

Class Divisions among Women*

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By exploring how gender norms and material interests vary between women in different classes, this article highlights interactions between class and gender that mitigate against the mobilization of political support for activist family policies in the United States. Ironically, while educated women in professional and managerial jobs are ideologically most favorable toward the dual earner/dual carer model, it is not in their economic interest for the state to make it happen. Scandinavian-style interventions would impose costs on relatively privileged women in their role as child care consumers. There is also reason to believe that these interventions would indirectly undermine their labor market attainments.

Keywords: class; gender; family policy

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Women have both shared and divided interests. In the United States, this truism was forcefully brought home at the peak of second-wave feminism by African American dissidents who criticized the movements of predominantly white and middle-class leaders and activists for imposing their own assumptions, values, and interests. Since then, scholars working on gender have internalized the reality of pluralism among women, and today they often enshrine it in the concept of intersectionality between gender and other cleavages.¹ As one indication of this, an online search of Google Books in April 2008 yielded more than twelve hundred volumes that include all three of the words *gender*, *race*, and *class* in their titles. This article focuses on the gender–class couplet. I argue that attending to potentially divisive class differences is essential for understanding the benefits and burdens for women of different ways of combining work and motherhood. Feminist perspectives on the intersection between class and gender have yielded important insights but have concentrated on how gender inequality contributes to class inequality and how class subordination oppresses women. Less commonly discussed is interaction between class and gender in the sense that the implications of gender are conditional on class.² Here, I highlight precisely this type of interaction by exploring how gender norms and interests vary between women in different classes.

The context for this discussion is the political conditions for realizing Gornick and Meyers's vision of a gender-egalitarian and family-friendly society.³ My substantive focus is on two of their most important proposals for federal government intervention: universal public child care and paid parental leave. I seek to demonstrate with respect to these reforms that in the United States, both women's normative orientations and their economic interests are divided along class lines. In relation to values, public opinion data show that the majority of women from all class backgrounds reject the male-breadwinner model of gender roles in the family. At the same time, the distribution of opinion reveals systematic differences in the ideals supported by women from different educational and occupational classes. Gornick and Meyers's proposals are most consistent with the orientations of relatively privileged women. I will go on to argue that there is an even clearer class division when it comes to the costs and benefits for women of different approaches to reconciling motherhood and paid employment. This discussion relates to both the interests of women as child care consumers and the indirect effects of work/family policies on their labor market attainments.

When variations across classes in ideals and interests are juxtaposed, the result is ironic. Class differences in moral economy (norms) are inconsistent with class differences in political economy (the costs and benefits of policies intended to support maternal employment). While educated women in professional and managerial jobs appear to be the most favorable toward the dual earner/dual carer model, it is not in their economic interest for the state to take responsibility for making it happen. I infer that even though relatively privileged

women may strongly support the goals underlying Gornick and Meyers's program, they are unlikely to mobilize their superior political capabilities to push this program forward. As a result, class differences and tensions among women are an unacknowledged barrier on the road to a dual earner/dual carer society.

THE MORAL ECONOMY OF GENDER

If there are significant class differences in values and orientations toward work, the family, and how best to balance these two spheres, then a "one-size-fits-all" approach to work/family reconciliation may be inappropriate. Gornick and Meyers's ideal of a dual earner/dual carer society presumes that both caring for children and being employed outside the home are important to mothers, and that to reconcile conflicting demands, it is preferable that fathers rather than mothers adjust by doing less paid work and taking on more domestic work. Many highly educated, career-oriented American women probably share this view. But what if lower-class women do not aspire to and cannot realistically expect self-fulfilling careers,⁴ and what if, in addition, they (and their husbands) value women's care responsibilities at home more highly than their paid work outside? In that case, Gornick and Meyers's policy package conflicts with these women's preferences, which would be better served by "familializing" interventions aimed at raising the income of male breadwinners or subsidizing mothers who stay at home with their children.

There is a sizable survey-based literature on gender role ideologies. This literature addresses both the rise of egalitarianism over time and its variation across countries.⁵ Analyzing data from the ISSP (International Social Survey Program) from 2002, Svallfors has demonstrated the prevalence of class differences in orientations toward both family and work in diverse Western societies, including the United States.⁶ Examining variations in an index of support for women working outside the home and defining classes by occupation, Svallfors finds that in all the countries he studied, among both men and women "the working class consistently displays more conservative attitudes than the service class."⁷ Class differences were, however, lower in the United States and Britain than in Europe.⁸

The General Social Survey (GSS) is a frequently utilized source for quantitative research on gender-role attitudes in the United States.⁹ However, research in this mode has not sought to explicitly identify class differences. A study by Harris and Firestone indirectly addressed this issue, finding that of a wide range of other determinants, education strongly affected an index of gender egalitarianism. However, no differences were detected between broad occupational groups.¹⁰ Making different methodological choices, I do find such differences. My analysis looks directly at class effects, viewed both as the resources that individuals bring to the labor market (education) and their locations in the division of labor (occupational groups). This is preferable to the standard procedure of testing the impact of multiple and partially overlapping socioeconomic attributes in an additive,

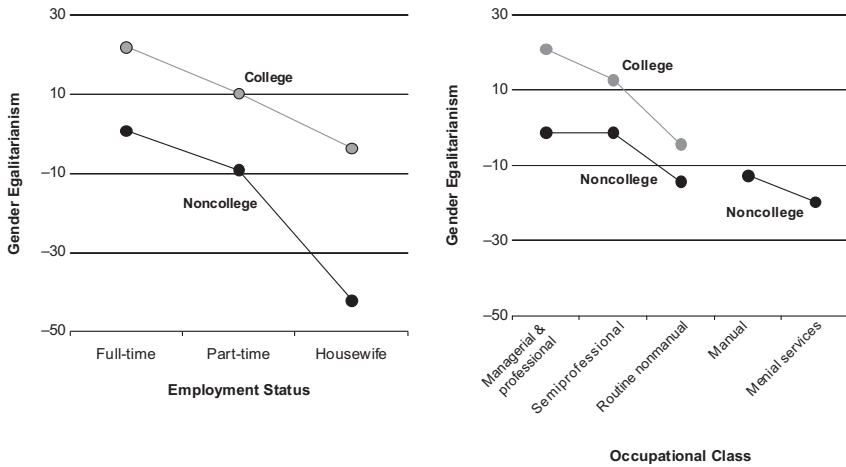


Figure 1. Effects of education, employment status, and class on gender egalitarianism.

Source: General Social Survey, pooled sample 1994–2004 (effective n approximately 800–850).

Note: Gender egalitarianism (shown on the vertical axis) is measured as the absolute difference between the percentage who strongly disagreed and the percentage who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.” The analysis refers to married women aged twenty to fifty-five living with their spouses and children. Immigrants, students, and retired women were excluded.

overspecified regression model. Rather than relying on statistical controls to cope with limited sample sizes, I have pooled GSS surveys for the whole of the latest available decade. This makes it possible to analyze only those respondents who represent the target audience of Gornick and Meyers’s proposals: married women of prime working age living with their spouses and children.

