state policies and a functionalist analysis of structural changes needed to increase compatibility of productive work and caregiving. The functionalist classification suggests a practical research agenda for comparing national strategies and their relation to past and future change. It also helps to interpret the policy agenda of activists and interest groups. To elaborate these analytic possibilities, this paper concludes with a review of major themes that are currently visible in four major types of work-and-family policy.

A Generic Classification of Work-Family Policies

The value of codifying types of work-family policy is in being able to link up the stated purposes of each policy to the actual function it serves in helping to institutionalize a new more egalitarian work-family system. Accordingly, this study spells out the function of each policy group, familiar and new examples, and common trends that suggest cross-national convergence. In addition, following the lead of structural-functional theory, this classification links each major type of policy to a particular "level" of the social order, ranging from specific and closer to the

material world to the increasingly general and abstract cultural order.[6] Working-time policies are focused primarily on enabling adaptation (A) of the *individual* to the new work and family demands. Employment and child welfare policies that define and limit role expectations of workers and parents (G) are most relevant to *collectivities* (employers and families). Entitlement policies that expand coverage and eligibility have an integrative function (I) for the society as a whole and define the boundaries and obligations of major societal *institutions* such as family, market, and state. Finally, implicit in all work-and-family policies are values that provide legitimacy (L) in the prevailing *culture* for various patterns of employment and family life and gendered (or gender-neutral) adult roles.

Adaptation: greater flexibility in time and resources. Policies that serve an adaptive function typically increase flexibility and choice in the use of time and resources. This serves the process of structural change by making it possible to combine more specialized roles in novel ways such as parenting and working outside the home. The most familiar examples are part-time work, family leave, reduced hours of work, and regulation of working time (Gornick and Meyers 2003; Plantenga 2004). Less well known are telecommuting, work leave with right of return, job-sharing, and accumulation of hours for later use (Van Doorne-Huiskes 1999). Personal capacities and resources (such as health, marital status, disability, and number and age of children) can also be treated more or less flexibly and can be neutralized or be made into handicaps by policy (Oppenheimer 1970, Jennisson 1999, Esping-Andersen 2002, Daly and Rake 2003). To the extent there is any common trend in these policies, it appears to be in the direction of enhancing choice. "Cafeteria" plans for choice of benefits (Blau *et al.* 2002) as well as more choice in type and location of services such as child care are such examples of increasing adaptive flexibility (Van Doorne-Huiskes 1999, Jenson and Sineau 2001).

Goal differentiation: role crossover and recombination. Policies that promote higher levels of productivity and quality of care are those that advance the structural differentiation of tasks and roles and allow both men and women to combine paid work and caregiving. The new more specific and performance-oriented role boundaries have the potential to mobilize unused talent and release unused capacity into the system. This process can be observed both in paid work and provision of care. Growth of non-manual and professional service jobs and public employment has pulled women into paid work (Oppenheimer 1970, Charles and Grusky 2004). In addition to the economic forces that generate these changes, anti-discrimination laws in employment have been enacted in Europe, North America, and Australia (Berghahn 2004, O'Connor 1999). Proliferation of health occupations, child care services, and formal elderly care has released women from full-time unpaid work as homemakers (Jensen and Sineau 2001, Gornick and Meyers 2003, Letablier 2004). A key issue for all states is whether to encourage "employment first" at the risk of underinvesting in infrastructure that also promotes further progress in the de-familialization of care (Rubery 2002).

Integration: more inclusive grounds for entitlement. Social policies that promote a dual earner-career system accomplish integration and inclusion by eroding sex-based

and family-based characteristics of the individual as grounds for entitlement to social insurance and other benefits. In their place, the new rules substitute individually based qualifications such as earnings history, citizenship, or residence as grounds for entitlement. The tax system moves away from joint tax returns with deductions for dependants to separate filing by individuals with equal tax relief for each (Sainsbury 1999: 78). Despite these signs of growing equalization, however, there are two major sources of continuing inequality. First is the continued widespread reliance on family status and the implicit male-breadwinner model as a basis for entitlement, such that widows are still considerably better off than lone mothers and women who have no partners (Daly and Rake 2003). Second is growing inequality in the income distribution due to the increasing numbers of dual-earner households whose household income is at the higher end (Blossfeld and Drobnic 2001).

Value generalization: evolution of the ideal adult role model. Value generalization of the new work-family structure is evident at the level of the individual in both elite and popular views about the ideal adult citizen, and these views appear to be evolving from a gender-typed breadwinner/homemaker pair to that of an earner/carer role ideal that is applied to both sexes (Lewis 2003, Gornick and Meyers 2003: 20). This ideal is understood to mean an expectation that most women will be in the paid labor force as well as have children, what Esping-Andersen (2002: 95) terms "female life course masculinization"; for men who lag in taking up the carer role, he suggests they embrace "a more feminine life course". One indication that the ideal is becoming generalized can be found in the 1998 statement by the Council of Europe that called for the "development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages" (Rubery 2002: 113). While not directly inscribed in legislation, this statement implicitly expresses an ideal and thus provides direction and ultimate legitimation for the tendency toward gender equality that is becoming increasingly evident.

The emergence of these four generic types of family policy should not be understood as inevitable. They do not appear without intervention by political actors, social movements, and the interested wider public (O'Connor *et al*. 1999, Daly and Rake 2003, Pfau-Effinger 2004), but the competition of different interest groups and politics of implementation is not the focus of this paper. Rather this analysis pinpoints the functional exigencies in postindustrial economic and family life that have posed challenges that resulted in similar policy solutions and a pervasive concern with gender equality in work and family life.

