

CHAPTER 1

Gender Inequality in the Labor Market in Comparative Perspective

In February 1993, the U.S. Congress passed the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). The bill was soon signed into law by President Bill Clinton. The passage of the FMLA was a watershed event for American families, and for American women. For the first time in the nation's history, the federal government required employers to provide twelve weeks of job-protected leave for new parents and other workers with family caregiving obligations.

The FMLA has been characterized as a pivotal moment in work-family policy in the United States. Its passage signified widespread government recognition of the competing demands of the workplace and family caregiving and an explicit endorsement of measures that promote flexibility for workers. At the same time, the FMLA positioned the federal government squarely between employers and families. The act received support from workers' rights organizations, women's rights organizations, and disability organizations (Sawyers and Meyer 1999). Yet passage of the bill mandating unpaid leave took nearly twelve years and endured significant objections from the business community (Marks 1997; Elison 1997).

Although the passage of the FMLA signaled a new era in American politics surrounding work and family, its use by workers is highly variable and its effects on workers and their families uncertain (Gerstel and McGonagle 1999).

Not all workers are covered, and not all employees can afford to take unpaid time off from work. Moreover, some employees, especially highly skilled professional workers, may either be exempt from the provisions of the FMLA or already have more generous employer-sponsored parental leave.

The central provisions of the FMLA—twelve weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave—are exceedingly meager viewed in cross-national comparison. For example, since 1979 Germany has offered federal paid maternity leave of at least fourteen weeks. In 1986 the leave and benefit policy was changed in several ways, including the introduction of parental leave of more than a year, thus creating a “powerful instrument for delaying mothers’ return to work after childbirth” (Ondrich, Spiess, and Yang 1996, 247). By the time the United States passed the FMLA, German women had the option to take 162 weeks of leave, nearly two-thirds of which is paid (Gauthier and Bortnik 2001). Germany’s generous leave policies are not without critics, and the German parliament has continued to revisit their length and configuration. Recently, in response to concerns about fertility and labor supply, the German parliament changed the parental leave policy to compensate middle- and high-earning families for the additional income loss associated with leave-taking and to encourage the participation of fathers in child-rearing (Spiess and Wrohlich 2008).

Germany’s leave and benefit provisions are outmatched by those of the Czech Republic. After the fall of the Communist regime, the Czech Republic pursued work-family policies that encouraged women to stay at home with young children (Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007). Maternity leave, or leave reserved for mothers of newborns, continues at its pretransition level of twenty-eight weeks. In addition to maternity leave, parental leave gives parents time away from work to engage in caregiving responsibilities. Parental leave can be taken by either mothers or fathers. In the Czech Republic, parental leave has been extended from two and a half years to three and a half years. With declines in access to child care and increases in parental leave, mothers now often stay home with young children for three to four years (Saxonberg and Szelewa 2007).

Dramatic variation in parental leave policies across countries raises critical questions about how policy conditions like job-protected parental leaves influence gender inequality in economic outcomes. In this book, we consider the economic consequences for women, men, and families of job-protected leaves and other conditions purported to affect gender inequality in the home

and the workplace. How do the configuration and length of leave influence gender inequalities in caregiving? How consequential are variations in the length of leaves—from three months to nearly four years—for the labor market fortunes of women and men? How does government-mandated or state-supported leave affect employment among women and men with different levels of skill and experience?

Although it is valuable to discern the effects of parental leave on inclusion into or exclusion from paid employment for women and men, and for mothers and fathers, we are also concerned with whether and how parental leave and other conditions influence other aspects of economic inequality between women and men once they are in the labor force. No single measure captures the essence of economic inequality between women and men, either within or across countries. For example, although there is growing evidence that job-protected parental leaves foster women's labor market attachment and return to work after childbirth (Ruhm 1998; Gornick and Meyers 2003), there is also concern that extended parental leaves—especially those lasting more than a year—promote gender specialization and exacerbate gender inequality on other dimensions.