Turning now to the dependent variables rather than potentially clouding the meaning of the attitudes analyzed by combining answers to different questions, I look at responses to a single but classic evocation of traditional gender roles: “it is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.” The four alternative responses offered were very unevenly distributed in my sample. Conservative choices attracted only a minority: 8 percent “strongly agree” and 20 percent “agree.” Egalitarian choices dominated: “disagree” (50 percent) and “strongly disagree” (22 percent). Even when the sample was segmented in various ways, a large bloc of respondents routinely chose the disagree options. To accentuate the remaining variance, I have defined the gender egalitarianism of any group as the absolute difference between the proportion expressing strong disagreement and those expressing any agreement (strong or not) with the traditionalist position. The results displayed in Figure 1 show that this simple indicator reveals substantial class differences.

The first chart indicates that that employment status and education have both additive and interactive effects on gender egalitarianism. Based on their activity in the week of the survey, women who work are more egalitarian than those who do not, and among working women, full-timers are more egalitarian than part-timers. Among all three groups, college-educated women are more likely to choose egalitarian answers, with the difference being especially marked among housewives. The second chart examines only women in paid employment, who are grouped by broad occupational classes similar to those identified in the EGP schema.¹¹ If the two working-class categories are combined, the women in this sample are distributed fairly equally between the resulting four broad classes.¹² Because of this diversity in women's class locations, it matters that their attitudes vary distinctly by class. The chart also shows the effect of educational differences among white-collar workers. A college education is associated with significantly more egalitarian values, with the size of the education effect rising as we go up the hierarchy of occupational classes.

Although evidence of class differences in the gender ideologies of married mothers is thus quite strong, we cannot be certain which way the causal arrow runs. It is conceivable that instead of their outlooks being molded by their class circumstances, women choose their education and employment trajectories in an individualistic manner on the basis of a priori preferences. This atomistic and voluntaristic view of women's aspirations has been most vigorously advocated by British sociologist Catherine Hakim. In her words, in "rich modern societies," work/family balance is "just one of the lifestyle choices open to . . . all social class and income groups."¹³ I agree with Hakim's two main empirical claims: that women do not all have the same preferences regarding work and family and that many of them are ambivalent and "adaptive." However, I also agree with critics who have insisted that preferences are constrained by opportunity structures and conditioned by cultural context.¹⁴

In sum, both theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence oblige us to recognize class differences among women in their commitment to gender-equal work and family roles. This, in turn, raises questions concerning Gornick and Meyers's implicit assumption that their program is appropriate for women as a whole. The implications will be taken up in the concluding section of the article. At this point, our empirical focus moves from orientations and values to political economy. The question now is, Who gains and who loses from present arrangements for work/family reconciliation in comparison with the arrangements that Gornick and Meyers propose?

DISTRIBUTIONAL EFFECTS OF FAMILY POLICIES

The blueprint for reform drawn up by Gornick and Meyers refers to two different types of policies. One of them is government regulation of working hours

designed to facilitate more equal parental responsibility. However, I focus here on Gornick and Meyers's proposals for radical innovation in family policy: public provision of free or heavily subsidized child care and early education made available to all parents who want it and the right to various forms of publicly financed parental leave at high replacement rates for fathers as well as mothers.

Any policy innovation that would alter the balance between private and public responsibility or redistribute income inevitably implies conflicts of interest between classes. Since Gornick and Meyers's program explicitly includes both of these elements, it acutely raises the question of *cui bono* (who benefits). To answer this question, it is necessary to consider two separate issues: the availability and cost of leave and care services under the present market-based systems, and how the alternative state-sponsored system would be financed.

In discussing family policy reforms, Gornick and Meyers emphasize that reforms would entail multiple types of redistribution, including from parents to nonparents and between families with younger and older children (e.g., p. 14).¹⁵ Insofar as they do discuss the possibility of vertical redistribution between classes, they frame it as a solution to problems of equity and justice. Under America's privatized system, they argue that only "the most privileged families" (p. 22)—those with high incomes and superior job-based parental benefits—have assured access to essential mechanisms of work/family reconciliation. Because "market-based solutions have been calamitous for many American parents and children" (p. 141), a public system based on progressive financing is considered essential (see also pp. 139, 144, 232–34).

Perhaps to mobilize sympathy for their program, Gornick and Meyers draw attention to the burdens that current American work/family practices place on mothers and families with limited resources rather than their beneficial consequences for advantaged women and their families, who are presented as a privileged elite. Gornick and Meyers also fail to acknowledge the radical distributional implications of the mechanisms they propose for financing new family policies. They advocate paying for child care from general revenues, possibly supplemented by co-payments, while parental-leave programs would be paid for by a combination of general and social security taxes. Clearly then, progressive income taxes would be the major source of revenue. Under current political circumstances, this could be expected to meet resistance from middle-income families. Even stronger opposition would emanate from the rich and their allies, who so successfully led the rollback of progressive taxation in the United States.¹⁶

What are the distributional implications of the work/family arrangements currently in place? Beginning with parental leave, these policies are of course a far cry from the publicly financed federal schemes and high replacement rates that Gornick and Meyers advocate. Under prevailing conditions in the United States, leave is a discretionary employee benefit that is granted almost exclusively to women. Clearly, employers only have an incentive to finance

leave for workers who are difficult or costly to replace. This assures built-in advantages for the privileged that Gornick and Meyers are anxious to neutralize by moving to a publicly financed system (p. 139). Supporting their and my assumption of class bias, the most recent available data from the Census Bureau indicate that while a sizable majority (close to 60 percent) of first-time mothers with a college degree utilize some form of paid maternity leave, the proportion declines sharply at lower levels of education, reaching only 18 percent among those without a high school diploma.¹⁷

Richer quantitative evidence is available for child care patterns. Reports by the Urban Institute, based on large-scale national surveys of families carried out in 1997 and 1999, reveal that for children under three, care arrangements differ substantially between families with higher and lower incomes (the dividing line was twice the federal poverty line). Lower-income families and women with low education are primarily dependent on family members to look after infants and toddlers while mothers are at work, whereas the majority of higher-income households and college-educated mothers utilize paid child care.¹⁸ Among families with a child under thirteen that did purchase care, the dollar cost is about 50 percent higher for higher-income families. However, this represents only half the proportion of their household income (7 percent vs. 14 percent).¹⁹

Caution is needed in interpreting unqualified findings such as these since comparisons might be complicated by class differences in potentially confounding factors, including family structure (differing rates of fertility and single parenthood), the quantity and quality of care received, and the effects of government aid.²⁰ To deal with some of these issues, I have analyzed the cost of care using a carefully targeted sample drawn from a small but high-quality data set, the *National Study of the Changing Workforce*.²¹ The results presented in Figure 2 confirm that the burden on working mothers who are married with children and purchase preschool child care is closely related to how much they personally earn. The average cost is equivalent to a hefty one-third of the gross earnings of women in the bottom tertile, and the box plot indicates that a quarter of this group spend at least half of their income on child care. In contrast, the child care burden for women in the middle and top tertiles is only 17 percent and 13 percent, respectively.

