Engendering the Welfare State. *A Review Article*

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It has been nearly a decade since Linda Gordon published her influential review of the "new" feminist scholarship on the welfare state.[1] In the essay, Gordon traced the contours of the then-blossoming feminist literature on the welfare state and encouraged feminists to move beyond a critique of gender-blind welfare analyses to construct their own, less deterministic historiographies of state formation. In the last ten years, feminists have not only heeded this call but have largely surpassed it, developing a voluminous literature that now addresses gender and the welfare state. Feminist historians have written new origin stories to reveal how female reformers, motivated by both maternalism and professionalism, participated in the building of Western welfare states.[2] They have also unearthed the gendered scripts adhered to by male politicians, policy makers, and class-based movements. In addition, feminist social scientists have explicated the re/distributive outcomes of welfare states to illuminate how states allocate resources in gendered and racialized ways.[3] These scientists have also

[1] Linda Gordon, "The New Feminist Scholarship on the Welfare State," in L. Gordon, ed., *Women, the State and Welfare* (Wisconsin, 1990).

[2] For an excellent review of feminist work on maternalism and motherhood, see Lisa Brush, "Love, Toil, and Trouble: Motherhood and Feminist Politics," *Signs* (1996), 21:21. For feminist analyses of maternalism and the origins of the welfare state, see Robyn Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935* (Oxford, 1991); Theda Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers* (Harvard, 1992); Linda Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare* (Cambridge, 1995); Molly Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare, and the State, 1890–1930* (University of Illinois, 1994); Seth Koven and Sonya Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and Origins of Welfare States* (Routledge, 1993); Gisella Bock and Pat Thane, eds., *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of European Welfare States, 1880s–1950s* (Routledge, 1991); Lori Ginzberg, *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in Nineteenth-Century United States* (Yale, 1990); and Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890–1945* (Yale, 1993).

[3] For feminist analyses of the gendered underpinnings of state re/distributive practices, see Nancy Fraser, *Unruly Practices* (Minnesota, 1989); Linda Gordon and Nancy Fraser, "Dependency Demystified: Inscriptions of Power in a Keyword of the Welfare State," *Social Politics*, 1:14–31; Virginia Sapiro, "The Gender Bias of American Social Policy," *Political Science Quarterly* (1986), 101:221–38; Barbara Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workman's Compensation and Mothers' Aid," in L. Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Wisconsin, 1990); and L. Bryson, *Welfare and the State* (Macmillan, 1992). For studies of the racialized undercurrents of state re/distribution, see Gwendolyn Mink, *Wages of Motherhood* (Cornell, 1994); Jill Quadag-

0010-4175/98/4769–0565 $9.50 © 1998 Society for Comparative Study of Society and History

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417598001728 Published online by Cambridge University Press

treated the welfare state's discursive outputs as gendered and explored how states interpret women's and men's needs and construct their identities in divergent ways. Thus, it is no longer accurate to characterize feminist work as simply a critique of the welfare state. Although feminists remain in dialogue with mainstream scholars, they have produced their own collection of state and social policy analyses.

While all feminist welfare scholars make gender central to their work on state formation and development, they do not form a consensus on exactly how gender matters. Instead, there are grave variations in feminists' substantive findings. In examining re/distributive outcomes, some feminist social scientists argue that the welfare state reinforces gender inequality, while others focus on its ameliorative effects.[4] In studying moments of state building, some feminist historians show how the welfare state can foster women's political activism, while others document how the state undermines women's participation.[5] In this historical work, there are also different findings about the effects of female activism: Some emphasize the positive influence of female reformers on policy, while others center on the contradictory effects of female activism. To grapple with such substantive differences, many feminists have become more comparative in orientation. They have stepped back from individual case studies to pro-

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no, *The Color of Welfare: How Racism Undermined the War on Poverty* (Oxford, 1994); and Eileen Boris, "The Racialized Gendered State: Constructions of Citizenship in the United States," *Social Politics*, 2:16–80.

[4] There is a vast literature addressing how the state bolsters male dominance. For an excellent overview of these arguments, see Ann Orloff, "Gender in the Welfare State," *Annual Review of Sociology* (1996), 22:51–78. For feminist analyses of "state patriarchy," see Mimi Abramovitz, *Regulating the Lives of Women: Social Welfare Policy from Colonial Times to the Present* (South End, 1988); Jane Jensen, "Gender and Reproduction: Or, Babies and the State," *Studies in Political Economy* (1986), 20:9–45; Carol Brown, "Mothers, Fathers, and Children: From Private to Public Patriarchy," in L. Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution* (South End, 1981); Mary McIntosh, "The State and the Oppression of Women," in A. Kuhn and A. Wolpe, eds., *Feminism and Materialism* (Routledge, 1978). Feminist discussions of the state's ameliorative effects are far less common but include Frances Fox Piven, "Ideology and the State: Women, Power and the Welfare State," in L. Gordon, ed., *Women, the State, and Welfare* (Wisconsin, 1990); Sheila Kamerman, "Women, Children, and Poverty: Public Policies and Female-Headed Households in Industrialized Countries," in B. Gelpi, N. Hartsock, C. Novak, and M. Strober, eds., *Women and Poverty* (Chicago, 1986); Mary Ruggie, *The State and Working Women* (Princeton, 1984); G. Goldberg and E. Kreman, *The Feminization of Poverty: Only in America?* (Praeger, 1990).

[5] There are numerous explanations for these differences. For instance, Koven and Michel relate the influence of female reformers and maternalists to the "strength" of the state, arguing that, in relatively "weak" states, women exert more influence on social policy. See Koven and Michel "Mother Worlds," in Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and Origins of Welfare States.* On the other hand, feminists also trace the effect of female activism to the dynamics of a given polity, that is, to its democratic or totalitarian qualities and its militaristic tendencies. For examples of such analyses, see Gisella Bock and Pat Thane, eds., *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of European Welfare States, 1880s-1950s* and Alyssa Klaus, *Every Child A Lion: The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States and France, 1890–1920* (Cornell, 1993). Still other feminists connect the role of female reformers to the organizational makeup of the state. See Jane Jensen, "Gender and Reproduction," and Barbara Hobson, "Feminist Strategies and Gendered Discourses in Welfare States," in Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and Origins of Welfare States.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417598001728 Published online by Cambridge University Press

duce broad, cross-national studies of state gender regimes. For instance, collections by Koven and Michel and by Thane and Bock trace the political construct of "maternalism" in different national contexts and systematize its effects on policy making.[6] Similar comparative studies have been done on the re/distributive patterns of Western welfare states.[7] Again, the goal of these analyses is to specify the dimensions of state variation in policy outcomes and their gendered effects.