Parental leave helps families reconcile tensions between home and work by relieving the demands of employment for a period of time and enabling parents—typically mothers—to care for children at home. In contrast to policies and conditions that are conceptualized as “work-facilitating,” parental leave may be thought of as a “work-reducing” policy (see, for example, Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Parental leave may therefore affect hours worked, occupation, and wages through its influence on labor force participation, and these effects may last well beyond the child-rearing years by shaping household and societal expectations about gender roles and domestic responsibilities. The skills and competencies that women gain caring for children, managing a household, and supporting a partner in the paid labor force typically go unrewarded if and when they return to the labor market. In contrast, while women are at home caring for young children, men are concentrating their effort in the paid labor force and thus gaining valuable experience that pays dividends in salaries and long-term economic security. While women in places like Germany and the Czech Republic gain two, three, or even four precious years at home with their young children, they simultaneously lose value in the labor market.

A brief discussion of cross-national variability in parental leave helps to il-

illustrate how the contours of gender inequality in economic outcomes may be shaped by policies and conditions that structure inequality within households and the marketplace. Yet parental leave is not the only policy available across advanced industrialized economies to help families manage the sometimes competing demands of paid work and caregiving. Countries intentionally and unintentionally influence the tensions between work and home through taxation structures, the regulation of working hours and school days, the provision of child allowances, and early childhood education and care, to name a few mechanisms (Gauthier 1993, 1996; Gustafsson 1992; Gornick and Meyers 2003). Throughout this book, we draw contrasts between the different mechanisms that influence gender inequality within both the household and the workplace. For example, some countries provide extensive public child care to support families—both materially and symbolically—in combining work in the paid labor force with the demands of caring for children. The United States is not among these countries, but a brief look at history reveals that it almost was.

Although a laggard in parental leave policy, the United States considered universal child care coverage almost forty years ago in an effort to facilitate the growing involvement of women in paid work. In 1971, after several years of debate, both the Senate and the House of Representatives passed the Comprehensive Child Development Act (CCDA). The CCDA promised universal child care for America's children, free to some though available to all on a sliding-scale fee basis; the act promised to provide federally funded child care for nearly one-third of America's preschool-age children.

Fierce political debate surrounded the CCDA. Feminists largely supported it, while conservatives called for private solutions to work-family problems. Yet even supporters of universal child care could not agree on the extent of coverage or on which level of government would administer the program, and opposition to various dimensions of the act ultimately diluted its provisions (Michel 1999). Conservative opposition to the CCDA was so intense, however, that even the compromise bill passed by Congress was vetoed by President Richard Nixon (Dinner 2004).

The federal government continues to provide support for public child care for low-income children through the Head Start program, but the targeted benefits of Head Start have not had the widespread impact that CCDA promised. Even at Head Start's peak in the mid-1990s, fewer than one in twenty American children under age three were being cared for in publicly

supported child care—nowhere near the one in three the CCDA aimed to cover.

Although U.S. child care policy is meager in contrast to what is offered by some advanced industrialized nations, it is not unique in that distinction. Few countries have universal child care or child care coverage that meets the expectations outlined in the CCDA. There are, however, some particularly notable examples of countries that have invested significantly in early childhood education and care (ECEC).

Among European and English-speaking advanced industrialized nations, Denmark is the leader in the public provision of child care. Nearly half (48 percent) of children under age three in Denmark were in publicly funded child care facilities through the early 1990s. Sweden, Norway, and Finland all exhibit relatively high rates of young children in public care, though lower than Denmark's. France has long been a leader in public support for child care: in the mid-1990s, nearly one-quarter of children under age three in France were in public child care facilities (Morgan 2006).

Public child care reconciles the tension between employment and caregiving by moving some caregiving labor outside of the household and into the public domain. As suggested earlier, just as parental leave may be conceptualized as “work-reducing,” the public provision of child care may be thought of as “work-facilitating” (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Previous research has not adequately examined, however, how the labor market inclusion associated with the public provision of child care might influence other aspects of economic inequality in the prime childbearing years and over the life course.