The role of government complicates the story. Since the computations reported in Figure 2 are based on pretax earnings, they understate the burden on middle- and upper-income women. However, some of the tax bite on these women's gross earnings is offset by credits for private child care expenses. On the other hand, the position of low-income households would be even worse if it were not for the existence of means-tested subsidies and free preschool programs. A detailed survey carried out in New York by Durfee and Meyers revealed that fully half of all families with preschool children and working mothers received one or another form of government assistance, valued at an

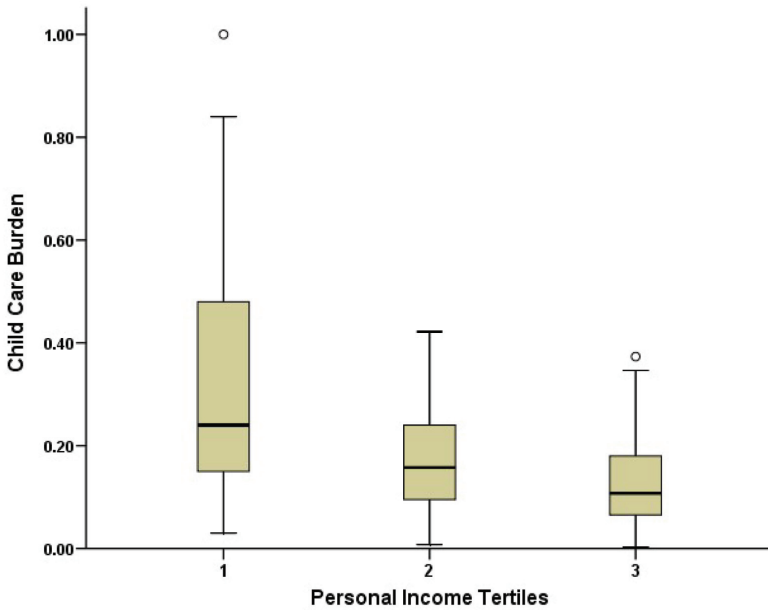


Figure 2. The economic burden of paid child care on working mothers.

Source: National Study of the Changing Workforce 2002 (interviews in 2002–2003, earnings in 2001–2002).

Note: The vertical axis shows child care expenses as a proportion of gross personal income. The horizontal axis shows tertiles (thirds) of gross personal income. The analysis refers to married working mothers (excluding immigrants) with preschool children who use paid care; $n = 116$.

average of \$4,000 per recipient family.²² However, notwithstanding the fact that the role of government is apparently far more significant than studies of U.S. family policy have previously acknowledged,²³ there is little evidence that it countervails market-based inequalities. Despite the emphasis on targeting in preschool and subsidy programs, not all of the criteria used are financial, and take-up of means-tested programs is far from complete.²⁴ In addition, tax credits are by nature regressive. As a result, Durfee and Meyers conclude that overall the system is only weakly redistributive, if at all.

To summarize, from a financial perspective, more advantaged families fare relatively well under the present systems of parental leave and child care. In contrast, the alternatives advocated by Gornick and Meyers would enlarge the scope of progressive taxation, which is certainly not in the economic interest of the advantaged. The evidence shows that the cost of child care is relatively modest for middle- and, especially, upper-income women.²⁵ Higher-class parents not only have the means to purchase high-quality substitute care but are able to obtain this care by shouldering a smaller economic burden than lower-class

parents. An important reason for this is the relatively low cost of private care due to the ready availability in the United States of low-paid, unqualified, and often noncitizen female care workers. However, affordability is not the only factor with a class bias. Parents with a class advantage also have a strong interest in treating superior childhood care and early education as investments in their children's future ability to reproduce that advantage.

We turn now to the third and final substantive section of the article, which considers the likely effects of Gornick and Meyers's policy recommendations on the wages and occupational attainments of working women and how these can be expected to differ along class lines.

THE CLASSING OF LABOR MARKET EFFECTS

To promote convergence in the work and family roles of mothers and fathers, Gornick and Meyers deliberately steer clear of measures that aim only to make it easier for women to perform their traditional roles while attached to the labor market. Instead, they opt for policies designed to encourage parents to equally share both paid work and unpaid care responsibilities. While even Sweden has not implemented such a far-reaching agenda, I believe that much can be learned by treating the Swedish experience with family policy as a counterfactual guide to the likely consequences of adopting Gornick and Meyers's proposals in the United States. Two different arguments may be invoked in support of this strategy. One is that Gornick and Meyers may be unduly optimistic concerning the scope for changing men's behavior through social engineering. The most radical dual carer policy experiment attempted in Sweden, the introduction of earmarked paternal leave for men, has not succeeded in significantly reducing women's maternal responsibilities and has also run into serious political limits.²⁶ A less controversial justification for regarding Sweden as a valid counterfactual is that even though dual earning/dual caring is the ideal embraced by Gornick and Meyers, their work can also be read as a plea to American policy makers to emulate enlightened Nordic policies. My claim is that this would run counter to the interests of women with the highest potential labor market attainments.

A growing literature on the effects of family policies, especially in Scandinavia, suggests that measures that facilitate women's employment also exacerbate occupational sex segregation and widen the gender wage gap.²⁷ However, in this respect, there may be an important difference between the two policy instruments on which this article focuses. As Estevez-Abe has pointed out, "statutory leaves and public child care provision are both intended to promote women's employment. They nonetheless differ on a dimension that is critical for women's human capital development: Paid leaves *increase* women's time off work, and extensive child care provision *reduces* it."²⁸ Accordingly, provided that it is in synch with parents' work schedules, Estevez-Abe and others

consider public child care to be a gender-neutral policy so far as the labor market is concerned. This is not the case for reconciliation policies that free mothers from work obligations to take care of newborn children and meet other family needs. Arrangements that make it easier for them to interrupt their work more frequently than men discourage employers from hiring women. In turn, this discourages women from preparing themselves for careers in which they face strong competition from men.

The purpose of the Sweden–United States comparison that follows is not, however, simply to reiterate that developed work/family reconciliation policies have perverse unintended consequences for women's attainments. Instead, my argument centers once again on class differences. Specifically, I claim that state interventions considered to be mother friendly have deleterious consequences for the labor market attainments of relatively higher-class women, while benefiting relatively lower-class women. Consequently, the implicit class conflict between more and less advantaged women that the previous section identified in relation to their interests as consumers of child care services also applies to their interests as employees. The remainder of this section seeks to make this case, first by identifying the causal mechanisms involved and then by comparing actual outcomes in the United States and Sweden to see whether they are consistent with theoretical expectations.

When the state intervenes to ease conflicts between women's roles at home and work, this makes it possible for them to avoid career tracks that strain their obligations as wives and mothers. The result is that women effectively self-select into lower-paying jobs.²⁹ In contrast, when women lack the cushioning provided by reconciliation policies (including child care), they come under pressure to adjust their traditional household responsibilities to employer and career demands. In the American context, this adjustment is most readily made by purchasing private child-minding and housework services and outsourcing other domestic tasks. The critical point here is that for both economic and cultural reasons, the likelihood of such adjustments increases as we go up the class ladder. In contrast, in the Scandinavian context, women with a relatively high earnings potential have difficulty purchasing market-based services as substitutes for their unpaid work in the home.³⁰ The reason is that the Nordic social democracies have been leaders in social protection (decommodification) as well as family policy (defamilialization), and this has impeded the development of a low-wage private service sector.³¹ Indeed, despite a rising tide of immigration, Swedish conditions are almost the mirror image of those in the United States, where a largely unregulated and nonunion labor market coexists with a sizable supply of socially and politically marginal labor (immigrants and minorities).

