State Feminism in New ‘Adult Worker Model’ Welfare States?

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Abstract
In the past decade traditional male breadwinner welfare states such as the United Kingdom and Germany have been transformed to adult worker model (AWM) welfare states (Lewis 2001, Annesley 2003). This process has been accompanied by new policy agendas designed to encourage and support adults’ participation in the labour market. This paper investigates whether the shift to AWM welfare states in the UK and Germany has been shaped by women in their roles in the state, corporatist organisations, feminist elite and the European Union. The paper presents empirical case studies of AWM policy in the two countries and highlights how policy debates are gendered.

Introduction
Welfare states have been undergoing a process of reform and transformation in recent decades to address the challenges of the new economic conditions. Despite predictions, this process can be characterised not as wide-scale retrenchment but as a significant programme of restructuring (Bonoli et al 2000, Taylor-Gooby 2001). One major feature of this phase of reform concerns the role of women in welfare states. Jane Lewis (1992) drew the distinction between European welfare states as weak, moderate and strong male bread-winner (MBW) welfare states depending on the degree to which the welfare state guaranteed their well-being independent of a male wage-earner and supported their role in the labour market. Following a decade of welfare restructuring, Lewis argues that welfare states can now be characterised as adult worker model (AWM) welfare states (Lewis 2001). This refers to the fact that all adult citizens—male and female—are required to take paid employment. AWMs differ in the degree to which citizens are supported in this role. Lewis (2001) referred to Sweden as a supported AWM and to the United States of America as an unsupported AWM.

A strong underlying assumption of the AWM welfare state is that all citizens should be citizen-workers. This approach ties in with the European Union’s (EU) concept of citizenship which emphasises economic activity as the root to citizenship rights (Annesley 2003). Indeed the EU’s Lisbon Strategy, agreed 2000, set the target of raising the employment rate of women to 60% by the year 2010 and of increasing the provision of child-care for children between the age of three and school-age to 90%. This citizen-worker model of citizenship coincides with the model promoted by the welfare states of the Nordic countries; countries such as Sweden have the highest rates of female

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participation in the labour market—most notably in the public sector—and an extensive provision of childcare.

The citizen-worker assumption of the AWM welfare state has, however, been strongly criticised by feminist scholars. Lister (2003) argues for a concept of citizenship that synthesises the ethics of justice, achieved through equal employment rights, and the ethics of care, exercised through caring responsibilities. This synthesis would value both formal-work and informal-care contributions to society. Other feminist scholars have argued that to promote equality, the share of both formal and informal/caring work would be shared more equally between the sexes (e.g. Fraser 1994). The citizen-worker model has also been criticised by some Scandinavian scholars (Hernes 1987a and 1987b) on the grounds that in Nordic welfare state women have moved from private to public dependency, that they now rely on the state for both employment and welfare, but that have significantly less political power than their male counterparts to shape politics and policy. Despite the fact that Scandinavian women are well represented in their national parliaments (Sweden currently 45.3%) they are underrepresented in corporate decision-making institutions, where policy is traditionally formulated.

Recent research in the shift to AWM welfare states shows clear evidence of a transformation from a strong male-breadwinner welfare state to an adult worker model welfare state in the UK and Germany. This shift to AWM welfare states most specifically affects women in previously strong male-breadwinner welfare states such as (West) Germany and the United Kingdom (UK). As Bonoli (2001) points out for the case of Switzerland, the inclusion of women into the labour market and systems of social welfare has the potential to radically change European welfare states. In the contemporary welfare state women are required both as employees in the post-industrial economy and as mothers to replenish the stock of welfare citizens and compensate for the shrinking work force. However, as Bonoli points out (2001, 124) ‘social policies towards [this] group […] are virtually absent from the welfare state repertoire and must be invented. This is likely to become a major policy challenge’. Indeed, the inclusion of women into labour markets and social programmes has the potential to radically restructure welfare states, and this may be in the direction of reconstruction rather than retrenchment.