Without a doubt, this comparative turn has fostered new ways to grasp national and historical variation in state policy structures and gender regimes. Yet there is another, often overlooked, reason underlying feminists' substantive differences. To a large extent, feminists conceptualize the state in divergent ways: They adhere to contrasting understandings of the state itself. Of course, the state is not the only social institution characterized by conceptual and definitional disputes.[8] Yet the state is arguably more vulnerable to conceptual disagreement than institutions like the family or the workplace. Unlike these other realms, the state is somewhat of an abstraction. The state is a layered and multi-faceted entity consisting of different apparatuses that can operate in inconsistent ways.[9] Thus, state scholars have enormous discretion in deciding what to exclude or include in their investigations. All of the books I review in this essay provide analyses of the welfare state but in doing so define the state quite differently—whether as a regime of re/distributive policies, a national site of political struggle, or a local site of policy formation and implementation. Although all of these texts reflect superb research and are well-written, their authors remain rather unreflective about the conception of the state underlying their analyses. Clarifying these conceptual differences can offer a new way to understand the conflicting, and seemingly contradictory, findings of feminist scholars of the welfare state.

[6] Koven and Michel, eds., *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and Origins of Welfare States;* Bock and Thane, eds., *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of European-Welfare States, 1880s-1950s.*

[7] See Diane Sainsbury, ed., *Gendering Welfare States* (Sage, 1994); Jane Lewis ed., *Women and Social Policies in Europe: Work, Family, and the State* (Edward Elgar, 1993); Kamerman, "Women, Children, and Poverty: Public Policies and Female-Headed Households in Industrialized Countries"; Isabella Bakker, "Engendering Macro-Economic Policy Reform in the Era of Global Restructuring and Adjustment," in I. Bakker, ed., *The Strategic Silence* (Zed, 1994); Jane Jensen, "Some Consequences of Economic and Political Restructuring and Readjustment," *Social Politics* (1996), 3:1–12.

[8] Nor are feminists the only ones who disagree about what constitutes the state. Political sociologists, historians, and economists also debate how to conceptualize and theorize the welfare state. For an analysis of these larger debates and their connections to feminist discussions, see Ann Orloff, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States," *American Sociological Review* (1993) 58:303–28; and Julia Adams, "Feminist Therory as Fifth Columnist or Discursive Vanguard: Some Contested Uses of Gender Analysis in Historical Sociology," *Social Politics,* 5:1 (1998), 1–16.

[9] For a discussion of the conflicting and competing nature of the state, see Lynne Haney, "Homeboys, Babies, Men in Suits: The State and the Reproduction of Male Dominance," *American Sociological Review* (1996), 61.

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In particular, this conceptual clarification can shed light on feminists' divergent accounts of how states shape, and are shaped by, gender relations. Like the elusive quality of the state, "gender relations" are quite difficult to pin down conceptually. They can imply differences in how the state re/distributes resources to women and men. They can connote political processes of state building that involve gendered scripts and visions. They can imply political contests over "appropriate" social roles and positions. Or they can refer to the actual power dynamics between women and men in their homes, their sexual lives, or the labor force. In fact, feminist scholars of the state have examined all of these processes as gender relations. And I would argue that feminists' different approaches to gender relations are closely linked to their views of the state itself. Certain conceptualizations of the state draw into view particular types of gender relations. For instance, while feminists who conceive of the state as a *regime* of policies are well-positioned to theorize gender patterns of re/distribution, they are less able to analyze gender as an interactive, negotiated process. While studies of the state as a national site of political struggle capture the ideological and political battles over gendered meanings, these studies frequently miss the lived experience of welfare for recipients. And while investigations of welfare implementation are attuned to caseworker-client interactions and power relations, they are often ill-equipped to elucidate the re/distributive or political contexts surrounding these local interactions.

In this essay, I argue that feminists' conceptual choices have empirical consequences. To demonstrate this, I will unearth the interconnections between feminists' conceptions of the state and the content of their gender analyses. More specifically, I will review three of the most exceptional narratives on gender and the welfare state: Diane Sainsbury's *Gender, Equality, and Welfare States*, Susan Pedersen's *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State*, and Joanne Goodwin's *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform*. I chose these books because they adhere to different conceptions of the state. These divergent understandings are coupled with contrasting theoretical claims, empirical findings, and political arguments about gender relations. These texts therefore illustrate how distinct approaches to the state illuminate *and* obscure key arenas within which gender relations are played out.

THE WELFARE STATE AS POLICY REGIME

Diane Sainsbury's latest book, *Gender, Equality, and Welfare States* is an excellent example of an exciting new approach that feminists are taking to the study of the welfare state.[10] Influenced by the work of Esping-Andersen, many feminists like Sainsbury have set out to develop typologies of state policy regimes—typologies that can illuminate the dimensions of welfare state variation and their implications for women. Some feminists take Esping-Andersen's

[10] Diane Sainsbury, *Gender, Equality, and Welfare States* (Cambridge, 1996).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417598001728 Published online by Cambridge University Press

"three worlds of welfare capitalism" as their point of departure and readjust his model to account for gender. Their work inserts gender into his regime typology to reveal new dimensions of state variation and to ascribe new meaning to his class-based categories. [11] Other feminists have replaced Esping-Anderscn's typology with their own models that situate gender as the main axis of state variation. [12] Sainsbury's work falls into this latter approach. As she represents it, her project takes a "two-pronged strategy": It synthesizes mainstream and feminist scholarship on welfare regimes and constructs a new framework to assess the effects of different welfare states on women and men (p.33).