Conclusion

Given evidence that the next step of welfare state development will be driven by postindustrial change in work and family structure, this paper has addressed two related questions: first, why postindustrial society is concerned with increasing the compatibility of work and family life; and second, how the idea of a more egalitarian gender contract is expressed in the work-and-family policies of the welfare state.

After considering whether the trend toward gender equality is structurally induced, or is the result of a general worldwide change in culture, this paper argues that a concern for gender equality emerges as work and family tasks become more

complex and differentiated. Ascriptive hierarchies are broken down in favor of employing people with the best capacities, regardless of class, family status, or gender.

To demonstrate a connection between the egalitarian theme and changes in family and social policy, we turned to Parsons' paradigm of evolutionary change. The four aspects of evolutionary change – adaptation, goal differentiation, integration, and cultural legitimation – can be specified for the work-family system as well as for the work-and-family policies that have been put forward to help societies reconcile their need for women's paid labor with their need for reproductive care. A quest for *adaptive flexibility* is the basis for new policies for working hours, parental leaves, and greater choice in use of services. *Goal differentiation* and higher levels of attainment create incentives for anti-discriminatory employment policies, reorganization, and compensation for unpaid care work. *Integration* and inclusion are enhanced by broader and more inclusive rules of entitlement to pensions, social insurance, and health care. Value generalization and *cultural legitimation* are indicated by the emergence of a new model adult (male or female) who combines paid work and unpaid care.

As with any theoretical analysis, this review will be useful if it reveals powerful underlying factors that explain the push for gender equality and the new social policies that up to now have been interpreted in atomistic and normative terms. A functional conceptualization of work-family policies, by identifying the reasons for their emergence and their affinity to a more egalitarian gender contract, can serve as both interpreter and guide for future research and policy development.

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Notes

1. This paper treats "equality between women and men" and the "gender contract" primarily in the context of the changing work-family nexus. But previous literature on gender in the welfare state has had a much broader reach. In order to situate my analysis with respect to this earlier work, I first discuss competing views from that more general perspective before concentrating on the narrower issue of evolving gender norms in work and family life.
2. It should be emphasized here that the logic of this functionalist analysis is not circular, as might be charged if (as cautioned by one anonymous reviewer) "social needs" of the postindustrial society were conflated "with their fulfillment". Rather, it is the new challenges created by postindustrial society that people with competing interests must independently respond to. Their adaptations are sometimes successful and sometimes not. At the same time that there are some common features in the solutions that are adopted, there is also wide variation in the particulars both within and between nations.
3. Earlier Parsons (1942, Parsons and Bales 1955) had alienated feminists who thought he believed men's instrumental and women's expressive specializations were based on essential differences and could never result in husband/wife equality. These charges were especially relevant to his work that categorized the husband-father as the instrumental leader of the family who linked it to the public sphere whereas the wife-mother was the expressive leader of the family and was thereby inexorably tied

to the private sphere. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, Parsons was intrigued by both the historic and contemporary women's movement. As advisor for Giele's doctoral dissertation and a mentor for her work on women's changing roles (Giele, 1961, 1978, 1995), he suggested that both the historic women's movement and the new feminism were examples of "adaptive upgrading". He never spelled out the application of his upgrading theory to changing gender expectations, but this was eventually done by another of his former students, Miriam Johnson (1989).

4. Smelser's (1959) study of the industrial revolution and the factory system in England documented how the productive and reproductive functions of the family were wrenched apart. Men became specialized in work outside the home and women in domestic care, thereby creating a crisis in socializing children when both parents were in the factory, and a crisis of economic security if wage labor disappeared. In our day it is difficult to picture how the same process of structural differentiation is operating when male and female roles are becoming more *similar*. To some that looks like "de-differentiation" or *less* specialization. The solution to this conundrum is to understand differentiation as a process of creating more independent sub-units within a given system in order to be more competitive or to meet higher standards. Further "specialization" in this sense is occurring *within* the male or female role package so that tasks once inseparable from sex of the incumbent are no longer dependent on gender. Thus the craft knowledge of the typical female homemaker has been reduced to manageable and rationalized components (child care, respite care, cooking, cleaning, laundry) that can be performed by outside services or a husband or child. A parallel change has occurred in the male breadwinner role as fewer jobs require particular craft knowledge, long absences, physical strength or endurance, which were once thought to be inseparable from male attributes; women can now perform these jobs also.
5. In terms of Parsons' (1966) adaptive upgrading scheme, de-commodification and de-familialization can be interpreted as reflecting an integrative function, which extends citizenship to those who were formerly excluded from access to services or benefits because of inability to work or lack of the requisite family status. Their "inclusion" does not happen, however, until a new more complex division of labor has revealed alternative ways to gain a living and to sustain reproduction and daily life. One aspect of this process is further advancement in the division of labor between market, family, and state, such that the obligations peculiar to each are rationalized, disembedded from institutional subcultures, and made more transparent and interchangeable across institutional boundaries. Only then is it possible for society to afford the entitlements of full citizenship to the individual who lacks traditional work or family ties.
6. In addition to articulating the four-function paradigm, Parsons (1966) and his collaborators saw each function as having primacy at a different level of the social structure in an ascending hierarchy of control, as follows: adaptation (A) at the level of *individual* units; goal-attainment (G) at the level of *collectivity*; integration (I) at the level of *institutions* and the *societal community*; latent pattern maintenance and legitimation (L) through values and norms at the level of the *culture* (Fox *et al*. 2005).

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