At the same time, family policy in Sweden has mainly sought to steer a middle way between gender traditionalism and full-blown defamilialization.³² The limits are primarily felt by women in higher-class positions. Public day care

cannot meet the needs of those required to work outside standard hours. Mothers are expected and assisted to absent themselves from work when family members are sick or otherwise temporarily in need of care. Parental leave preserves new mothers' jobs and replaces their incomes but at the cost of missed wage increases and promotions for professional women.³³

In addition to the effects of work/family reconciliation measures on employer and employee calculations, another factor integral to the Scandinavian welfare state model is the extensive role of the welfare state as an employer.³⁴ In liberal political economies, women are concentrated in private sector services, while in the social-democratic regime, they specialize in providing public social services. Socialization of child care—and its cousin, unacknowledged by Gornick and Meyers, socialized elder care—adds considerably to the public sector workforce in Scandinavia. This workforce tends to be composed mainly of women, partly as a result of the sex typing of care occupations but also because of the public sector's relative friendliness to mothers.³⁵ There is actually a double payoff for women with low earnings potential. Not only are they provided jobs that ease work/family conflicts that might otherwise have made it uneconomic for them to work. They also suffer less from low pay and gender discrimination in the public than the private sector.³⁶ Governments are large, law-abiding, and politically sensitive employers. The public sector tends to be unionized, and its wages are usually determined in a centralized fashion and administered bureaucratically. The result is a comparatively high wage floor and compressed wage differentials, benefiting women in low-skill care services such as minding children and the elderly.

An additional implication of public sector conditions is, however, that earnings ceilings tend to be lower than in the private sector. Consistent with this, a seven-country study by Gornick and Jacobs found that the public sector wage premium declines as income rises.³⁷ In principle, this affects both men and women, but the implications depend on the extent to which the sectoral boundary is gendered. Where there is a large public social service sector, as in Sweden, this has supply-side effects that are similar to reconciliation policies. Women—even those with high potential occupational and earnings attainments—are encouraged to opt for working conditions convenient to mothers. Consequently, extended public sectors employ the majority of women working in managerial and professional occupations. Unaffected by similar considerations, men in these occupations flock to the better-paying heights of the private sector, where it is possible to extract handsome “rents.”³⁸ Once more, the very same conditions that benefit women with lesser skills and in lower class occupations also constrain the likelihood of high-end women competing for the most powerful and lucrative positions.

Not only women workers but also their actual and potential employers are influenced by the family-policy environment. Child care services, joint taxation,

and other incentives that should be transparent to employers encourage Swedish women to return to work after giving birth. However, this adjustment is also accomplished with the help of arrangements such as maternal leave and part-time employment, which may be more problematic for women's careers. Employers can be expected to practice statistical discrimination against women in anticipation of their collective rights to shorter hours and discontinuous employment.³⁹ To the extent that employer discrimination is based on a rational-economic calculus, it should be most severe in relation to jobs that require the most expertise and responsibility and offer the highest pay. Here, we can expect to find the greatest reluctance to hire women or, alternatively, a tendency for employers to compensate themselves by paying women less than men. Following this logic, Albrecht and her colleagues have argued that it is probably because family policy weakens the intensity of women's work activity that the gender wage gap in Sweden increases throughout the wage distribution and is widest at the top.⁴⁰

An additional approach to understanding discrimination against women by cost-conscious employers has been suggested in the literature on varieties of capitalism. Employer sensitivity is said to be greatest in "coordinated" economies where employers rely heavily on skills and methods of training that are specific to a particular firm or industry. Women's lesser commitment to employment continuity makes them especially unattractive to firms anxious to recoup their investments in specific skills training and fearful of losing employees that are hard to replace.⁴¹ Modifying this expectation from a class perspective, it can be argued that the risks attached to skill specificity should be greatest in relation to employees with the highest skill level.⁴² If this is true, Sweden's skills regime may compound the problem of blocked mobility for higher-class women above and beyond the effects of its family policy regime. In that case, part of the gap between Sweden and the United States in women's attainments in private sector employment may derive from Sweden's specific-skills regime rather than from the unintended consequences of family policies. I do not believe this is a serious problem, however, since the skill requirements for managers and professionals (where blocked mobility is greatest) are likely to be quite similar across different economies.⁴³

Summing up, the effects of both reconciliation policies and the role of the public care services as an employer of women are "classed." Due to mechanisms of self-selection by women workers and statistical discrimination by employers, policies that make it easier for women to combine household responsibilities with paid employment can be expected to have largely benign effects on the careers of lower-class women while indirectly hampering the occupational and earnings mobility of higher-class women. In the Swedish welfare model, social rights for mothers go hand in hand with extensive public social services that are partly the result of the state's defamilialization of child and elder care. The state as an employer tends to pay lower-class workers more

generously and higher-class workers less generously than private employers. It follows that Gornick and Meyers's proposal for families' care needs to be serviced by the state, and some of the reconciliation policies that they advocate, would most probably undermine the labor market attainments of higher-class women if they were introduced in the United States.

I now present selected empirical data, which verifies that the occupational and wage attainments of women in the United States and Sweden are conditional on class position. The results are consistent with my claim that under Swedish conditions, American women in higher classes would likely be worse off and in lower classes better off. Rather than comparing the entire class structure, the analysis is based on two occupational classes—managers at the top and “menial services workers” at the bottom. The latter category has been described as the postindustrial working class, encompassing unskilled and semiskilled work in sales, care work, cleanup, food, and entertainment.⁴⁴ The selection of only two class categories was partly dictated by the need to ensure cross-country comparability, but it also has a theoretical rationale. These two classes represent different patterns of women's labor market integration as well as different poles of the contemporary class structure. The first is the home ground of the glass ceiling, while the second encompasses the lower reaches of the feminized service sector.

The first thing we learn from Table 1 is that there is a substantial difference in class structure between the two countries. For the age group considered here (twenty-five to fifty-five), the managerial class is twice as large in the United States than Sweden. At the same time, reflecting the magnitude of the paid caregiving sector, the menial services class is considerably larger in Sweden.⁴⁵ Women have indeed been notably successful in competing with men for jobs in America's ample managerial class.⁴⁶ Not only is the proportion of managers who are women lower in Sweden, but far more of them (nearly half) owe their positions to the public sector. When the hourly earnings of managers are divided into tertiles, women in both countries are much more likely to be found at the bottom than the top—an indication of the glass ceiling effect. However, women's crowding at the bottom of the managerial wage structure and their exclusion from the top are both significantly lower in the United States. These findings support my expectation that advantaged women in Sweden would have more difficulty competing with men for high-class and highly paid positions. The public sector eases this difficulty in relation to occupational attainment but not in relation to wage attainment. Swedish women managers who work in the private sector earn a lot more than their public sector counterparts (10 percentiles in terms of the overall earnings structure).

Turning to the menial services class, as expected, it is highly feminized in both countries.⁴⁷ However, judging by their wages, the economic position of working-class women in the services differs dramatically between the two countries.

Table 1
Comparison of Two Occupational Classes in Sweden and the United States

	Managers		Menial Service Workers	
	United States	Sweden	United States	Sweden
Class as percentage of all employees	10	5	10	16
% of class who are women	43	35	71	81
% of women in top wage tertile	22	15	28	33
% of women in bottom wage tertile	43	52	38	33
Wage differential within class (tertile ratio)	2.6	2.3	3.1	1.3
Women only:				
% in public sector	17	46	13	71
Public-private differential (in percentiles)	0	-10	+6	+7

Note: Author's calculations from 2001 Current Population Survey (United States) and 2000 Level of Living Survey (LNU) (Sweden). Wage earners aged twenty-five to fifty-five only. Wage calculations based on gross hourly earnings. Effective sample size for United States > 4,000; for Sweden, $n = 119$ managers and 362 menials. For further details, see Hadas Mandel and Michael Shalev, "How Welfare States Shape the Gender Pay Gap: A Theoretical and Comparative Analysis," *Social Forces* (forthcoming).