In this book, we examine four measures of gender inequality—employment, hours worked, occupation, and pay—to provide a nuanced assessment of the factors that influence the contours of inequality across and within countries. Assessments of women's relative economic standing across countries depend not only on whether women are included in the labor market but on how they are included. Any employment—even part-time—gives some indication of women's access to economic rewards and public endorsement of the concept of working women, wives, and mothers (Blossfeld and Hakim 1997). Part-time and part-year work, however, decreases access to economic rewards and can generate inequality in other domains, including occupational sex segregation and the gender wage gap, and lead to the persistence of inequality over the life course (Bardasi and Gornick 2001). Occupational sex segregation is an important feature of gender inequality in the

labor market because separate is seldom equal. Segregation generally reflects inequalities in other social domains, including education and family responsibilities, and it is often associated with inequalities in pay and promotion (Roos and Reskin 1992; Bridges 2003; Charles and Grusky 2004). Finally, the gender wage gap provides an important measure of women's relative economic standing, indicating how employed women are compensated for their work in comparison to men.

While employment rates, hours worked, occupational segregation, and wages all provide some indication of women's relative economic standing, no country ranks high on all these measures. Table 1.1 ranks twenty-one European and English-speaking countries on commonly used indicators of women's economic standing: employment, involvement in part-time work, occupational integration, and wage equality. Sweden, Finland, and Denmark post the highest levels of women's employment; the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the United States document the highest concentration of women in full-time work or the lowest concentration of women in part-time work; Belgium, the Netherlands, and Slovenia exhibit the highest levels of occupational sex integration or the lowest levels of occupational sex segregation; and Italy, Belgium, and France record the smallest gender wage gaps. No single country does better than average on all four indicators of gender inequality in the labor market.

How is it that Nordic women post such high employment rates but remain heavily concentrated in female-dominated jobs? How do the relatively few Belgian women working in the paid labor force succeed in making inroads into male-dominated occupations? How can we reconcile extremely low rates of women's employment in Italy with near-parity in their wages with men? These inconsistencies beg the question: is there a tradeoff between women's inclusion in the labor market and their equality within it? In other words, do high rates of women's employment come at the cost of gender wage equality? As women enter the labor market in greater numbers, will they inevitably work in different occupations and jobs than men? Are high wages among working women found only when few women work in the paid labor force?

This book asks these and related questions to develop the notion that there are tradeoffs between different aspects of gender inequality in the economy. Our central purpose is to explain how those tradeoffs are shaped by individuals, markets, and states. A comprehensive account of gender inequality demands attention to multiple dimensions of women's economic standing,

Table 1.1 Four Measures of Gender Equality, Country Rankings, Mid-1990s

| | Employment (1 to 21) | Full-Time Work (1 to 15) | Occupational Integration (1 to 18) | Wage Equality (1 to 12) |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Sweden | 1 | 14 | 6 | 8 |
| Finland | 2 | — | 14 | 6 |
| Denmark | 3 | — | 13 | — |
| United States | 4 | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| Norway | 5 | — | — | — |
| United Kingdom | 6 | 13 | 15 | 12 |
| Czech Republic | 7 | 1 | 9 | — |
| Canada | 8 | 8 | 5 | 9 |
| Australia | 9 | 12 | 8 | 5 |
| Austria | 10 | 6 | 12 | 4 |
| Russian Federation | 11 | 4 | 18 | — |
| France | 12 | 7 | 16 | 3 |
| Luxembourg | 13 | 9 | 17 | — |
| Netherlands | 14 | 15 | 2 | 7 |
| Germany | 15 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Slovenia | 16 | — | 3 | — |
| Hungary | 17 | 2 | 7 | — |
| Belgium | 18 | 10 | 1 | 2 |
| Poland | 19 | — | — | — |
| Italy | 20 | 5 | — | 1 |
| Spain | 21 | — | 10 | — |

Source: Luxembourg Income Study (LIS 2003).

Notes: Data for rankings appear in table A.1. Employment is ranked 1 for highest employment rates. Full-time work is ranked 1 for highest percentage of employed women working full-time. Occupational integration is ranked 1 for most integrated. Wage equality is ranked 1 for the greatest equality in wages. Using the full sample in table A.1, the correlation between women's employment and full-time work is .03, between women's employment and occupational integration .12, between women's employment and wage equality $-.25$, between full-time work and occupational integration $-.35$ ($p < .05$), between full-time work and wage equality .19, and between occupational integration and wage equality .01.

since equality in one domain often conceals inequality in another. Only through considering how different economic outcomes reveal different aspects of the gendered character of work at home and within the marketplace can we identify how different policy conditions structure tradeoffs between labor market inclusion and labor market equality.