Most research on gender and welfare states has concerned itself with how welfare state policy constructs and shapes genders relationships (e.g. Sainsbury 1999 and 2001). As Mazur (2004, 15) points out, most existing research on gender and welfare ‘is not concerned with the development of purposeful feminist policies but rather with the impact of non-feminist policies on the status of women, often compared with men’s, and gender relations’. She argues (2004, 4) that research therefore needs to be conducted on the impact of women in the ‘pre-formulation, formulation, implementation and evaluation of a specific policy and whether policy generates institutional feedback in the state and society’. Thus an important aspect of the process of the transformation of welfare states to AWMs remains under-researched. This relates to the input and impact of women in the policy reform process. Since women are among the citizens to be most affected by the shift to AWMs, it is important to assess their degree of influence in the policy-making process.

This paper is concerned with policy reform in the direction of the adult worker model welfare (AWM) state in Germany and the UK. The aim of the project is to evaluate the
capacity of women to influence welfare reform discussions and to shape welfare policy. It will study welfare reform debates that led to a concrete reform outcome and establish the influence of women’s in various capacities on that outcome. It will generate new knowledge about which women’s organisations are most effective in shaping welfare policy reform.

This research project will look at reform debates and policy outcomes in the UK and Germany according to three categories: ones that 1) encourage adults to take employment, 2) make formal employment financially worthwhile and 3) support citizens in their role as workers and carers (Millar and Rowlingson 2001). Taking one example of each debate, it will be assessed whether these debates and policies seek to promote the gender blind citizen-worker model or whether gendered concerns are included. For example, debates and policies will be analysed to assess whether they promote parenting and caring roles for women and—as significantly—for men. [SEE FIGURE ONE].

A second stage of the research is to identify the key sources of influence of women in shaping debates. Some scholars argue that the presence of a critical mass of women in parliament and the core executive leads to ‘women’s issues’ being brought onto the political agenda and policy reform (Childs 2004, Meehan 2005). Alternatively, scholars working with the state feminist approach (Stetson and Mazur 1995, Outshoorn 2004) highlight the way women’s groups influence policy through women’s policy agencies (WPAs) such as the Equal Opportunities Commission in the UK or the Frauenbeauftragten in Germany. Drawing from the example cited above from Hernes (1987a), in corporatist states, such as Germany, the influence of women in the trade union movement rather than parliament might be important. Fourth, we might look at the role of female representatives of the media, the economy or the academy in shaping policy debates and outcomes. Finally, the role of the EU needs to be considered both in terms of the European Commission’s equal opportunities policies, rulings made by the European Court of Justice, and influence of the Lisbon benchmarking processes on domestic politics.

Stages 1 and 2 will be carried out by reviewing policy outcomes and policy debates issued in formal documents by the sponsoring government departments. Stage 3 will be conducted through wider reviews of debates in the above-named organisations, and through semi-structured interviews with key individuals in those institutions.

The study will compare policy debates and reform in the period from May 1997 (UK) and September 1998 (Germany) to 2004. This period has been chosen as it coincides with the election and re-election of social democratic governments in both countries.2 Drawing on the Nordic experience, social democratic governments can be assumed to traditionally support the worker-citizen model of citizenship and to be more in favour of female participation in the labour market, and welfare reform or expansion (Korpi 2000). The countries, however, differ significantly in these periods in terms of their rates of economic growth and un/employment levels. Whereas in that period Germany experienced low economic growth and high and rising unemployment, the UK enjoyed sustained economic growth and low rates of unemployment and expansion of

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2 The Labour Party governs as a single party and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) governs in coalition with Alliance 90/The Greens.
employment. Nevertheless, in both countries the social democratic governments conducted debates about welfare reform, and there was welfare reform in the direction of the AWM.