Whereas in Sweden, they are distributed equally between the three wage tertiles of their class, in the United States, they are a lot more likely to be found in the bottom tertile than the top. The effects of this difference are amplified by the massive wage differential between high- and low-earning menial services workers in the United States—more than 3:1, compared to near-equality in Sweden. Moreover, not only inequality within but also between classes is far milder in Sweden.⁴⁸ It is reasonable to infer that many of these positive outcomes for Swedish menial services women are the result of their high concentration in the public sector. Table 1 shows that in both countries, public employment enhances women's earnings in the menial services class. However, because of private sector domination, relatively few American women benefit from this sectoral effect.

Clearly, many of the advantages enjoyed by lower-class women and barriers to the attainments of higher-class women in Sweden derive from wage-setting institutions and social policies that promote class equality and earnings compression rather than from work/family policies. However, by measuring women's representation in both the class and intraclass hierarchies, I have sought to isolate gender inequality per se from the effects of the underlying wage structure.⁴⁹ The results suggest that Swedish women have a harder time entering elite positions and are hemmed in by a lower glass ceiling, especially in the public sector. In contrast, their lower-class compatriots in the services enjoy intraclass gender equality, and most of them benefit from a sizable bonus by dint of working for local or central government. Neither of these conditions applies to American women in the menial services class. It seems plausible that these systematic differences are related to the unintended effects of family

policies on the incentives facing women and private sector employers as well as the role of the public sector in paying care workers to perform work that would otherwise be the domestic responsibility of mothers.

CONCLUSIONS

In spite of continuing asymmetry in the gender division of paid labor, working women in American now occupy diverse occupational-class positions, and they are also sharply divided by education and income. While largely unacknowledged by Gornick and Meyers, work/family politics are infused by these class divisions, which pose severe obstacles to the realization of a dual earner/dual carer gender order. It is unquestionably true that lower-class women would benefit enormously from free public child care, paid maternity leave, and a proliferation of decent low-skilled service jobs in the public sector. Nevertheless, a significant minority of them are committed to a moral economy that favors traditional gender roles. In contrast, even though the egalitarian worldviews of economically advantaged women are well aligned with Gornick and Meyers's proposals, many of these women find the prevailing dual earner/private carer system manageable, and they are supported both by government tax subsidies and employer initiatives based on the "business case" for work/family reconciliation. Progressive European policies that socialize child care and underwrite maternal leave would be opposed to the class interests of women who find private nannies and high-quality child care affordable.

These circumstances raise three issues that I address in this concluding section. First, assuming that there really are class differences in the moral economy of gender, why should Gornick and Meyers care? Second, they are well aware of prevailing class inequalities in child care but if anything, they interpret this as an asset rather than a liability for the political feasibility of their reforms. Why do I believe they are mistaken? Finally, it may be true that if Swedish-type family policy and the enlarged public sector that accompanies it were imported into the United States, this would dampen the mobility prospects of higher-class women. But are these women aware of the alleged danger and actively conspiring against policy change?

Class and Moral Economy

Gornick and Meyers seek to transcend traditional work/family reconciliation measures by packaging them with more radical policies aimed at equalizing the domestic division of labor. The findings presented in the first section of this article suggest that traditional policies may represent the upper limit of what many lower-class women would support. Indeed, they may well prefer even more conservative policies, such as paying mothers to care for their own children or

supporting a “one-and-one-half earner” model. Consequently, it cannot be assumed that the women most in need of the proposed reforms would react with enthusiasm if they appeared on the political agenda.

Gornick and Meyers downplay this apparent contradiction. Instead, they focus on the injustice of current policies toward less affluent families and strive to legitimate their reform proposals by emphasizing how much they would improve the welfare of needy mothers and their children. But do Gornick and Meyers have the right to ignore conflicts between their program and what lower-class women may actually want?⁵⁰ Their own justification seems to be that the opinions held by these women are essentially adaptations to constrained opportunity structures. Socialization along traditionalist lines, pressure from male partners, and limited career opportunities indeed make it understandable why women of humble origins may be more predisposed toward the traditional household division of labor and find little attraction in paid work. I have already suggested, however, that while moral economy and political economy are mutually selecting and reinforcing, they are also at least partly autonomous. As Sayer puts it, “normative rationales . . . matter greatly to actors, as they are implicated in their commitments, identities, and ways of life.”⁵¹ Moreover, as Uhlmann has forcefully argued, when sociologists explain away the alien (to them) norms of working-class families as responses to disadvantage, they may be guilty of imposing their own habitus and worldview.⁵²

Class and Child Care

For Gornick and Meyers, the regressive distributional consequences of market-based child care constitute a glaring inequity that policy should address by assuring quality care for all children and spreading the costs widely. They gloss over the conflictual implication that the proposed solution would redistribute income at the expense of more affluent families, and they fail to address the possibility that advantaged parents have an interest in investing in superior child care and early education as one means of reproducing their class advantage in the next generation. Nevertheless, in muted recognition of opposing class interests, Gornick and Meyers suggest emulating the universal system of social security for the elderly, which enjoys broad public support. In the spirit of Korpi and Palme⁵³ they argue that if all classes were to benefit from a public system, solidarity would override parents’ narrow calculations of whether they personally stand to lose or profit (p. 270). However, while this may be true once a universal public system is in place, it is unclear how it would motivate higher-class consent to eliminating the present private system.

Gornick and Meyers offer two additional arguments that seemingly reinforce their expectation of a broad cross-class coalition behind socialized child care. First, following Crompton,⁵⁴ they portray the low-paid female labor force in private

child care as exacerbating the gender pay gap (p. 93). Yet not all women suffer as a result. It is logically the case that the existence of a poorly remunerated group of women has the effect of depressing women's average wage relative to men. However, if our starting point is that both women and men are differentiated by class, then the phenomenon of low-paid nannies primarily signifies unequal class relations among women.⁵⁵

Gornick and Meyers also suggest that a public system of child care would benefit nearly all families because only the privileged can afford private care, but it is arguable where the affordability line should be drawn. From a comparative perspective, private child care ought to be relatively inexpensive in the United States. The reasons include (1) nonregulation of child care workers' training and qualifications, (2) immigration policies that permit the inflow of caregivers from low-wage countries, (3) the conspicuous lack of direct or indirect state support for raising the wage floor, and (4) tax subsidies that partially offset private expenditure on child care.⁵⁶ Orloff claims that even "slightly better-off households" are able to afford private care, which is consistent with the evidence presented earlier in this article.⁵⁷ Still, insofar as middle-income professional women find that high-quality private child care solutions are a serious drain on their income, they might find common cause with lower-class women in fighting for socialized child care. Equally possible, however—and in my view, more likely—is that middle-class families experiencing a child care squeeze will follow the predictions of path-dependency theorists and demand increased tax relief rather than a radical change in the system.