Throughout the book, we build our argument that conditions that foster labor market inclusion do not necessarily guarantee equality by other measures. Similarly, conditions that foster labor market exclusion do not necessarily guarantee inequality by other measures. We concern ourselves not only with whether women are included in the labor market, but with *how* they are included in the labor market. For example, publicly provided child care promotes labor market inclusion but does not necessarily ensure gender equality in hours worked, occupation, or wages. If publicly provided child care pulls women who would otherwise eschew employment into the labor market, we may observe that women appear to do less well on gender equality measures such as occupational segregation and wages. This is a simple selection argument. On the other hand, if publicly provided child care allows women to work similar hours to men, in similar occupations, and at similar pay, we may observe that such child care promotes both inclusion and equality.

In this book, we investigate economic inequality not only across countries but within them as well. For example, long parental leaves foster labor market exclusion, but their effect on women's labor market outcomes is likely to vary by parental status and educational level. Mothers who take time out of the paid labor force to care for their own children may see their economic fortunes deteriorate relative to women who either do not have children or do not leave the labor force to care for them. Women with high levels of education may be less likely to utilize long parental leaves because of the ramifications for career advancement or low levels of wage replacement. This highlights the need to specify not only which labor market outcome is of interest and which policy is under consideration, but also which women are most affected.

We investigate the labor market inclusion-equality tradeoff by examining how the work lives of women and men are organized over time across twenty-one countries. We take advantage of cross-national and over-time variation in economic outcomes and the conditions thought to produce them to investigate the underpinnings of gender inequality in the labor market. We examine how employment, hours worked, occupation, and pay are shaped by the domestic obligations associated with child-rearing and individual investments

in education. We also consider how each of these outcomes is influenced by government policies and programs—like parental leave and public child care—that regulate, routinize, and reinforce gender differences in home production and market work. The contours of inequality across and within countries are shaped by specific aspects of social policy that variably relieve or concentrate the demands of caregiving within households, often in the hands of women, and at the same time structure workplace expectations and the allocation of workplace rewards. Government policies and conditions—like parental leave and public child care—affect gender inequalities in power within the household and the marketplace and have implications for women’s economic standing on a number of fronts.

ENGENDERING INEQUALITY

There is little disagreement that women still lag behind men in many measures of economic well-being, and scholars from a range of disciplines agree that even though women have made progress in some domains, significant inequality in the labor market persists (Blau, Brinton, and Grusky 2006). Yet despite agreement about the existence of inequality, the causes of gender inequality in the labor market are contested, and there is little consensus about the best methodological approach for resolving the dispute. We argue that gender inequality in economic outcomes across countries and over time can be best understood by integrating the prevailing micro-economic and comparative explanations.

Micro-economic explanations for gender inequality rest on the assumption that women and men within households make collective decisions about how to allocate their labor to paid and unpaid work in an effort to maximize the well-being of the household (Mincer and Polachek 1974; Becker 1981). With few exceptions, however, micro-economic explanations for gender inequality in the workplace pay little attention to how social and economic conditions, including state policies and conditions, influence women’s and men’s investments in, and productive capacities for, paid labor and domestic work across countries (compare Del Boca and Locatelli 2007; Wetzels 2007; Boeri, Del Boca, and Pissarides 2005).

Comparative studies of economic inequality broadly defined, and gender inequality specifically, often examine economic well-being and inequality in relation to the level and configuration of welfare state provision. The term “welfare state” typically refers to how countries ensure the economic produc-

tivity and overall well-being of the population. While there are many ways to classify the nature and extent of welfare state provisions (Meulders and O'Dorchai 2007), countries are commonly categorized by the level and configuration of such provisions and the extent to which citizens are protected against the instabilities and uncertainties of the labor market, particularly how well they are shielded from the poverty or economic instability associated with unemployment.

Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1990) classifies advanced industrial societies as social democratic, liberal, or conservative-corporatist. Social democratic countries are characterized by generous income transfers and support for full employment and high wages. Liberal welfare states take a hands-off approach to social policy, leaving the market relatively unrestricted. Corporatist countries also have generous income transfer systems, as well as labor market policies that encourage high wages. Their benefit systems, however, are family-centered rather than individual-centered, and they tend to reinforce traditional divisions of labor between women and men and between social classes. Many comparative accounts of women's economic standing have found that Esping-Andersen's (1990, 1999) welfare state typology accounts for variation in women's involvement in the paid labor force, but that the classifications are less instructive for explaining gender inequality in other economic outcomes and give short shrift to the full range of women's productive activity, both at home and at work (Sainsbury 1996; Orloff 1993; O'Connor, Orloff, and Shaver 1999).