**Policy Debates and Outcomes**

The UK and Germany are both examples of strong male breadwinner welfare models. Traditionally, men have been encouraged to take employment and women were mothers and not workers and relied on a male breadwinner for financial support and social citizenship rights. In the absence of a male breadwinner (in the event of death of the father or divorce), the state has traditionally been prepared to step in as a substitute so that lone mothers can fulfill their role as mothers. Women have not been expected to rely on the market for support. In the UK, lone mothers are not obliged to take employment until the youngest child is 16 (Duncan and Edwards, 1997). In Germany, schemes have been introduced to encourage mothers to stay at home, although generally lone mothers are expected to take work once the child is over the age of three (Klett-Davies, 1997). In the UK lone mothers have the right to general benefits and specific benefits designed for lone parents. In Germany there are no benefits directly targeted at lone mothers (Hakovirta, 2001); instead, they are entitled to the safety-net social assistance benefit, which is funded and administered at local level. Moreover, mothers have traditionally been exempt from the work obligations that social assistance benefit entails. Social assistance recipients traditionally have not been obliged to accept a work offer if having to work would endanger the rearing of children in a family or if the claimant has responsibility for the running of a household or the care of dependents (Annesley, 2002, OECD, 1996, 163-4, Voges et al, 2001, 78). In Germany married mothers are less likely to work than lone mothers in (although differences between women in the new and old Bundesländer [Klett-Davies, 1997]). In the UK, by contrast, lone mothers are less likely to work than other mothers. Also, the incidence of poverty among lone mothers is significantly higher in the UK than in Germany, although lone mothers living on benefits in both countries are prone to poverty. In both countries the provision of childcare is traditionally poor.

If we turn to look at recent policy debates and developments, we can identify evidence of a shift from a male breadwinner model, to an adult worker model (AWM). [SEE TABLE ONE] This section outlines policy change in the UK and Germany in the direction from the male breadwinner model to the adult worker model and assesses the extent to which adults as parents are supported in this transition. Three questions will be addressed: Do these welfare states encourage adults back to work? Do they make work appear financially worthwhile? And is a work-care balance facilitate by the state? These questions clearly span a number of different policy domains. The following overview therefore highlights key policy debates and programmes emanating from key national ministries. These include for the UK: the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP); the Department for Education and Skills (DfES); the Home Office; the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI); the Treasury and the Cabinet Office in Number Ten. It should be stressed here that some relevant policy developments, such as childcare, have been devolved to the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland administrations. For Germany we look at: the Ministry for Families, Pensioners, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ); the
Ministry for Work (BMA); the Finance Ministry (Finanzamt) and the Chancellor’s Office (Kanzleramt). In addition, taking into account Germany’s federal structure politically, and in terms of welfare provision—social assistance is administered by local authorities—we look at debates and initiatives at local level.

The UK

There has been a clear shift towards an AWM in the UK for some years and this has been taken a step further since May 1997 when the Labour government came to power. New Labour introduced the New Deal on a compulsory basis for the young and the long term unemployed and a New Deal for Lone Parents on a voluntary basis. This is an active labour market policy which gives lone mothers the opportunity to take employment or training as well as the help of a personal advisor to help them make a choice. New Labour’s decision to included lone mothers as a client group in the New Deal was based on the joint premise that lone parents (and their children) are particularly prone to poverty, that work is the best route out of this trap and that most unemployed lone mothers—80 to 90 per cent was the figure regularly cited by ministers (Duncan and Edwards, 1999, 287)—want to work but are stuck in a dependency trap. Government statistics suggest that by 2001, over 96,500 lone parents had moved to work via the NDLP (HM Treasury & DWP 2001, 19). The rate of employment among lone parents has increased from 40.9 per cent in 1992 and 45.6 per cent in 1997 to 51.5 per cent in 2001 (HM Treasury & DWP 2001, 18).

The New Deal is supported by measures to improve the financial incentives to entering the labour market. At the most general level, the New Labour government has also been running campaigns in the Treasury and the Women and Equality Unit in the dti to close the gender pay gap—it is estimated that women in the UK earn just 81 per cent of male earnings—and to improve women’s earnings over a lifetime. One key new policy is the minimum wage, which was introduced in April 1999. It was claimed that the introduction of the minimum wage would be particularly beneficial to women, many of whom were previously poorly paid in the ‘female’ service sector. However, the rate was set at a low level—£4.10. Although the national minimum wage was raised to £4.20 per hour for workers over the age of 22 in October 2002, and currently stands at £4.50, many critics have argued that this minimum wage fails to provide a living wage (Toynbee, 2003) and is certainly not sufficient to encourage women with families into the labour market.

A further measure introduced to encourage women into the workplace is the Working Families’ Tax Credit (WFTC). Introduced in October 1999, the WFTC is a benefit in the form of a tax credit available to families with at least one adult in paid employment for at least 16 hours per week and with a dependent child in compulsory full-time education. As an in-work tax credit rather than a direct benefit, it was anticipated that the take up of WFTC would be higher than with Family Credit which preceded it. The Inland Revenue’s figures claim that between 2000 and 2001, WFTC take up rose from 49 to 53 per cent for couples with children, but from 77 to 83 per cent for lone parent families (Inland Revenue, 2002, 4).