Class and the Labor Market

Work/family reconciliation policies and the expansion of sheltered public sector employment that they generate may be essential for "weak" women to combine motherhood with paid work. But they undermine the potential labor market attainments of "strong" women by crowding them into feminized enclaves and fueling statistical discrimination by private employers. In developing counterfactual predictions for the United States based on the Swedish experience, I have already conceded that not all of the relative disadvantage of Swedish women at the higher end of the class structure can reasonably be attributed to the ripple effects of family policies. Some may be due to the different skill regimes that characterize the two countries, which may have made private sector firms in the United States more amenable to recruiting women into high-level positions. Another difference between the two countries, which has arguably worked in favor of American women's entry into managerial and professional jobs, is the role of legislation and state regulation in promoting equal opportunity for women.⁵⁸ Chang argues that North American states have prioritized this type of "equal access intervention" over the "substantive" interventions (reconciliation

policies) favored in Scandinavia and that this has been consequential for the rate of sex desegregation of elite occupations.⁵⁹

Notwithstanding these and other potentially confounding features of the American context, it is fair to conclude that adoption of the Swedish family policy regime would be at odds with the interests of advantaged women. Inversely, the benefits of Swedish policies for disadvantaged women would clearly be amplified by the weakness of lower-class workers in America's highly commodified labor market. Public child care, rights to parental leave and other forms of paid time off for care, and the transfer of child and other care work to the public sector would greatly curtail the current negative interplay between lower-class women's dual vulnerabilities as mothers and workers. In turn, shrinkage of the female and low-wage segment of the workforce would undermine the market-based modes of defamilialization that are currently so important for easing the work/family conflicts that face higher-class women.

Are members of the latter group aware of and concerned by these potential threats to their relatively privileged position? Perhaps not, but their class interests nevertheless form a resilient barrier to the realization of Gornick and Meyers's vision. The reason is that both higher-class women and the pressure groups which they dominate favor liberal feminism and its sibling—liberal political economy.⁶⁰ They do so for good reason: both resonate well with their life experiences. It is true that, as critics point out, the status quo imposes tough choices between motherhood and career and makes heavy demands on the time and energy of those who opt for both. Nevertheless, middle- and upper-class women are able to navigate the status quo by purchasing marketized care and housekeeping services, sometimes with government subsidies, by utilizing supports for mothers' employment offered by self-interested employers, by taking advantage of America's higher education system (where money speaks much louder than gender), and by benefiting from institutionalized state and corporate guarantees of equal opportunity at work. In short, advantaged women have good reason to preemptively forfeit social rights earmarked for mothers and to avoid compromising on lower-paid but mother-friendly public sector jobs. Note, however, that this probably applies more to white than black women. College-educated African American women are far more reliant on the public sector for opportunities to enter managerial and professional occupations, suggesting the hypothesis that whiteness may be an implicit condition for women to pursue the market-based route to emulating male success.⁶¹

The interests of advantaged women will not necessarily and always prevent at least some of them from joining coalitions with women from less advantaged classes in support of family policy reform. That depends to a great extent on politics, but comparative studies suggest that the political opportunity structure in the United States is relatively unfavorable to such a scenario.⁶² In Scandinavia, the combination of powerful unions, governing social-democratic parties, and

strong states encouraged the development of cross-class coalitions of women. Solidaristic trade unions integrated their growing female membership by “adopting policies that benefited women in the same way as they benefited all low-paid workers”⁶³ and also by acting as trailblazers, introducing gender-equality policies through collective agreements before they ever reached the legislative arena.⁶⁴ In parallel, a common interest in big government developed between social-democratic governments and women employed as social service workers.⁶⁵ In contrast, in the United States, decentralization and fragmentation of both organized labor and the state have favored an “individualistic legalistic approach” that has yielded significant victories but primarily “at the upper end of the occupational spectrum.”⁶⁶

To conclude, class interests and the character of class and gender politics stand in the way of moving the United States toward a radically different set of employment and family policies. True, political economy is not everything. Current literature acknowledges a much greater role than conceded hitherto for the role of new ideas in bringing about radical changes in policy,⁶⁷ and this is, of course, the motivation for Gornick and Meyers’s tireless promotion of their utopian vision. Nevertheless, they have also taken on the challenge of infusing political plausibility into their program. *Families That Work* cogently defends it against a variety of obstacles, which are often said to prevent European-style policies from being adopted in the United States, including labor market structure, political institutions and culture, demography, and diversity. The factor that is conspicuously missing from this list, although it is connected to several of those that do get attention, is the difficulty of constructing a cross-class coalition—first and foremost of women—in favor of their proposals. I have sought to argue that this constitutes a fundamental barrier to the advent of gender-egalitarian policy activism in the United States.

NOTES

1. Irene Browne and Joya Misra, “The Intersection of Gender and Race in the Labor Market,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 29 (2003): 487–513; Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “Racial Ethnic Women’s Labor: The Intersection of Race, Gender and Class Oppression,” *Review of Radical Political Economics* 17, no. 3 (1985): 86–108; and Leslie McCall, “The Complexity of Intersectionality,” *Signs* 30, no. 3 (2005): 1771–99.

2. Erik Olin Wright, “A Conceptual Menu for Studying the Interconnections of Class and Gender,” in *Reconfigurations of Class and Gender*, ed. Janeen Baxter and Mark Western, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), 28–38.

3. Janet C. Gornick and Marcia Meyers, *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment* (New York: Russell Sage, 2003); and in “Creating Gender-Egalitarian Societies: An Agenda for Reform,” *Politics and Society*, 36 (2008).

4. Throughout this article, I use the terms *higher class* and *lower class* in a relative fashion, not as proper names for specific classes. My concern is with broad differences in economic advantage linked to either personal resources (i.e., education) or positions

in production (i.e., occupations). In any event, data considerations make it necessary to take an eclectic approach to defining classes for empirical purposes.

5. For a recent contribution and references, see Ola Sjöberg, "The Role of Family Policy Institutions in Explaining Gender-Role Attitudes: A Comparative Multilevel Analysis of Thirteen Industrialized Countries," *Journal of European Social Policy* 14, no. 2 (2004): 107–23.

6. Stefan Svallfors, *The Moral Economy of Class: Class and Attitudes in Comparative Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

7. *Ibid.*, 112. Svallfors's index of support for women's paid employment includes questions that tap not only whether women's paid labor is seen as legitimate in terms of the division of labor with their husbands but also whether or not it is perceived as detrimental to their families and children.

8. *Ibid.*, Table 6.2. With age and sex controlled, class gaps were lower by roughly half in Britain and the United States, compared to Germany and Sweden.

9. For a valuable analysis of General Social Survey data and references to further literature, see M. V. Lee Badgett, Pamela Davidson, and Nancy Folbre, "Breadwinner Dad, Homemaker Mom: An Interdisciplinary Analysis of Changing Gender Norms in the United States, 1977–1998" (unpublished paper, Department of Economics, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 2002).

10. R. J. Harris and J. M. Firestone, "Changes in Predictors of Gender Role Ideologies among Women: A Multivariate Analysis," *Sex Roles* 38, no. 3 (1998): 239–52. Other studies have confirmed the importance of education but without testing the effect of occupational class. K. M. Blee and A. R. Tickamyer, "Racial Differences in Men's Attitudes about Women's Gender Roles," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57, no. 1 (1995): 21–30; and C. I. Bolzendahl and D. J. Myers, "Feminist Attitudes and Support for Gender Equality: Opinion Change in Women and Men, 1974–1998," *Social Forces* 83, no. 2 (2004): 759–89.

