

A Gendered Double Movement? Income Security and Family Policy Dynamics Over Three Decades

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Over the past decades, social policy in OECD countries has experienced two shifts: First, the emerging focus of family policy towards family-work reconciliation (Gornick/Meyers 2003) and, second, the stricter conditions in the field of income security due to labour market activation policies (Kvist 2002). Analysing family policies and income security policies simultaneously allows to investigate: 1) to what extent women are relieved of their familial duties or encouraged in their role as mothers and 2) to what degree are citizens able to “uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation” (Esping-Andersen 1990, 37). In comparative welfare state research, these questions have often been answered separately: Concepts like familisation and individualisation¹ are often used to describe gendered welfare regimes (Daly 1994; Lewis 1992; Orloff 1993; Sainsbury 1997), whereas de-commodification and (re)commodification are used to classify welfare state regimes in general (Esping-Andersen 1990; Pierson 1996, 2002). By combining both perspectives, this article follows the theoretical framework that reintroduces Polanyi’s category of a “double movement” (Ferragina 2019; Fraser 2017; Polanyi 1944) into family policy research and thus emphasizes the ambiguity of gender liberation and commodification and liberalisation (ibid.). The gendered double movement is interpreted to be a result of the combination of increased commodification and increased individualisation and hence a transformation of (gendered) welfare state regimes. To trace these dynamics empirically, four dimensions (familisation, individualisation, commodification and (re)commodification) are combined and measured by four indices. Data from multiple sources of 17 OECD countries over 25 years are utilised to answer three questions: 1) Can a shift towards individualisation and commodification in OECD welfare states be identified? 2) Can distinct types of welfare states be identified based on the four dimensions? and 3) Are they consistent over time?

The article is organised as follows: It first discusses the concept of a double movement in the context of the political economy of gender. It continues with a conceptualisation of defamilisation, familisation, and individualisation on the one hand, and de-commodification and (re)commodification on the other hand, and combines both concepts to build a typology. Then, the operationalisation and measurement of the concepts are presented: two new indices of familisation and individualisation are constructed. An overview of K-means Cluster Analysis (KCA) is given as the method used to group of welfare states at several points in time together. The empirical results are then discussed, focusing on three aspects: The general policy shift and the results of the KCA, the types of welfare state that are identified and – due to the use of longitudinal data – the welfare state type dynamics.

The findings reveal a trend towards increased commodification from 1985 to 1995 and a rise in individualising policies from the late 1990s. Six distinct welfare state

types were identified, highlighting both stability and shifts. Most remarkably is the shift towards the optional familialistic/individualistic flexicurity type.

This article contributes to the research on the political economy of gender in two ways. Substantively, the use of four dimensions enables a nuanced perspective that not only dissolves the double movement into the dichotomy of more individualisation and less decommodification but also shows that combinations of individualising and familising policies create more ambiguity in the options of how to divide labour in the family. Potentially it may translate into an increased double burden for mothers, as well as new class differences among women. Methodologically, the article constructs a new index for familisation and individualisation over three decades to utilise a cluster analysis with longitudinal data. This contributes to a rarely taken perspective in (gendered) welfare state research, which allows to trace changes in welfare states over a long period of time (Ciccia/Sainsbury 2018).

Revisiting the Double Movement

A recent contribution by Ferragina (2019) brings together the perspective of the political economy of gender, as well as the debate about the transformation of the welfare state by referring to Jessop's (1993) theory of the transition from the Keynesian Welfare State (KWS) to the Schumpeterian Workfare State (SWS). Jessop situates increased commodification in the transition from the KWS to SWS, which is linked to the transition of the Fordist to the Post-Fordist political economy and a new form of social intervention by the state. A central aspect in Jessop's theory is a shift in the goal of welfare states in terms of economic and social reproduction from support of full-employment through a demand-sided management of a national economy to "the subordination of social policy to the demands of labour market flexibility and structural competitiveness" (ibid. 9) of a globalised economy. This not only encourages the welfare state to integrate men more strongly into the labour market but can also lead to the targeted integration of women into the national labour market (Jessop 1998). This shift has led to a partial erosion of the division of labour within families, creating new opportunities, and it has also increased the double burden of women as carers and workers, creating risks due to the increased austerity strategies of the welfare state (ibid.).

Ferragina (2019) characterises the new opportunities and risks women face as a double movement. Thereby, he refers, in a similar way as Fraser (2016, 2017), to Polanyi's thesis which he used to describe the protection of the male worker over the course of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries and transfers this to the dynamics starting at the end of the golden age of the welfare state and capitalism (Esping-Andersen 1996; Polanyi 1944). For Polanyi, a movement towards the commodification of labour is accompanied by a countermovement of decommodification by the welfare state aimed to protect the worker from the harmful effects of market economies (ibid.). Ferragina's narrative applies Polanyi's concept to women's