A second barrier to entering employment for adults with caring responsibilities is the availability and affordability of childcare. In 1998 New Labour launched a National
Childcare Strategy which aimed to deliver more good-quality, affordable and accessible childcare to all parents (DfES). The aim was to provide free education for all 4 year-olds by September 1998 and additional childcare places for 1.6 million under-fours by March 2004. This policy is supplemented by the Sure Start programme which aims to provide early education, childcare, healthcare and family support in deprived areas. As well as improving the provision of childcare, New Labour has introduced childcare tax credits which pay up to £70 a week for a family with one child and £105 per week for a family with two children to help with the cost of childcare.

The Labour government has also at a more general level been addressing the issue of the Work-Life Balance for families (DTI). Since 1999 British parents have been entitled to 13 weeks’ parental leave (Lewis 2002). In April 2003 new legislation on maternity and paternity leave was introduced giving mothers entitlement to six months’ paid maternity leave and an additional six months’ unpaid leave if they want it. Men were granted two week’s paid paternity leave. Furthermore, parents of children under the age of six now have the legal right to ask their employers to consider flexible ways of working (dti). Finally, part-time working legislation now gives part-time workers the same rights as their full-time colleagues.

Germany

The unification of the GDR—an AWM—and the Federal Republic of Germany—a strong male breadwinner welfare model—in 1990 marked, potentially, an initial shift towards a AWM in Germany. Instead, the transfer of the social structure of the West German model to the east undermined many aspect of AWM in the new Länder. Despite the desire among East German women to remain economically active, rising levels of unemployment, and a rapid reduction of childcare provision has made large numbers to exit the labour market.

Since the change of government in 1998, general moves have been made away from the male breadwinner model to the AWM by encouraging women into the labour market and supporting families. Lone mothers have not been targeted directly, although the issue of lone parenting has been brought onto the policy agenda; the BMFSFJ has for example run a series of policy focused workshops on the issue of lone parenting. This shift towards AWM in Germany has been packaged as a concern for gender equality and work-family balance, but also as a concern with economic efficiency, not wasting female human capital, the potential of creating a demand in the service sector if women work.

More significantly, the shift to encourage mothers into employment has been driven by concerns about high levels of welfare spending, and social assistance spending in particular. According to the 2001 annual report on social issues, 24.2% of social assistance recipients are lone parents and this is the second largest group after single people living on their own (Kanzleramt, 2001, 187). Concerns about levels of welfare spending and social assistance dependency came high up on the political and policy agenda in April 2001. Chancellor Schröder set off a so-called ‘laziness debate’ by announcing that no one has the right to live off welfare in Germany (Annesley, 2002). This triggered a cross-party debate about the respective rights and responsibilities of welfare recipients, and social assistance recipients in particular. Following this, further
calls were made from both the left (Scharping) and the right (Koch and Lautenschläger in Hesse) for more work obligations to be attached to social assistance receipt. Significantly, for the first time, it was stated that lone mothers should be included under this obligation. This debate radically alters the assumption that women with children and lone mothers are primarily mothers in the German welfare state (Annesley, 2002).

Reforms in the first Red-Green government sought to improve coordination between unemployed social assistance claimants and job centres through an initiative referred to as MoZArT (Annesley 2002). In addition, in 2001 an active labour market policy called Job-AQTIV was passed which aims to increase the speed at which the unemployed are moved to the labour market. Further developments such as the ‘privatization’ of the Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (the organization which manages unemployment benefit), the recommendations of the Hartz Commission in 2002 to increase the speed at which claimants move from benefits to work and the 2003 proposals from Chancellor Schröder to set time limits on claiming benefits are all likely to trigger more movement from welfare to the labour market. The controversial Hartz IV measures introduced cuts in benefit if claimants did not take up an employment offer but also increased support for families.

