

development still needs to grapple with the problem of exactly how change in the meaning of options vs. the presence or absence of options entrenched in the middle of the Overton window – e.g. “activation” (p. 178) – might also help to explain some of the policy failures, it remains fruitful and innovative.

Lynch also in this chapter develops the idea of medicalizing inequality. In all three country cases, the power of bio-medicine and the vagueness of some of the policies advanced by the international health inequalities consensus combined to turn a social problem into a medical one. While Peter Conrad, a medical sociologist, is commonly credited with originating the overarching concept of medicalization, Julia Lynch develops this concept in a new direction by showing how the specific process of medicalizing inequality depends on politics. For example, in the early years of the Macron government, French policy focused on “health education, prevention, and access to medical care,” as it was “built on the foundations of the territorial, medical-care centric frame that had dominated French policy” before the emergence of the consensus (p. 189). The concept of medicalizing inequality also offers an intellectual pathway toward deepening the gender analysis of resilient inequality, as gender vividly marks some of the interviewees’ remarks. It seems that, at least in the Finland case, medicalizing inequality moved it from the masculine domain of economic policy (“the big boy”, p. 200) to the feminine domain of health (“the small, soft things”, p. 200).

The book concludes on a pessimistic note, offering strong advice – some of it likely to attract controversy – to policymakers and health-equity advocates. Lynch tells policymakers to “eschew the health inequalities problem frame and instead stick to tested, effective remedies for social inequality consisting of taxation, redistribution, and labor market regulation” (p. 224), but does not explain how to reverse the forces that led to the tabooing of these policies in the first place, or whether tabooing redistribution resulted more from the reframing itself or from other forces. Lynch also suggests that health-equity advocates de-emphasize “cross-sectoral work and related efforts to decentralize” health-equity policy (p. 224), but does not explain how this would address the funding shortfalls discussed earlier in the book. Nevertheless, I wholeheartedly agree with the central political conclusion that “if the center-left wishes to regain the support of voters now being drawn away by populist and nationalist parties, it will need to rethink how it talks about inequality” (p. 226). Hear, hear!

JASON BECKFIELD
Harvard University
jbeckfie@wjh.harvard.edu

Mary Daly (2020), *Gender Inequality and Welfare States in Europe*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, £25.00, pp. 232, pbk.
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In this monograph, Mary Daly claims to “assess the relationship between gender and social policy, for the purpose of both taking stock and sketching out a future research agenda”. With this, she follows on from a long-standing and ongoing discussion in welfare state analysis, held first and foremost by feminist scholars.

The aim of this book is to “examine both the nature and consequences of policies” and to fill the gap of “a lack of convincing assessments of both progress already made and the significance of a range of social policy approaches in this context”. The book begins by presenting a chronology of approaches to gender and social policy. Starting with the early approaches and proceeding with contemporary ones, it puts dominating concepts in welfare state analysis

under the spotlight. It reminds us on critical perspectives on major approaches such as the labour movement or Marxism that placed the concerns of class over gender, or the welfare regime approach of Esping-Andersen and the de/familialisation concept of McLaughlin and Glendinning, (Lister) and later Leitner, as insufficient for analysing the relationship between gender and social policy, or liberal and social contract theory with its notion of the isolated individual. Also, it lists relevant issues for this analysis including social policy's strong normative position on the family, its contradictory effects on women, the gendered definition of risks, the collective or individual unit of entitlements, tax-related arrangements; in addition to gendered social rights divided into male social insurance and female social assistance, and care as a major component in this debate. The theoretical part concludes with presenting Daly's perspective on the issue which is: 'intersectionality'. While recognising the challenges of this concept, it promises, Daly argues, to reveal "the interconnections between systems of power at a more abstract level". To her understanding, "no single category – e.g. gender – is sufficient for understanding people's positioning, needs and experiences". Instead, in this book she adopts a "situated agency perspective". Drawing on Jane Jensen's work, it focusses on the intersection of income, employment, and unpaid work since only gains in all three would indicate real progress in gender equality.