Because Sainsbury sets out to develop a new conceptual framework, she is fairly reflective about how she conceptualizes the welfare state. In essence, Sainsbury views the state as a national-level entity that re/distributes benefits to the population. For her, the state is a complex of social provisions, including social security, pensions, income-maintenance, family and child allowances, child-care services, and tax exemptions. Sainsbury takes these policies as indications of entitlement claims: She analyzes them for how they draw recipients into the state. By demarcating bases of eligibility and entitlement, welfare states determine who gets which benefits and on what terms. According to Sainsbury, states vary in terms of how they confer eligibility. Moving beyond other feminist regime models, Sainsbury claims that states confer eligibility to women based on three primary social positions: their roles as wives, mothers, and workers.[13] As wives, women receive benefits due to their connection to a male breadwinner and their care for him. As mothers, women are accorded benefits due to their maternal responsibilities and their care for dependent children. And as workers, women are granted assistance due to their labor market status and wage-earning capabilities.

[11] See Ann Orloff, "Gender in the Welfare State"; *Idem.*, "Gender and the Social Rights of Citizenship: The Comparative Analysis of Gender Relations and Welfare States"; Julia O'Connor, Ann Orloff, and Sheila Shaver, *States, Markets, and Families: Gender, Liberalism, and Social Policy in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (forthcoming); Sheila Shaver, "Body Rights, Social Rights and the Liberal Welfare State," *Critical Social Policy* (1993), 13:66–93; Siv Gustafsson, "Childcare and Types of Welfare States," in Sainsbury, ed., *Gendering Welfare States;* Peter Taylor-Gooby, "Welfare State Regimes and Welfare Citizenship," *Journal of European Social Policy* (1991), 1:93–105.

[12] For a few examples of this new typologizing, see Jane Lewis, "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes," *Journal of European Social Policy* (1992), 3:159–73; Barbara Hobson, "Solo Mothers, Social Policy Regimes, and the Logic of Gender," in D. Sainsbury, ed., *Gendering Welfare States;* and Jet Bussemaker and Kees van Kersbergen, "Gender and Welfare States: Some Theoretical Reflections," in D. Sainsbury, ed., *Gendering Welfare States.* In addition, the Summer 1997 issue of *Social Politics* includes an informative dialogue on gender and welfare regimes, including essays by Ann Orloff, Jane Lewis, Sonya Michel, Jane Jensen, and Anne Showstack Sasson.

[13] Sainsbury extends other feminists' frameworks by centering all three of these social roles. Instead of giving analytical priority to the mother, wife, and worker role, she theorizes all of these positions as key to women's eligibility claims. For regime analyses that center on a more limited number of social positions, see Lewis, "Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes"; Hobson, "Solo Mothers, Social Policy Regimes, and the Logic of Gender"; and Mary Langan and Ilona Ostner, "Gender and Welfare: Toward a Comparative Framework," in Graham Room, ed., *Toward a European Welfare State?* (School for Advanced Urban Studies, 1991).

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Sainsbury's model then links these bases of entitlement to show how they come together to form two ideal types—the male breadwinner model and the individual model. In the former, the family is the unit of re/distribution: This regime is premised on heterosexual marriage, on a clearly demarcated domestic division of labor, and on a wide range of family laws and policies that tie women's rights to men, police the public-private divide, and retain care work as unpaid labor (pp. 41–42). This contrasts to the individual model, which takes the citizen as the unit of re/distribution: This regime has no preferred family form, holds both women and men responsible for familial well-being, and bases entitlement on citizenship rather than family role or employment (pp. 42–43). Because these are ideal types, any given welfare state can encompass these elements. Unlike Esping-Andersen, who assigns specific cases to his welfare types, Sainsbury's model allows for competing eligibility modes and a mixture of entitlement models in all welfare states.

After Sainsbury constructs this classificatory scheme, she applies it to four welfare states—the United States, the British, the Dutch, and the Swedish—in order to determine whether these entitlement bases prevail in each case and their re/distributory consequences. In terms of the former, Sainsbury's classification leads to an unique clustering of welfare states. For instance, in tracing women's entitlements as wives, Sainsbury arrives at a surprising finding that the Dutch welfare state most closely approximates the male breadwinner model, followed by the United States, the United Kingdom, then Sweden. This ranking is intriguing, since the Netherlands and Sweden are usually lumped together as examples of the Scandinavian model. Sainsbury presents an equally compelling analysis of maternal entitlements. Here, she shows that although all of these states extend some support to women as mothers, they vary according to whether they are universal in character. The maternal benefits provided in the United States, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands are largely distributed by employers, while Swedish benefits are universal social rights. A similar pattern characterizes child-care services. In Sweden, there is a guaranteed parental allowance, while in the other three cases, private child care is mixed with tax exemptions (United States), informal family arrangements (United Kingdom), or public playgroups (Netherlands). Finally, women's benefits as workers vary across these cases. Here the United States leads the pack, since where Americans work largely determines the benefits they receive. This is not the case in the United Kingdom or the Netherlands, where work-based provisions are more marginal and tempered by breadwinner policies. It also stands in sharp contrast to Sweden, where wage-related policies are more inconsequential due to the plethora of universal entitlements. In the end, Sainsbury uses these findings to place the four cases along a continuum—with the Netherlands adhering most to the breadwinner model, the United States and the United Kingdom fully mixing entitlement bases, and Sweden coming closest to an individual, citizenship-based welfare regime.

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Sainsbury's book is not simply an exercise in classifying these four welfare states. Her ultimate goal is to assess how these modes of entitlement translate into concrete benefits and how these benefits affect women. Her evaluation of these regimes is guided by one primary criterion: the re/distribution of financial resources to women and men. Using a combination of utilization patterns, coverage rates, and poverty statistics, Sainsbury tracks how women fare in regimes based on different entitlement structures. Not surprisingly, she finds that women do best in policy regimes that are universal and citizenship based. Such regimes tend to be characterized by fewer gender differences in re/distributive outputs and lower levels of inequality (p. 147). Perhaps more surprising, Sainsbury discovers that wage-related policy regimes are highly stratified and unfavorable for women. Because they link eligibility to "male tasks in the traditional gender division of labor," these regimes usually buttress men's social rights (p.145). Since such schemes are frequently accompanied by additional qualifying conditions, they often exclude many employed women (p. 145–6). Similarly, policy regimes based on the breadwinner model have sharp stratifying effects. Because they bestow unequal entitlements and vest social rights in husbands, these regimes produce stratification between women and men and among women. Finally, Sainsbury claims that maternal entitlements have mixed consequences for women. Universal maternal policies can enhance women's rights, while means-tested benefits are more exclusionary and less emancipatory (p. 147). Thus, Sainsbury's book ends with a bleak prognosis: Given that the welfare shifts underway across the globe have weakened universal entitlement claims and bolstered earning-related and means-tested programs, women are likely to bear the brunt of this current welfare restructuring.