The issue of whether a move from welfare (social assistance) to work is financially worthwhile has also been debated in Germany, and it is generally agreed that there are not enough financial incentives for welfare claimants to move to work (Scharping, 2001). Some Länder have been piloting a scheme of tax credits in order to increase the incentive for welfare recipients to move to work. For example in Baden-Württemberg there are schemes to support lone parents financially and with advice on employment and training (ibid, 9). In Rheinland Pfalz, there are some schemes being piloted to target in work benefits at families and lone mothers in order to make exiting social assistance worthwhile (BMA NAPincl, 2001-03, Part II, 8). One such model—the Mainzer Modell—has now been extended into a national project, supporting in particular lone parents and those on low incomes (Presse- und Informationsamt 2002, 25).

The fact that German lone mothers are more likely to work than other mothers is often explained by the fact that they are, on the whole, better off in work than on social assistance. Work does pay. The fact that the number of lone mothers working is falling—falling 1991 and 1994 the number of single mothers working fell from 70.7% to 63.4% (Klett-Davies 1997)—can be explained by other factors. Firstly, it has to do with the state of the labour market. In male breadwinner welfare states, women are more likely to be displaced by men at times of high unemployment. This phenomenon has been clearly illustrated in the new Länder where women’s employment has drastically decreased since unification. However, more recently, it has been argued in Germany that expanding female employment would be a way of creating jobs since female employment creates a demand for childcare and the private service sector. The failure for women to take up employment has, secondly, to do with the difficulty of combining work and family commitments on account of the lack of infrastructure such as childcare. Clearly, in Germany, financial incentives alone will not encourage mothers into employment. If mothers are to be encouraged to work then this must be supplemented by measures to expand the labour market, to improve childcare provision and to promote family friendly employment.
Since 1996 parents in Germany have had a statutory right to childcare, but only from the age of three. Moreover, most Kindergärten and schools close at lunchtime. The Red-Green coalition agreement in 2002 predicted that in coming years 500 000 Kindergarten places will become available as falling birth rates will decrease the demand for childcare places. Länder and local authorities will be expected to use this slack to increase provision of all-day childcare and places for the under-threes. The agreement also made a commitment to create an additional 10 000 all-day school places. However, the current budget difficulties—particularly at local level which funds childcare—places severe constraints on these.

Important changes have also been made to the provision of parenting leave (Erziehungsurlaub), which used to be granted for two years and needed to be taken at one time. Since January 2001 parenting leave has been change to parenting time (Erziehungszeit) and it no longer needs to be taken in one single block; the third year can be taken at any time up to the child’s eighth year. In two parent families, parents can take time off together. This links in to a broader initiative from the BMFSFJ called Mehr Spielraum für Väter (literally: more playtime for fathers) which aims to promote men’s role in childrearing. Parenting allowance (Erziehungsgeld) of 307 € per month is paid to parents in the first two years though if this is only claimed for one year, then the payment is 460 € offering an incentive to return to work after one year. Finally, both parents now have the right to work part-time hours if their workplace employs more than 15 employees.

**Gendered Policy Debates in the UK and Germany**

This section highlights an example of how one policy debate and policy reform—parental and maternity leave—is gendered, and how this can change over time. Policy providing for parental leave on the birth of a child can be gendered in three ways. Firstly, it can offer a minimal provision which encourages women to adopt the role of citizen-workers, buying in childcare so that mothers can undertake market activity. Secondly, it can offer a more generous provision for the mother only so that she can combine her roles as worker and carer; this recognises the importance of care roles as well as formal employment. Thirdly, policy can be in the form of leave for both parents to encourage shared work and caring responsibilities.

Policy on parental leave in the UK and Germany is influenced by the 1996 European Directive on Parental Leave. The Directive is gendered in the third way: to help men and women reconcile work and family responsibilities and to encourage men ‘to assume an equal share of family responsibilities’. The Directive grants ‘men and women workers an individual right to parental leave on the grounds of the birth or adoption of a child to enable them to take care of that child, for at least three months, until a given age up to 8 years to be defined by Member States and/or management and labour’ (Clause 2.1).