11. Robert Erikson, John H. Goldthorpe, and Lucienne Portocarero, "Intergenerational Class Mobility in Three Western European Societies: England, France and Sweden," *British Journal of Sociology* 33 (1979): 1–34.

12. Managerial and professional: 22 percent; semiprofessional: 28 percent; routine nonmanual: 27 percent; working class: 24 percent.

13. Catherine Hakim, *Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century: Preference Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 73.

14. See, for example, Rosemary Crompton and Fiona Harris, "A Reply to Hakim," *The British Journal of Sociology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 144–49; and S. McRae, "Constraints and Choices in Mothers' Employment Careers: A Consideration of Hakim's Preference Theory," *British Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 3 (2003): 317–38.

15. Page references refer to Gornick and Meyers, *Families That Work*.

16. Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson, *Off Center: The Republican Revolution and the Erosion of American Democracy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005).

17. Julia Overturf Johnson and Barbara Downs, *Maternity Leave and Employment Patterns of First-Time Mothers: 1961–2000* (U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, 2005), Table 5.

18. Jennifer Ehrle, Gina Adams, and Kathryn Tout, *Who's Caring for Our Youngest Children? Child Care Patterns of Infants and Toddlers* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2001), Figures 5 and 8. The results refer to the primary-care arrangement only, and the analysis of income was limited to two-parent families. Parallel findings for the care of older children (elementary-school age) reveal only small effects of income on the broad types of care utilized. See Jeffrey Capizzano, Kathryn Tout, and Gina Adams,

Child Care Patterns of School-Age Children with Employed Mothers (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2000), Table 2.

19. Linda Giannarelli, Sarah Adelman, and Stefanie Schmidt, *Getting Help with Child Care Expenses* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2003), Figure 3.

20. Marcia Meyers, Dan Rosenbaum, Christopher Ruhm, and Jane Waldfogel. "Inequality in Early Childhood Education and Care: What Do We Know?" (unpublished paper, Social Inequality Program, New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 2004).

21. <http://www.familiesandwork.org/site/work/workforce/2002nscw.html> (accessed June 5, 2008).

22. A. Durfee and M. K. Meyers, "Who Gets What from Government? Distributional Consequences of Child-Care Assistance Policies," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 68, no. 3 (2006): 733–48.

23. Note, however, that Durfee and Meyers qualify their findings by pointing out that New York provides unusually extensive childcare supports.

24. Anne B. Shlay, Marsha Weinraub, Michelle Harmon, and Henry Tran, "Barriers to Subsidies: Why Low-Income Families Do Not Use Child Care Subsidies," *Social Science Research* 33, no. 1 (2004): 134–57.

25. Gornick and Meyers, *Families That Work*, Table 7.5. On the basis of the Urban Institute surveys cited earlier, Gornick and Meyers show that for middle- and high-income families, the burden of childcare costs in the United States is fairly similar to France, except that a higher proportion of families have out-of-pocket expenses. However, they do not consider the effects of France's extensive public provision on the tax burden.

26. For a recent evaluation of the Swedish experiment, see Anita Nyberg, *Parental Leave, Public Childcare and the Dual Earner/Dual Carer Model in Sweden* (discussion paper presented at the Swedish Peer Review of the European Employment Strategy, Stockholm, April 2004). Indications of the political barriers to extending the current system within Sweden or exporting it to other Scandinavian countries are provided by Tommy Ferrarini, "Sweden: Towards a New Model of Family Policy?" (unpublished paper, Swedish Institute of Social Research, Stockholm, 2007); and Heikki Hiilamo and Olli Kangas, "Trap for Women or Freedom to Choose? Political Frames in the Making of Child Home Care Allowances in Finland and Sweden" (paper presented at the annual conference of the Research Committee on Poverty, Social Welfare and Social Policy [RC19], Northwestern University, Chicago, September 2005).

27. Examples are Hakim, *Work-Lifestyle Choices*; Hadas Mandel and Moshe Semyonov, "Family Policies, Wage Structures, and Gender Gaps: Sources of Earnings Inequality in 20 Countries," *American Sociological Review* 70, no. 6 (2005): 949–67; and Hadas Mandel and Moshe Semyonov, "A Welfare State Paradox: State Intervention and Women's Employment Opportunities in 22 Countries," *American Journal of Sociology* 111, no. 6 (2006): 1910–49.

28. Margarita Estevez-Abe, "Gender Bias in Skills and Social Policies: The Varieties of Capitalism Perspective on Sex Segregation," *Social Politics* 12, no. 2 (2005): 180–215. Quoted from page 192; emphasis added.

29. Marianne Nordli Hansen, "The Vicious Circle of the Welfare State? Women's Labor Market Situation in Norway and Great Britain," *Comparative Social Research* 15 (1995): 1–34.

30. Precisely for this reason, the center-right coalition that has held office in Sweden since 2006 favors tax rebates for families that hire private household help.

31. Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Social Foundations of Postindustrial Economies* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999).

32. Jane Lewis and Gertrude Astrom, "Equality, Difference, and State Welfare: Labor Market and Family Policies in Sweden," *Feminist Studies* 18, no. 1 (1992): 59–87; Nyberg, *Parental Leave*.

33. <http://www.jusek.se/>, cited by Nyberg, *Parental Leave*, 19.

34. Gosta Esping-Andersen, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1990); and Jon Eivend Kolberg, ed., *The Welfare State as Employer* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991).

35. Martin Rein, "The Social Welfare Labor Market," in *The Welfare State and Its Aftermath*, ed. S. N. Eisenstadt and Ora Ahimeir (London: Croom Helm, 1985), 109–31; and Jon Eivend Kolberg and Gosta Esping-Andersen, "Welfare States and Employment Regimes," in *Between Work and Social Citizenship*, ed. Jon Eivend Kolberg (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 3–35.

36. P. Robson, S. Dex, F. Wilkinson, and O. S. Cortes. "Low Pay, Labour Market Institutions, Gender and Part-Time Work: Cross-National Comparisons." *European Journal of Industrial Relations* 5, no. 2 (1999): 187–207.

37. Janet C. Gornick and Jerry A. Jacobs, "Gender, the Welfare State, and Public Employment: A Comparative Study of Seven Industrialized Countries," *American Sociological Review* 63, no. 5 (1998): 688–710, Table 3.

38. Marianne-Nordli Hansen, "The Scandinavian Welfare State Model: The Impact of the Public Sector on Segregation and Gender Equality," *Work, Employment and Society* 11, no. 1 (1997): 83–99; and Patricia Rice, *Gender Earnings Differentials: The European Experience* (working paper no. 8, World Bank Policy Research Report on Gender and Development, 1999), 25.

39. Inga Persson and Christina Jonung, eds., *Women's Work and Wages* (London: Routledge, 1998).

40. J. Albrecht, A. Bjorklund, and S. Vroman, "Is There a Glass Ceiling in Sweden?" *Journal of Labor Economics* 21, no. 1 (2003): 145–77.

41. Margarita Estevez-Abe, Torben Iversen, and David Soskice, "Social Protection and the Formation of Skills: A Reinterpretation of the Welfare State," in *Varieties of Capitalism: The Institutional Foundations of Comparative Advantage*, ed. Peter A. Hall and David W. Soskice (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2001), 145–83.