Sainsbury's work is an example of feminist regime analysis at its best. Her book therefore illustrates the strengths of this approach, as well as its weaknesses. In terms of the former, Sainsbury's book exemplifies the explanatory power of regime typologies. It goes a long way in illuminating the gendered dimensions of variation in state policy regimes; it offers systematic criteria with which to assess the gendered nature of different welfare states. Moreover, by centering on bases of entitlement, Sainsbury comes up with an original conceptual framework. Unlike mainstream regime analysts, she extends beyond an exclusive focus on class to examine how states stratify in a multiplicity of ways. And, unlike other feminist regime analysts, Sainsbury highlights three axes of variation and the ways they can intersect in a given welfare state. In short, her model is more comprehensive than other regime analyses. Instead of slotting particular welfare states into distinct types based on a single policy dimension, Sainsbury constructs a fluid model that she uses to detect traces of different entitlement modes across welfare states.

Sainsbury's conceptual originality has empirical pay offs. From the welfare regime lens, she is able to provide a powerful descriptive account of re/distributive outcomes. This is one of the real strengths of regime analysis: It produces compelling data on who gets what and how this varies by policy struc-

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ture. Regime analysts are then able to take political stances on why women fare better in some states and not in others. While it is almost commonplace to say that the Swedish state is more "woman-friendly" than the U.S. state, analyses like Sainsbury's help us understand why this may be true. By moving from a simple study of the size of welfare states to encompass modes of entitlement, Sainsbury's regime analysis reveals the importance of how benefits are conferred and how citizens are connected to the state.

While the "welfare regime lens" illuminates these material relations of gender, it obscures other relations. Most broadly, regime analyses like Sainsbury's tend to treat both the state and gender as abstractions. As Sainsbury admits, her interest is in how constellations of social policies affect the "model" or "ideal" female recipient. Unfortunately, such an approach misses the complex ways that different recipients use and appropriate social policies. Women (and men) have complicated relationships to policy structures and can mobilize the same policy for contrasting, even unexpected, ends. Women often have multiple interests in state provision—interests that cannot be captured when they are treated as abstractions. Since they too readily view women's interests in strictly economic terms, as reducible to the re/distribution of material resources, regime analysts fail to appreciate women's other interests and commitments. Female recipients can have discursive interests related to their desire to speak and be heard, practical interests connected to their desire to maneuver among conflicting social responsibilities, and strategic interests related to their desire to protect themselves in the domestic realm or to defend themselves against male abuse.[14] Yet Sainsbury fails to explore how women strategize as wives, mothers, or workers to fulfill these different needs.[15] She also misses how different state policies pattern gender interests and needs. Both of these limitations are related to Sainsbury's conception of the state. When the state is viewed as an abstract "regime" of policies, it is difficult to acknowledge the recipients' everyday struggles or to assess how social programs disarm women in such battles.

Furthermore, feminist regime analyses like Sainsbury's often take policy constellations as given rather than as products of political or ideological struggle. Thus, they tend to miss the historical processes through which state gender regimes are constructed. In Nancy Fraser's terms, their focus on the state as a "need satisfier" obscures the state's role as a "need interpreter."[16] For instance, there are almost no social actors present in Sainsbury's analysis. This leaves the

[14] For a discussion of women's different interests in the state, see Maxine Molyneux, "Mobilization Without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State, and Revolution in Nicaragua," Feminist Studies, 11(1995):227–54.

[15] For instance, in my work on the Hungarian welfare state, I found that women mobilized their different identities and positionings in quite strategic ways in order to stake claims to state resources and to protect themselves in their everyday lives. See Lynne Haney, *Inventing the Needy: Policies, Practices, and the Gender of Welfare in Hungary, 1948–1996* (forthcoming); Lynne Haney, "But We Are Still Mothers: Gender and the Construction of Need in Post-Socialist Hungary," *Social Politics* (1997), 4:208–44.

[16] Nancy Fraser, "Women, Welfare, and the Politics of Need Interpretation," in *Unruly Practices.*

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reader with a plethora of unanswered questions. How did Sweden develop such a comprehensive system of universal entitlements? And why did the Netherlands follow a different path? What were the politics surrounding the introduction of the married women's option in Britain? And how did the U.S. welfare state become so preoccupied with wage earning and so invested in separating out the unworthy? Can policy regimes be disrupted? Can welfare states change their course of development or cross into another regime type? In this way, while Sainsbury's typologizing is not deterministic, her policy analysis is overdetermined. This limitation is also linked to Sainsbury's conceptualization of the state. From the standpoint of re/distributive outputs or structural divergences, it is exceedingly difficult to explicate the discursive, ideological, and political underpinnings of welfare state reformation. Hence, it is in the work of feminist scholars who operate with a somewhat different conceptualization of the state that we find a fuller appreciation of the contested and constructed nature of state gender regimes.

THE WELFARE STATE AS A SITE OF NATIONAL POLITICAL STRUGGLE

Whereas feminist regime analysis is an ascendant new approach to studying the welfare state, feminist historiographies of state formation are far more pervasive. Feminists working in this crowded area ask somewhat different questions of the state: Instead of asking *how* welfare states vary, feminist historians of welfare investigate *why* welfare states develop in contrasting ways. Their origin stories emphasize new social actors in state building and reinterpret the motives of the old cast of characters. More specifically, this feminist historiography illuminates the role that female reformers played in the formation of Western welfare states. They have shown how women appropriated a discourse of maternalism and mixed it with a distinctively feminine notion of professionalism to carve out influential positions for themselves in state building. Yet women were not the only ones motivated by gendered interests. Feminist historians have recast the "traditional" battle between labor and capital, fears about population quantity and quality, and movements of militarism to reveal their underlying gendered agendas. Because of the historical detail involved in such reinterpretations, few feminist historians build their origin stories from more than one or two cases. [17] Unlike regime analyses, which often work with a wide range of welfare states, this feminist historiography tends to be more geographically limited.