The UK initially opted out from the Social Protocol which contained the parental leave Directive. It signed up to this 1997 following the election of the Labour government and was then obliged to introduce parental leave legislation. Since 1999 British parents have been entitled to 13 weeks parental leave (Lewis 2002, 148). This is, as Lewis points out (ibid.), significantly lower than the provision in other European countries (e.g. Sweden 18
However, as was highlighted above, the Labour government has extended the provision of maternity leave to six months paid, with six additional months unpaid and it now has plans to extend this to 12 month paid leave. Fathers were granted two weeks paid paternity leave in April 2003. The gendered nature of debates and policy shifts from the model of the citizen-worker with little provision that encourages women back to the labour market as soon as possible to a female worker-carer model which respects the value of both contributions. Policy in the UK falls short, however, of the gender-blind work-carer model which the EU promotes as the UK’s provision for parental leave is one week longer than the EU’s minimum requirement. For men, the citizen-worker model is the only model supported by state policy.

In Germany there is no strong gender model in Germany that promotes women solely as citizen-workers. Parental leave introduced in 1986 entitled men and women to three years paid leave with a means-tested flat-rate benefit. This had to be taken immediately after the birth of a child. The SPD-Green government’s reforms of parental leave legislation in 2000 introduced more options. Parents can now share the maximum of three years leave, they can care for the child together for some of the time, they can chose how they want to split the leave over the first eight years of the child’s life (Lewis 2002, 159). In gender terms this represents a shift from being gendered to a care-work balance for women to a work-care balance model for both men and women.³

Women’s Influence on Policy Reform Debates—the UK

In the UK and Germany there is evidence of extension of parental and maternity leave provision, and there are shifts to more generous regimes which recognise the importance of caring roles for the mother (UK) and the mother and father (Germany). In the UK case, the parental provision was introduced by the Labour government and the legislation offers leave for 13 weeks—just one week over the minimum requirement of the Directive. Maternity leave has been subsequently extended and paid paternity leave has been paid at a low flat rate since April 2003. This might indicate that domestic feminists have been successful at shaping government policy in their interests, to provide more than the minimum required provision. Current reform debates are considering the idea of extending paid paternity leave. Further research is required to find out which voices shaped this process of policy reform. This section briefly highlights some of the key debates in different women’s communities in the UK which shape the reform process which have called or are calling for a shift in the emphasis of policy away from the gender blind citizen-worker model to a combined care and work gender model for men and women.⁴

³ The interesting and important question of policy take up—whether policy opportunities makes a difference to behaviour—is outside the scope of this study. Lewis (2002) shows that take up of parental leave by men has increased since 1986 but that men’s roles remain primarily as breadwinners. This trend is perhaps exacerbated during periods of high unemployment and economic insecurity. Also, a high minority of women do not return to work after three years’ parental leave (Bleses and Seeleib-Kaiser 2004, 89).
⁴ This is provisional research on the UK. The research on Germany will be carried out during a period of research leave August 2005-February 2006.
Substantive Representation

Recent research on the impact of Labour’s female MPs on policy outcomes argues that descriptive representation has led to substantive representation (Childs 2004). Childs highlights Labour women MPs’ campaigns to integrate women’s issues (childcare, violence against women, breast cancer) into ‘mainstream’ parliamentary business and makes specific reference to the campaigns by Ruth Kelly MP5 for paternity leave (2004, 134). The Government’s consultation paper on ‘Work and Families, Choice and Flexibility’ was launched by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on 28 February 2005. The paper, sponsored by Particia Hewitt MP, Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and Minister for Women and Equality, states that the Government is consulting on:

1. extending the period of statutory maternity pay, maternity allowance and adoption pay initially from 26 to 39 weeks and subsequently to 52 weeks by the end of the next Parliament;
2. improving dialogue between employers and employees during maternity leave, including extending the notice period mothers give when returning to work;
3. allowing a mother to transfer some of her leave and pay entitlement to the father;
4. extending the existing right for an employee to request flexible working arrangements to new groups of people, for example parents of older children and carers of sick and disabled adults.

Women’s Policy Machinery

The Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) supports policy which encourages fathers to take part in caring responsibilities (point three above). It commissioned a paper on the issue entitled ‘Sharing Caring: Bringing Fathers into the Frame’ by Margaret O’Brien of the University of East Anglia in November 2004. Based on the findings of this research the EOC responded to the Government’s consultation by calling on it to follow three principles which will influence the choices parents make in how they share child care and earnings. The EOC argues that Government policy should:

• ‘Make sure that parents are entitled to a separate period of paid leave each
• Give parents flexibility on when and how they can take their leave in the first year of their child’s life and beyond;
• Make sure that all this leave is paid at a higher level so that it nearly replaces parents’ earnings.’