Cross-national studies of women's employment typically find that welfare state institutions have a moderately consistent relationship with women's employment. High rates of women's employment are found in the social democratic countries of northern Europe, and low levels of women's employment are found in the conservative-corporatist countries of southern Europe. The liberal countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, demonstrate a more mixed pattern, with medium to high employment rates (Oppenheimer 1994; Gornick, Meyers, and Ross 1997).

Variability within welfare state regimes in the levels of women's employment and the shortcomings of welfare state theory for understanding other measures of gender inequality have led to the development of alternative classification schemes of contemporary welfare states (see, for example, Lewis and Ostner 1995; Pfau-Effinger 2004; Gornick, Meyers, and Ross 1997; Korpi 2000; for a review, see Meulders and O'Dorchai 2007). Feminist scholars have

called attention to how the configuration of welfare state provisions reflects and reinforces existing productive activities within the home as well within the marketplace (Meulders and O'Dorchai 2007). One common theme is to highlight the effect of "family policy" on women's employment and economic security (Gornick, Meyers, and Ross 1997; Gornick and Meyers 2003).

Family policy is particularly consequential for women given their disproportionate involvement in family caregiving across countries (Gornick and Meyers 2003), and indices of family policy generosity have been shown to influence aggregate levels of women's employment and employment at the individual level (Gornick, Meyers, and Ross 1997, 1998; Mandel and Semyonov 2005; Stier, Lewin-Epstein, and Braun 2001). In our view, however, "family policy" conflates a variety of specific policies that may have countervailing effects on women's employment and other economic outcomes. Policies that foster women's inclusion in the labor market may lead to inequality among those employed, while other policies associated with women's exclusion from paid work may increase equality among those employed. Recent research indicates that particular policy features like the length of parental leave or the public provision of child care have different impacts on the work lives of women (see, for example, Pettit and Hook 2005; Stryker, Eliason, and Tranby 2007; Boeri, Del Boca, and Pissarides 2005). In our work, we try to distinguish the relationship between specific policy conditions and the economic fortunes of women from the generalized effects of overall welfare state classification or family policy generosity. By looking at multiple outcomes, we generate a more complete portrait of the factors that shape gender inequality.

Significant cross-national variability in the size of the part-time workforce and women's concentration within it illustrates some of the tensions between labor market inclusion and equality measured within the market, and it also suggests that states play an important role in structuring levels of employment and shaping working hours for women and men. Part-time work has been viewed as both a mechanism to incorporate women into the labor market and a means to marginalize them in the workplace (Blossfeld and Hakim 1997; Fagan and O'Reilly 1998; Pfau-Effinger 1998). The Netherlands claims the highest rate of part-time workers: well over one-third of Dutch workers are employed less than thirty hours per week, and a majority of women in the Netherlands are part-timers. A number of social democratic and liberal countries routinely classify between one-quarter and one-fifth of their workforce as part-time. Data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS)

show that women are overrepresented in part-time work across all advanced industrialized countries, though part-time work is rare—even among women—in the former socialist nations of Hungary, the Russian Federation, and Slovenia and in the conservative countries of Luxembourg, Italy, and Spain.

Research seeking to explain cross-national differences in involvement in part-time or part-year employment has focused less on overall welfare state typologies or family policy generosity and more on macroeconomic conditions and the size of the public sector as determinants of women's concentration in part-time work. Periods of economic expansion and recession have generated growth in the part-time sector, though involvement in part-time work is not equally distributed across social and demographic groups. Men are more likely to be found in part-time work during recessionary periods, when unemployment and underemployment run high, than during periods of economic growth and full employment (Farber 1999). When the economy is strong, new workers, including women and the young, are often brought into the labor market through part-time jobs (Fagan and O'Reilly 1998; Hakim 1997). The size of the public sector is a key determinant of women's involvement in part-time work (Gornick and Jacobs 1998). Perhaps ironically, the size of the public sector may be driven by an ideology to provide services for working families and reduce work-family conflict, yet the disproportionate incorporation of women in part-time work may fuel occupational sex segregation and the gender wage gap.