[17] Examples of single case origins stories include Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare;* Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935;* Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers;* Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare and the State, 1890–1930;* Mink, *Wages of Motherhood;* Nelson, "The Origins of the Two-Channel Welfare State: Workman's Compensation and Mothers' Aid." Examples of two case origin stories include Klaus, *Every Child A Lion: The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States and France, 1890–1920;* Hobson, "Solo Mothers, Social Policy Regimes, and the Logic of Gender"; and Ruggie, *The State and Working Women.*

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Susan Pedersen's book, *Family, Dependence, and the Origins of the Welfare State,* is an example of this feminist historiographic work at its best. It examines the development of two welfare states, the British and the French, over a thirty-year period, from 1914–45. The study is guided by a classic dilemma: Why did France develop a comprehensive set of family policies when Britain had the stronger feminist and labor movements? While Pedersen concurs with Sainsbury to view the British state as one premised on a male breadwinner model and the French state on a parental model, Pedersen's goal is to explain their divergent welfare paths. This agenda leads her into different theoretical dialogues. For instance, Pedersen's analysis also opens with an introductory dialogue with Esping-Andersen, yet she does not deploy Esping-Andersen to call for the need for a new conceptual framework. Rather, she faults him for not adhering to his own theoretical agenda. Although his framework centers three social realms as constituting a welfare rcgime—the state, the labor market, and the family—his actual analysis treats the family as subsidiary. For Pedersen, all three of these realms are key to welfare formation and development. Understanding the origins of welfare provision implies tracing the emergence of state policies not only toward the labor market but also toward family dependence (p. 12).

At the same time that she contests what constitutes a welfare regime, Pedersen also challenges the "classic" historical explanations for policy creation. Deeming traditional approaches "reductionist" and overly preoccupied with class and state structure, Pedersen recognizes that the policy sphere was a "crowded arena." In Britain and France, a variety of actors occupied this arena, including union activists, employers, civil servants, feminists, and Catholic leaders. These groups were committed to many visions—from pronatalism to trade unionism to socialism to feminism to militarism to labor control. In this way, by studying the interplay of different actors with alternative agendas, Pedersen constructs a more sophisticated understanding of the interests at stake in state reformation. While most accounts of state building see actors' interests in strictly material terms, Pedersen views them as multiple and conflicting; she recognizes that people have complex loyalties and identities that motivate them to act politically. Pedersen then sets out to trace these axes of mobilization and to connect them to different paths of welfare state development.

The result is a beautifully crafted and convincingly argued account of the rise of family policy in Britain and France. Pedersen's analysis skillfully illuminates the twists and turns of political alignments while maintaining a level of historical detail unparalleled in other accounts. Throughout her work, Pedersen remains attentive to how rhetorical and institutional contexts shaped the success of competing claims on the state. In Britain, Pedersen explicates the chasm between those in control of the rhetorical space and those with the capacity to institute policy. Beginning in the prewar period, British feminists entered the public debate about family allowances—framing them as a way to enhance

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women's rights, to endow motherhood, and to challenge gender hierarchies. To translate this rhetoric into state policy, feminists needed to build coalitions with the more powerful labor movement, that is, with trade unionists invested in protecting the family wage and the male breadwinner model. Because family allowances were equated with the radical demand for female autonomy, a discursive clash ensued. By the early 1920s, it was clear who had won the battle: Both the Trade Union Council and the Labour Party rejected allowance proposals due to the threat they posed to male privilege. Moreover, in the late 1920s, after feminists had recast their arguments and proposed child allowances, the Labour Party blocked them yet again. This time, labor's desire to protect the male wage was coupled with institutional interests. Since unions would not have controlled child allowances, they worried that such a policy would weaken their bargaining power and ability to press for higher wages. Backed by social scientific studies of the "normal" household headed by a male, Labor blocked proposals for child allowances. Hence, in Pedersen's origin story, British feminists won the rhetorical battle but lost the policy battle due to the male unions' gender interests and institutional strength.

In France, a different constellation of actors was involved in policy formulation from the onset. In prewar France, the relatively weak feminist movement exerted little influence on the public debate about state intervention into the family. Instead, right-wing pronatalists and Catholics usurped this rhetorical space, equating the family with the nation in an attempt to protect family hierarchies. Yet, in the post-war period, these conservative forces did not have the political means necessary to institute family policies. This was the work of a powerful government and business coalition interested in the rationalization of labor. By the 1920s, private industry developed child allowance schemes as a method of labor control. In particular, French employers used child allowances to achieve three goals: to stabilize and regulate the workforce by attaching benefits to social work interventions, to restrain wages by disaggregating the wage bill, and to expand their own authority by undermining labor unions. So while the rhetorical appeals of Catholics and pronatalists underlied French child allowances, employers instituted them. As in Britain, different groups controlled the discursive and institutional context. But in France, because they were rhetorically linked to the nation rather than to female emancipation, family benefits were less threatening to those with the political capacity to implement them.

In the final part of the book, Pedersen traces the long-term implications of these policy trajectories. Out of these divergent modes of state building came different logics of state intervention—logics which defined the terms of subsequent policy developments. When faced with a world-wide economic collapse in the 1930s, two distinct welfare states emerged. In Britain, the introduction of the Beveridge Plan solidified the male breadwinner model. That plan established Britain's first social insurance system along fully gendered lines, based on male maintenance and female dependence. It took the married couple

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as the unit of re/distribution, separating married women from other social groups and exempting them from compulsory insurance. Even when child allowances were finally created in the 1940s to curb child poverty, their small sum did little to bolster women's rights or economic independence. The French welfare state developed according to an entirely different logic. Its tradition of re/distributing benefits from the childless to families with children persisted and eventually evolved into a "parental" welfare state. Throughout the 1930s, there were campaigns to translate work-based provisions into a national family policy. While many groups struggled to define the terms of this new state intervention, the combined force of economic interests and family ideology won out yet again. French family policy was pioneered by business leaders eager to shift the economic burden onto the state and by pronatalists invested in the quantity and quality control of childrearing. In this way, Pedersen argues that the "intersecting and sometimes contradictory interests of organization, gender, culture, and class" underlay state development in both Britain and France.

Although never explicitly articulated, Pedersen's work adheres to a quite particular conception of the state. Throughout Pedersen's text, the state is portrayed as an entity around which social groups struggle to introduce their political visions. It is essentially a national-level policy apparatus that both interprets need and re/distributes resources. With this conception, Pcdersen is able to construct a complex story of how states are built by real rhetorical and institutional actors. She reveals that states are formed from the combined work of those who imagine and envision and those who hold the political clout and the institutional capacity to implement. Moreover, Pcdersen shows that the relationship between these actors is never simple or straightforward but depends on the degree to which their visions and interests converge, compete, or conflict. Unlike Sainsbury's regime model, which is equipped to analyze welfare states after they are constructed, Pedersen's framework problematizes the construction process itself. In doing so, it illuminates how state building is a complex political process, fraught with institutional and ideological struggle.