42. Hadas Mandel and Michael Shalev, "Gender, Class and the Varieties of Capitalism Perspective," *Social Politics* (forthcoming).

43. The literature on varieties of capitalism theory focuses on the overall direction favored by systems of skill formation (general vs. specific skills), but typical human capital requirements also vary between different levels of the job structure irrespective of the skills regime. In all varieties of capitalism, requirements for on-the-job training (OJT) are especially stringent in the higher (professional and managerial) class, which comprises occupations characterized by a high degree of task specificity. See J. G. Polavieja, "Task Specificity and the Gender Wage Gap: Theoretical Considerations and Empirical Analysis of the Spanish Survey on Wage Structure," *European Sociological Review* 21, no. 2 (2005): 165–81. Even in the United States, a liberal economy in which employers are said to rely predominantly on general skills, it has been shown that women's limited participation in OJT explains much of their exclusion from highly paid jobs. See D. Tomaskovic Devey and S. Skaggs, "Sex Segregation, Labor Process Organization, and Gender Earnings Inequality," *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 1 (2002): 102–28.

44. Gosta Esping-Andersen, *Changing Classes: Stratification and Mobility in Post-Industrial Societies* (London: Sage, 1993).

45. Had this analysis included workers under twenty-five, the U.S. menial services class would have grown due to the many young people employed in the "food-and-fun" sector.

46. The present estimate of the difference between the two countries may be conservative. Using somewhat different procedures, including controlling at the individual level for cross-national differences in workforce composition, Mandel and Semyonov find that women's probability of having a managerial occupation compared with men's is more than 80 percent greater in the United States than in Sweden. Mandel and Semyonov, "Welfare State Paradox," Figure 6.

47. Nevertheless, at 71 percent, the proportion of menial service workers who are women is lower in the United States than the eleven other countries analyzed by Mandel and myself. One reason for this is the role of minority men. Nonwhite men are three times more likely than white men to work as menial service workers in the United States. Hadas Mandel and Michael Shalev, "A Class Perspective on Gender Inequality: How Welfare States Shape the Gender Pay Gap" (working paper no. 433, Luxembourg Income Study 2006).

48. A calculation not reported in Table 1 indicates that at the median, the ratio between the wages of managers and menials is 2.2 to 1 in the United States and 1.6 to 1 in Sweden.

49. A similar analytical strategy, inspired by the work of Blau and Kahn, has been adopted by Gornick, Mandel and Semyonov, and Mandel and Shalev. Needless to say, however, gender is to some extent endogenous to both class structure and class inequality. Francine D. Blau and Lawrence M. Kahn, "The Gender Earnings Gap: Learning from International Comparisons," *American Economic Review* 82, no. 2 (1992): 533–38; Janet C. Gornick, "Gender Equality in the Labor Market," in *Gender and Welfare State Regimes*, ed. Diane Sainsbury (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1999), 210–42; Mandel and Semyonov, "Family Policies, Wage Structures, and Gender Gaps"; and Mandel and Shalev, "Class Perspective on Gender Inequality."

50. This is not the place to enter into the ethical aspects of the problem. Suffice it to say that it would not be difficult for advocates of progressive family policy to argue that, for example, the importance of economic autonomy for the well-being of lower-class women justifies such policies, even if the beneficiaries do not demand them.

51. Andrew Sayer, "Moral Economy" (unpublished paper, Department of Sociology, Lancaster University, 2004), 3.

52. Allon J. Uhlmann, "The Sociology of Subjectivity, and the Subjectivity of Sociologists: A Critique of the Sociology of Gender in the Australian Family," *British Journal of Sociology* 55, no. 1 (2004): 79–97.

53. W. Korpi and J. Palme, "The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State Institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries," *American Sociological Review* 63, no. 5 (1998): 661–87.

54. Rosemary Crompton, ed., *Restructuring Gender Relations and Employment: The Decline of the Male Breadwinner* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 208.

55. Linda McDowell, "Reconfigurations of Gender and Class Relations: Class Differences, Class Condensation and the Changing Place of Class Relations," *Antipode* 38, no. 4 (2006): 825–50.

56. Kimberly J. Morgan, "The 'Production' of Child Care: How Labor Markets Shape Social Policy and Vice Versa," *Social Politics* 12, no. 2 (2005): 243–63.

57. Ann Shola Orloff, "From Maternalism to 'Employment for All': State Policies to Promote Women's Employment across the Affluent Democracies" in *The State after Statism: New State Activities in the Age of Liberalization*, ed. Jonah D. Levy, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 253.

58. *Ibid.*; and Kathrin Zippel, "The Missing Link for Promoting Gender Equality: Family-Work & Anti-Discrimination Policies" in *Earning and Caring: Creating the*

Conditions for Gender-Egalitarian Families, ed. Janet Gornick (London: Verso, forthcoming).

59. Mariko-Lin Chang, "The Evolution of Sex Segregation Regimes," *American Journal of Sociology* 105, no. 6 (2000): 1658–701.

60. Linda A. White, "Institutions, Constitutions, Actor Strategies, and Ideas: Explaining Variation in Paid Parental Leave Policies in Canada and the United States," *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 4, no. 2 (2006): 319–46. From White's account, it appears that major women's groups, including the National Organization for Women, have been conscious of the threat that protective labor legislation and differential treatment for women would pose to the upward mobility of more advantaged women and have consequently opposed measures such as paid maternity leave.

61. S. M. Collins, "The Making of the Black Middle Class," *Social Problems* 30, no. 4 (1983): 369–82; C. Hsieh and E. Winslow, "Gender Representation in the Federal Workforce: A Comparison among Groups," *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 26, no. 3 (2006): 276; and Y. D. Newsome and F. N. A. Dodoo, "Reversal of Fortune: Explaining the Decline in Black Women's Earnings," *Gender & Society* 16, no. 4 (2002): 442–64.

62. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller, *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy, Women in the Political Economy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987); Walter Korpi, "Faces of Inequality: Gender, Class, and Patterns of Inequalities in Different Types of Welfare States," *Social Politics* 7, no. 2 (2000): 127–91; and Amy G. Mazur, "Drawing Comparative Lessons from France and Germany," *Review of Policy Research* 20, no. 3 (2003): 493–523.

63. Mary Ruggie, "Workers' Movements and Women's Interests: The Impact of Labor-State Relations in Britain and Sweden," in *The Women's Movements of the United States and Western Europe: Consciousness, Political Opportunity, and Public Policy*, ed. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein and Carol McClurg Mueller (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), 248.

64. Gillian Whitehouse, "Legislation and Labour Market Gender Inequality: An Analysis of OECD Countries," *Work, Employment and Society* 6, no. 1 (1992): 65–86.

65. E. Huber and J. D. Stephens, "Partisan Governance, Women's Employment, and the Social Democratic Service State," *American Sociological Review* 65, no. 3 (2000): 323–42.

66. Julia S. O'Connor, Ann Shola Orloff, and Sheila Shaver, *States, Markets, Families: Gender, Liberalism, and Social Policy in Australia, Canada, Great Britain, and the United States* (Cambridge, UK/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 104.

67. Mark M. Blyth, "'Any More Bright Ideas?' The Ideational Turn of Comparative Political Economy," *Comparative Politics* 29, no. 2 (1997): 229–50.

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