The three empirical chapters that follow provide data on gender equality understood as access to these "core sets of resources". The chapters show one after the other gender differences in income, employment, and time. Its intent is to "identify the status quo as well as signature trends and situate these in considerations regarding the prevailing social policy", accepting the multitude of measurement and data constraints. Interesting insights and recent overviews on women's position regarding these crucial resources are delivered. Gender differences and policy effects, though, are often put into perspective when adding, for example, that "the effect could be produced by falling male incomes and rising male unemployment", by demography, education, social class or socio-economic background, choice, cultural factors, interpreted mainly as employment culture, or workplace organisations as mediating work-family policies in practice, i.e. by factors at micro, meso and macro level that do not correspond to social policy. Often, the book concludes that country variation, indicating a social policy effect, cannot be identified. And it is very self-critical on the empirical chapters that rely entirely on outcome data when highlighting the "truth [...] that we do not know the reality [in terms of gender] with certainty because of standard data and research practice".

The final part of the book turns to policy analysis. First, it chronologically describes how the EU has approached the issue in utilizing three different types of policy approaches over time drawing on Daly's earlier study on gender mainstreaming. A chapter on "gender and social policy more broadly" follows, in which the issue of care is considered, and the limits of recent political concepts in this regard are identified, such as social investment and work-life-balance, in the form of concluding bullet-points, and "a new familialism" in Europe. Next to this new familialism, though, the book identifies on the next page, in the concluding chapter on a future research agenda, a major change, stating that it is the dual earner household that is now the dominant household arrangement among couples with children in the EU. Having a look at the countries and their histories in terms of female labour market participation, the table referred to (5.1 on the distribution of household employment patterns in couples with children) might also be interpreted differently: as showing not change but only frozen landscapes in these arrangements. And, it is not clear how far this identified change is a "consequence of policies" since this change is "again mainly [caused by] changes made by women".

It is not stressed often enough that social policy's impact on gender inequality is a step-child of analytical and political concern. Consequently, a book on this issue is highly

appreciated both from a scientific and a political perspective. And indeed, this book helps newcomers in the subject to get an overview on the issues and “old rabbits” to reflect again on what has been reflected upon and what is still lacking in terms of theory, methods and empirics. It reminds us on major steps in understanding the relationship between gender and social policy in terms of theory building, and in responding to it in terms of policies and systematic data collection on gendered outcomes both mainly initiated by the European Union. In this book, Daly provides a descriptive overview on outcome data on the broader societal situation regarding social inequalities in general and gender inequality in particular. And still, as repeatedly emphasised in the book, the empirical analysis of outcome data implies major limitations: first regarding the suitability of the data itself, and second regarding the conclusions we may draw from outcome data since it is a variety of structural factors that influence societal reality, and the impact of social policy on it can only be assumed.

It was surprising to me, reading this book on the relationship between gender and social policy, that it concludes in denying that gender is the major category of analysis: “speaking of women and men as global categories is inappropriate in light of the significant differences found between and within population sectors”. This standpoint is extreme even within intersectional discourses, and one might think of recent identity-approaches when the book understands improvement in terms of gender equality as being “read from the template of the lives of highly-educated, ethnic majority women”.

Also, it did not become entirely clear to me how the book approached the second component of analysis, which is social policy. In general, it reflects upon different micro and macro components that might be interpreted as influencing outcomes regarding income, employment, and time. Policy itself was hardly mentioned, and if so, it was rather in terms of employment policy and migration policy; social policy was not explicitly addressed so that it is difficult to “examine both the nature and consequences of [social] policies”. The broad societal rather than social policy perspective on welfare states applied in this book can, to me, also not explain why major contributions on gender inequality and social policy or welfare states in Europe are either marginalised or missing, both theoretical and empirical ones.