Pedersen's analysis not only views state formation as a process; it also conceives of gender as a socially constructed and imagined category. The alternative visions underlying British and French state formation encoded normative ideas about family life. They dictated what "appropriate" family responsibilities should look like. They helped define the social categories of gender; they gave meaning to parental, spousal, and work relations. In Britain, family roles were conceived of in dichotomous terms, according to the male breadwinner and his dependents. In France, the focus on the "parental" blurred this dichotomy. Yet even here state building was a gendered project guided by a feminized moral of reproduction and a masculinized project of labor control. Hence, by conceptualizing the state as a site of political struggle, Pedersen moves beyond a study of sexual differences in re/distributive patterns to trace the state's production of gendered meanings and norms.

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In this way, Pedersen's perspective on the state enables her to explore one key aspect of the relationship between the state and gender—how existing gender scripts and subtexts shaped the trajectory of state formation. Yet this conceptual lens obscures the opposite relation: How state policies inflected back to (re)pattern gender relations themselves. While Pedersen brilliantly explicates the competing visions of national-level political actors, she rarely connects them to women's interpretations of their needs. Thus, she avoids the thorny issue of women's interests in the state itself. At numerous points, Pedersen notes that neither British nor French women mobilized on their own behalf. This is not surprising: Large-scale political mobilization by recipients is the exception, not the rule. But this does not mean that women failed to advance their interests in other realms. Because of Pedersen's focus on political protest, she is blind to these other arenas of struggle. This omission is particularly glaring at several points in the narrative. For example, Pedersen analyzes the British labor movement's defense of the male breadwinner and the family wage as an outgrowth of men's interests. But what about women? We know that British feminists rejected these appeals, but we cannot assume that other women necessarily did. Similarly, Pedersen's discussion of French child allowances focuses on how they served employers' interest in labor control through home visits and interventions into workers' families. Yet as Pedersen notes, of the 45,120 Parisian households visited in 1932, only 2,000 (roughly 5 percent) were called on by employers (p. 274). The others were done at the request of women. With what intentions? With what outcomes? Such intervention may have served women's interests too. Exploring this possibility would add a new level of complexity to Pedersen's narrative. By ignoring it, Pedersen renders women too passive to contest or negotiate with the prevailing interpretations of their needs.

In addition to obscuring women's interests in welfare policies, Pedersen's analysis avoids the tricky terrain of gendered effects. While Pedersen's narrative explicates the causal link between the gendered subtexts of reformers' rhetorical appeals and the resulting policy structures, it fails to explore the causal link between these policy structures and concrete shifts in gender relations. In particular, Pedersen does not examine whether policy intentions had the desired effects, nor does she investigate whether policies were translated into concrete practices to shape power relations between women and men as parents, spouses, or lovers. In Britain, Pedersen more or less assumes a smooth translation by presuming that because the state dictated a male breadwinner model, British families simply followed suit. But did they? Were there any changes in domestic relations over this period? Did the British Married Women's Option or child allowances alter family roles in any way? In France, Pedersen skirts the issue by claiming that the French made "no consistent attempt to transform family structure or gender relations," and that those with discursive and political power were invested in other issues and had only an "opaque" agenda for gender relations (p. 357). But what about the 200,000

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home visits attached to child allowances? Or the 450 home economics courses organized per year in factories to "rationalize" the domestic lives of over 6,000 workers (p.275)? Were the gender agendas articulated in these concrete interactions as "opaque" as those in the larger political appeals? Did they attempt to alter familial relations? If so, were they successful?

As with Sainsbury, Pedersen's conceptual choices have empirical consequences. By conceiving of the state as a national site of political struggle, Pedersen illuminates how prevailing gender relations affect state building and interpretive work. At the same time, by limiting her analysis to political protest around the state, Pedersen misses the other side of the relationship, that is, how state policies return to reconfigure gender relations. Interestingly, it is in the work of feminists who operate with yet another conception of the state that we find a theorization of the mutual influence of state policies and gender relations.

THE WELFARE STATE AS A SITE OF POLICY FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

From the first page of *Gender and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, it is clear that Joanne Goodwin is developing an original approach to the welfare state. In the opening vignette, Goodwin juxtaposes the stories of two groups of women in the same city and in the same time period. The first is an account of the dilemmas faced by female reformers in turn-of-the-century Chicago. Emboldened by suffrage, these women faced new challenges as they tried to enter political spaces previously occupied by men. Theirs was a struggle to capitalize on the opportunities given to women after enfranchisement and to disrupt the remaining constraints on their political options. Yet in a different part of Chicago, another battle was underway. This was the struggle of Mrs. Capri, an Italian immigrant with five children and a husband who was too ill to support the family. Goodwin describes how Mrs. Capri struggled to pool resources from church and charity-run organizations. When Mrs. Capri's husband died in 1912, she received a mother's pension. Then, in 1913, her pension was abruptly revoked due to Mrs. Capri's immigrant status, leaving her without a claim to public aid. Goodwin's compelling book investigates the issues raised by these vignettes and traces how shifts in the boundaries of government, citizenship, work, and gender were encoded in one city's policy experiment, Chicago's mothers' pensions, from 1911–29.

Although the geographical and historical scope of Goodwin's work is more limited than that of Sainsbury or Pedersen, her conceptual lens is broader. Goodwin is concerned with the origins, implementation, and outcomes of mothers' pensions for diverse groups of women. She is also quite reflective about how her approach contributes to the existing feminist historiography. On the one hand, her study echoes other feminist arguments about the centrality of gender to the politics of mothers' pensions. Like Skocpol, Gordon, and Muncy, Goodwin interprets the politics surrounding mothers' pensions as contests over

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the meaning of the family, the roles of wives and mothers, and the feasibility of paid maternal service.[18] Yet while other accounts focus on the policy debate at the national level, Goodwin follows this policy back to the local level to examine its implementation. And unlike other accounts which take policy intentions at face value and thus view mothers' pensions as a payment to women to care for children, Goodwin's analysis traces the intricacies of allocation, in/eligibility requirements, and re/distributive patterns. In doing so, Goodwin reveals that mothers' pensions served more as a wage subsidy than a payment for maternal service. Imbued with ideas about self-sufficiency and support, mothers' pensions were less of an experiment in paid motherhood and more of a means to put women in the paid labor force. Hence, by connecting the national policy debate with concrete re/distributive practices, Goodwin renders a new interpretation of Chicago's mothers' pension program.