(EOC Press release: ‘Fathers caring more as EOC call for greater choice on parental leave’ 28 February 2005).

Corporatist Actors

5 Ruth Kelly MP was elected 1997, has had four children since then and is now Minister for Education and Skills.
The Trade Union Congress (TUC) won a legal challenge against the government on its parental leave legislation. The government originally limited entitlement to anyone with a child born after 15 December 1999. Following the TUC’s challenge, leave is now an entitlement to anyone with a child aged under 5 on 15 December 1999 (TUC Press release: ‘TUC welcomes changes to parental leave rules’, 10 January 2002). At the time John Monks said ‘The TUC is still campaigning for the Government to introduce paid parental leave and to make it more flexible. Many parents are unable to take their leave because it would be unpaid, and cannot be taken in blocks of less than a week or by temporarily working less hours’ (ibid.).

In response to the Government’s 2005 ‘Work and Families, Choice and Flexibility’ consultation paper Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC, stated that ‘Most mothers and fathers would jump at the chance of being able to spend more time at home with their babies, and any move that allows new fathers to play a greater role in the first few months of their children’s lives is to be welcomed. It’s also good to see the government considering extending the right to request to work flexibly to carers and the parents of older children—everyone at work should be able to benefit from a better work-life balance.’ (www.tuc.org.uk/work_life/tuc-9523-f0.cfm).

The Female Elite

There have been a range of other debates, for example among academic researchers and the liberal press in the UK about the importance of encouraging women to take maternity leave, on the impact of non-parental childcare on very young babies, the health benefits of associated with extended periods of maternity leave and the reality of the choices that women are making. In the Guardian and the Observer, columnists such as Polly Toynbee, Madeline Bunting and Psychologist Oliver James have committed many lines to the issue of family policy, and Bunting and James have written critically on the effects of too-much childcare on the under-threes (see e.g. Bunting 2004). Oliver James recently argued in the Observer that ‘It should be a matter of law that all fathers (especially politicians) are forced to care for their first child exclusively for a week before it turns three. Only then would men in general and our leaders in particular start legislating to create a social context in which carers of babies are maximally supported’ (James 2005).

Conclusion

The transition to the AWM welfare state encourages all adults to enter the labour market and supported welfare states offer not only encouragement or coercion to get adults to enter the labour market, but also provide financial incentives to do so, and support to adults with caring responsibilities. Many feminist scholars have criticised the AWM emphasis on paid employment and its gender blind citizen-worker model of the welfare state. They have stressed the importance of balancing working and caring responsibilities for both women as mothers and men as fathers. This paper outlines policy change in Germany and the UK in the direction of the AWM and highlighted the gendered debates behind maternity and parental leave policies. The example of parental leave shows change in policy in a direction away from the gender blind model of the welfare state to a
female work-care balance model in the UK and from a female work-care model to a parental work-care model in Germany. Such shifts are potentially the outcome of women’s influence in policy in their roles in the state, women’s movements, corporatist and media elites. The research task now is to establish with more accuracy which women’s policy advocates have (had) the most success in getting their issues translated into the policy of social democratic-led governments.

Bibliography


FIGURE ONE  THE RESEARCH PROCESS

STAGE 1  
Policy CHANGE in the direction of AWM

STAGE 2  
Are policy DEBATES gendered?  
- citizen-worker  
- female worker/carer  
- male and female worker/carer

STAGE 3  
Gendered debates in FEMALE policy communities:  
- Substantive representation  
- State feminism  
- corporatist  
- Female elites

TABLE ONE  EXAMPLES OF POLICY CHANGE IN THE DIRECTION OF AWM

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>United Kingdom</th>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage adults to take employment</td>
<td>Hartz IV</td>
<td>New Deal (Lone Parents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make formal employment financially worthwhile</td>
<td>Collective Wage Bargaining Tax credits</td>
<td>Minimum Wage Working Family Tax Credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support citizens in their roles as workers and carers</td>
<td>Erziehungszeit Full-time schooling</td>
<td>Maternity leave Childcare / Sure Start</td>
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