Two things could have been helpful for the reader, for beginners as well as old rabbits. First, a clear definition of gender equality or a systematic reflection of approaches (or models as Daly calls them) regarding social policy in terms of ‘sameness’, ‘difference’, and their mix. With this, many loose threads could have found a robust foundation for interpretation. The latter chapter suggests that defining gender equality is intentionally avoided since that there is no agreement on it: “one could argue at length about the appropriate conceptualisation of equality”. A guiding perspective on the book’s understanding of gender equality in social policy terms, though, could have informed the reader to better ground the different approaches: such as gender equality understood as “access to a breadwinner’s income [...] without having to marry”; or the adult worker model which seems, in part, to be being interpreted as the most promising solution to the issue.

Second, the differences between major approaches are discussed in the final chapter. It is not entirely clear to me why this discussion has been chosen as the endpoint of the book instead of its starting point. This chapter highlights two approaches suitable to inform a systematic analysis of the social policy effect on gender. The first one is choice, with the “limits to a liberal interpretation of choice” rightly criticised and the need for “state provision” stressed. A systematic analysis of social policies regarding this broader interpretation of choice could have been very insightful. And a second approach is highlighted in the final chapter as a potentially fruitful foundation for social policy analysis: substantive equality of Sandra Fredman (2016). The analysis of social policies’ impact on gender equality, based on approaches like

these, is put on the future research agenda. We are looking forward to these kinds of analyses, perhaps in the form of a second book by Daly herself.

References

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PATRICIA FRERICKS

University of Kassel

patricia.frericks@uni-kassel.de

Yasmine Ergas, Jane Jenson and Sonya Michel (eds) (2019), *Reassembling Motherhood: Procreation and Care in a Globalized World*, New York: Columbia University Press, £22.00, pp. 336, pbk.

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Reassembling Motherhood provides a thorough and insightful analysis of emerging and ongoing forms of injustice related to mothering.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines to *reassemble* as “to bring or put together the parts of (something) again”. Hence, the title of this volume implies two underlying theses about motherhood. First, that motherhood was a systematic whole. Second, that motherhood as a systematic whole has been broken up, and, somehow, we need to put it back together.

However, after reading this enlightening and engaging book, I believe *disassembling motherhood* could be a more apt title. In fact, this volume *disassembles* motherhood in that it successfully identifies the component parts involved in mothering, both, in relation to procreation and care. In addition, the book shows how each component part, as well as motherhood as a whole, are the outcome of social, legal, scientific, ideological and political forces at stake in a given time and place (as the illuminating opening chapter of Nara Milanich shows, giving a particularly insightful frame for the following chapters).

As such, recent changes transforming motherhood are just the last link in the socio-historical chain producing motherhood and, more precisely, mothering. Yet the ongoing challenge of each time, and in which this volume excels, is to unpack how these forces produce and reproduce new and old forms of oppression, injustice and discrimination associated with mothering. The focus in the book is changes brought about by assisted reproductive technologies (ARTs), family law, and care policies; taking place in a context of predominant neoliberalism and globalization.

The book comprises thirteen substantive chapters plus introduction and afterword. These chapters can be clustered in three broad subjects. The biggest cluster of chapters (Bos; Kahn and Chavkin; Lutz; Michel and Oliveira; Palumbo; Roberts; Sanger) analyze inequalities related mostly to ‘race’, class and migration, but also to ARTs, which result in punishing certain mothers or in curtailing their maternal rights. These chapters effectively show how classical social variables, such as race, class and marital status continue to shape the status of motherhood. Therefore, mothers who are non-white, single and from low-income groups continue to be punished in their condition as mothers. Yet, the volume also shows how today migrating, surrogate and lesbian mothers face significant forms of coercion.

For example, Roberts’ chapter shows the ongoing punishment of black mothers in the US, now exacerbated by the “intersection of the foster care and prison systems”, which results