As it develops, Goodwin's historical narrative becomes increasingly localized. Goodwin begins with an analysis of the cacophony of voices involved in the national debate on "dependent motherhood" in the Progressive Era. Her account gives voice to the usual cast of discursive characters, as well as some new ones. We hear the appeals of "child savers" preoccupied with eliminating poverty and vice in order to socialize "good" citizens. We hear the voices of maternalists, invested in raising the "standards" of childrearing and elevating the maternal through payments to poor women. When we listen closely, we can also discern the voices of feminists who were concerned with bolstering female economic independence and ameliorating female poverty. Quite often, these feminists spoke in unison with socialists to push for maternal endowments as a way to remunerate care work and to protect the impoverished. Of course, resounding throughout the period were the less-sympathetic voices of social insurance advocates. Engaged in their own battle for workman's compensation, these advocates found threatening proposals to remunerate motherhood. Amidst all of these voices, Goodwin draws attention to the arguments of African-American groups for community work and the interrelationship among care work, wage labor, and equality. She also gives voice to poor women themselves: Through their letters, Goodwin reveals the difficulties they had in balancing work and family in adverse material conditions. In sum, Goodwin claims there was general agreement that something had to be done to assist "dependent" mothers but that there was no consensus about what assistance should look like. Should it be universal, targeted, or wage related? Should it be aimed at children, mothers, or families?

While these questions remained unanswered at the national level, Goodwin uncovers how they unfolded at the local level. Here, Goodwin's narrative takes its first localizing move by illuminating how the political battles over mothers'

[18] Skocpol, *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers;* Gordon, *Pitied But Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare;* and Muncy, *Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890–1935.*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417598001728 Published online by Cambridge University Press

pensions transpired at the county level, within the context of preexisting institutions and systems of public aid. In Chicago, there was a complex network of urban services for the poor, including benefits distributed through the juvenile court, hospitals, the poorhouse, and poor-relief centers. The operation of these services was highly gendered: Men received assistance based on labor-force participation and assumptions of self-sufficiency, while women's eligibility rested on their caretaking and wage-earning capabilities (although this was highly mediated by race and ethnicity). Advocates for mothers' pensions had to contend with this policy apparatus as they advanced their arguments for pensions. According to Goodwin, in Chicago much of this rhetorical work was carried out by three women: Julia Lathrop, Sophonisba Breckinridge, and Edith Abbott. Through their social research and work in settlement houses, schools of social work, and government committees, these women sought to build an enlarged, activist state. In doing so, they developed new rationales for mothers' pensions: They framed pensions as compensation for motherhood and as a way to eliminate poverty. Their arguments were victorious in 1911 when the Illinois Fund to Parents Bill passed the state legislature. The bill provided public funds to impoverished families, set a minimum standard of living, and proposed cash benefits (as opposed to benefits-in-kind) to help families meet this standard.

According to Goodwin, the real political battles ensued after mothers' pensions had been passed, and these were organizational struggles which proved more formidable than the previous rhetorical contests. There were three moments to this struggle. First, Goodwin describes early local-level fights between county administrators and the juvenile court over administrative and fiscal control. This battle ended with new restrictions placed on pensions, so that in 1913, mothers' pensions were made available only to widows and the wives of permanently disabled men. This narrowing of eligibility cut approximately 16 percent of the women from support because they were either divorced or deserted (p. 128). Following this, there was a battle over who would implement the mothers' pension program—whether it would be local administrators tied to political parties or a new cadre of trained social workers. Eventually, the latter group wrestled control of pensions from poor-relief offices, but only after new work requirements and behavior standards had been inserted into the policy. Finally, after this "reactionary" phase of implementation, Goodwin argues that women's groups and "social justice" feminists mobilized to recapture some of the policy's early elements. They extended eligibility to include women who had been deserted for more than two years, expanded the program to encompass immigrant women with citizenship papers, and introduced a tax-based system of financing. Hence, the outcomes of these organizational and political struggles were mixed. While supporters of mothers' pensions extended public resources to female-headed households, these resources never stretched beyond partial wage subsidies. And while supporters created a new bureaucratic net-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0010417598001728 Published online by Cambridge University Press

work of social workers, they never freed mothers' pensions from an ethos of self-support to make them a remuneration for maternal labor.

Unlike most other historiographies, Goodwin's analysis is not limited to the political forces that shaped mothers' pensions. Instead, her narrative takes a final localizing turn to reveal how "the politics of welfare reform left a clear imprint on the families with its emphasis on self-support" (p.155). To do this, Goodwin investigates the concrete allocative practices associated with mothers' pensions. Importantly, she uncovers a disjuncture between the reformers' maternalist appeals and re/distributive practices on the ground. At the level of practice, an ethos of self-sufficiency displaced the language of maternal entitlement. This ethos permeated all aspects of benefit allocation. Goodwin shows how juvenile court officials and social workers assessed applicants according to their family size, home conditions, material resources, and wage-earning capabilities. Interestingly, the primary grounds for denying applicants aid were economic: Some 49 percent of those denied were said to be economically secure; 37 percent were deemed legally ineligible; while only 4 percent were denied on "moral" grounds (p. 167). Moreover, pension recipients were continually regulated. Social workers pressured able-bodied recipients to work and forced all others to gain employment as soon as they were physically able. Similar criteria were used to revoke pensions. Of those pensions revoked in the post-1915 period, only 12 percent were revoked on "moral" or "behavioral" grounds, while 80 percent were rejected on legal and economic grounds (p.167–8). Hence, Goodwin argues that, in practice, mothers' pensions were not primarily about valuing the maternal. Instead, they were aimed at policing self-sufficiency, personal accountability, and the family's responsibility to produce income. Recipients' ability to earn, rather than their maternal capabilities, underlay this policy and shaped women's access to public benefits.

This reinterpretation of mothers' pensions is Goodwin's most original and provocative argument. Importantly, she did not reach this interpretation by simply re-reading the political appeals of reformers and activists of the period. Rather, Goodwin came to this argument by studying the welfare state as a multi-faceted entity with both national and local embodiments. Like Pedersen, Goodwin views the state as layered with competing and conflicting interests. But Goodwin goes further than Pedersen to connect national-level struggles with county-level organizational and political battles. In this way, Goodwin is far more attentive to the processes through which state policies are translated into actual state practices. Goodwin resists the temptation to take reformers' political intentions at face value, a resistance which enables her to unearth the profound transformation that mothers' pensions underwent by the time they reached recipients. So although Goodwin's analysis is more geographically and historically limited than Sainsbury's or Pedersen's, it adheres to a broader, more encompassing conception of state development.

With this broad conception of the welfare state, Goodwin provides a more complex and nuanced account of the gender interests underlying these policy

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battles. Throughout her analysis, Goodwin is careful not to take gender interests as given—just the opposite. Her narrative traces how mothers' pensions were a panacea for various groups with different gender interests and agendas. Goodwin also shows how the interpretive battles between women were often as acute as those between women and men. Female reformers' interests in mothers' pensions ran the gamut, ranging from a commitment to women's empowerment to a desire for social control to a means to secure professional and political authority. Social workers, most of whom were women, had their own set of professional needs, values, and ideological commitments that shaped their relationship to mothers' pensions. Finally, pensioned women also had their own interests in the program. These ranged from ameliorating poverty to balancing work and family to improving their position in the paid labor force. As Goodwin's narrative becomes increasingly localized, it captures how all of these different interests collided in the formation and development of mothers' pensions.

Moreover, Goodwin's focus on policy formation and implementation fosters the kind of detailed gender analysis missing from Sainsbury's and Pedersen's work. In particular, Goodwin shows how mothers' pensions shaped, and were shaped by, the prevailing gender regime. On the one hand, she is quite sensitive to the power relations embedded in the program's re/distributive practices. She illuminates how these battles over power were contests over social definitions of gender, that is, struggles to define the social categories of mother, father, wife, husband, and worker. Caseworker and client negotiations over who should receive state funds were essentially negotiations over public expectations for women and men. Were wives to work? Which ones? For how long? Were mothers expected to produce income? Which ones7 How much? And were women to be "self-sufficient" workers just like men? At the same time, Goodwin's analysis reveals that the ultimate answers to such questions had concrete effects on existing gender relations. They shaped women's public positions and access to paid labor. And they left an imprint on family life. By steering family behavior in certain directions, state practices altered the dynamics between women and men in the domestic realm. In this way, Goodwin's gender analysis is strongest where Sainsbury's and Pedersen's are weakest. Instead of limiting her analysis to ideological appeals or material outputs, Goodwin probes into how social policies influence power relations between women in public exchanges and between women and men in their domestic lives.

The conceptual and empirical contributions of Goodwin's approach come with one major drawback. While Goodwin presents a compelling argument about the construction and implementation of mothers' pensions in Chicago, it is not entirely clear whether her argument is generalizable. Like other studies of local welfare practices, Goodwin's analysis seems case specific.[19] After it takes a series of localizing moves, her narrative does not end with a larger dis-

[19] For examples of other local studies of welfare practices, see Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The History and Politics of Family Violence* (Viking, 1988); and Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work, 1890–1945.*

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cussion of the relationship between policy formulation and implementation. In the absence of such a discussion, the reader is left with a number of unanswered questions. While the original intentions of Chicago mothers' pensions may have been subverted, was this due to the design of this specific policy or the politics of reform in this specific locale? Were mothers' pensions particularly vulnerable to such subversion? Did the structure of pensions make them open to a recasting by caseworkers? Or was there something particular about the organizational structure of Chicago social provisions that left this program more prone to reinterpretation? For example, did caseworkers exert more power over policy outcomes in Chicago, given the city's influential settlement house movement and reform tradition? In this way, Goodwin's analysis is weakest where Sainsbury's and Pedersen's are strongest. By avoiding comparative issues, Goodwin leaves readers unable to assess whether the policy patterns and gender relations unearthed in Chicago prevailed in other locales in the United States or other national contexts.

Clearly, feminist state scholars cannot be expected to operate on all analytical levels or to encompass all types of gender relations in their analyses. And the point of this essay has not been to fault these three authors for presenting partial accounts of gender and the welfare state. Instead, my goal was conceptual; my intention was to draw out the empirical consequences of feminists' theoretical choices and to show that particular conceptions of the state foster different kinds of gender analyses. While regime analysts like Sainsbury offer elaborate conceptions of the welfare state as a constellation of policies, eligibility principles, and entitlement claims, their understandings of gender relations are limited. Because they tend to reduce gender to re/distributive differences between women and men, regime analysts are often ill-equipped to explore how states shape, and are shaped by, a multiplicity of gender relations. This contrasts to studies like Pedersen's, which conceptualize the state as a national site of political struggle. Historiographies like these provide excellent accounts of how existing gender relations shape state trajectories and how state formation involves the deployment of gendered scripts and visions. Yet this focus on national political battles tends to blind these analysts to how state policies alter gender relations and dis/arm women and men in their everyday battles. For such an analysis of gendered effects, local-level studies like Goodwin's are particularly useful. By examining policy formation and implementation, local analyses can address both sides of the relationship between state policies and gender relations, that is, how gender relations inform policy development and how policies leave their imprint on gender relations. But local studies also have their limitations: They tend to be case-specific and not entirely generalizable to other local or national contexts.

Given that all of these feminist approaches to the welfare state illuminate and obscure key relations of gender, it may be time for feminists to devote more attention to the conceptual underpinnings of their analyses. On the one hand, this

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would imply that feminists might become a bit more reflective about their conceptualizations of the state and the possibilities and limitations of these conceptualizations. Yet it would also imply an appreciation of the insights provided by other approaches to the state. Feminist regime analyses could become more sophisticated if they include findings on the interplay of gender relations and social policy found in national and local studies; these findings could be used to inform larger regime typologies and classifications. Similarly, feminist historiographies of policy implementation could become generalizable if framed around comparable categories, so that regime classifications could be used to situate their national and local findings. In short, more dialogue among feminist welfare state scholars could foster a fuller understanding of the complex, multi-faceted relationship between state structures and gender relations.

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