Tradeoffs between women's labor market inclusion and equality within the labor market are also found when we consider cross-national accounts of occupational sex segregation. Again, we see evidence of the multifaceted individual and societal conditions undergirding gender inequality. Women entered the workplace in increasing numbers through the latter half of the twentieth century, yet women and men continue to be highly segregated in the workplace in most countries (Charles and Grusky 2004; Chang 2000). Moreover, high rates of occupational sex segregation are typically found in the countries with high rates of women's employment. The social democratic countries of northern Europe consistently post high levels of occupational sex segregation, and countries with the lowest levels of female employment post the lowest levels of occupational sex segregation (Charles 1992; Jacobs and Lim 1995; Semyonov and Jones 1999; Charles and Grusky 2004).

Although the comparative literature on occupational sex segregation has

shadowed research on women's employment, it has generated startlingly different conclusions. Welfare state theory is less instructive for occupational segregation than for measures of employment. In fact, the conditions that enable high rates of women's employment and are linked with women's concentration in part-time employment contribute to the concentration of women in particular occupations and jobs. Large service sectors, large part-time workforces, and large public sectors all contribute to high levels of occupational sex segregation (see, for example, Charles and Grusky 2004; Charles 1992; Gornick and Jacobs 1998). Although women and men do different jobs in most countries, they are more likely to be doing roughly equivalent jobs with similar responsibilities and pay in countries that exhibit strong ideological support for gender equality. Where gender egalitarian ideologies are weaker, women and men are still likely to be working separately, but are also more likely to be found in occupations that are unequal in terms of pay, prospects for promotion, and prestige (Charles 1992; Charles and Grusky 2004).

Examining gender differences in wages across countries points, again, to the tensions between labor market inclusion and the measurement of equality among those in the paid labor force and illustrates how specific policy conditions structure wage inequality indirectly through labor supply and demand and directly through the allocation of wages within the market. Although the gender wage gap conflates differences in employment rates and wages, it is often used to gauge cross-national differences in the relative economic standing of women. According to data from the Luxembourg Income Study, women's wages are highest relative to men's in conservative-corporatist countries and lowest in social democratic countries. Additionally, family responsibilities are more salient determinants of wages in conservative-corporatist and liberal countries than in social democratic ones (Rosenfeld and Kalleberg 1990).

Like research on employment, hours worked, and occupational sex segregation, cross-national research on the gender wage gap has examined the structural determinants of women's relative wages. A strong correlation has been found between overall wage inequality in the job market and gender gaps in wages (Blau and Kahn 2002), and researchers contend that economic conditions and wage-setting mechanisms are important causes of cross-national variability in the gender gap in wages (Blau and Kahn 1996, 2002; Mandel and Semyonov 2005). Recent research has also focused increasingly

on selection—both into the labor market and into particular occupations and jobs—as important to comparative assessments of gender inequality using the gender wage gap (Brainerd 2000; Wetzels 2007). Women’s strong wage gains in eastern Europe in the 1990s have been traced to declining employment levels among low-skill women who would have otherwise commanded low wages in the transitional economy (Brainerd 2000; Hunt 2002). Although limited to only one country, research also demonstrates that the gender wage gap in the United States narrowed in the early 1990s largely because of wage losses among men and not because of wage gains among women (Bernhardt, Morris, and Handcock 1995).

Even a brief review of the existing literature makes clear that we should expect indicators of women’s economic standing to vary across welfare state regimes, and within them, in relation to specific supports for parents and workers. Comparative explanations of gender inequality posit a key role for states in structuring inequality, though different indicators suggest different aspects of state policy. While family policy generosity promotes women’s employment, the size of the public sector correlates with women’s concentration in part-time work and occupational segregation. Moreover, centralized wage-setting mechanisms that affect the overall level of wage inequality also affect gender wage inequality. Our work builds on the insights of previous research to develop an overarching theory of how states institutionalize inequality—through policies and conditions that affect households and the market—in ways that influence a broad range of economic outcomes, including employment, hours worked, occupation, and wages.

We adopt an interdisciplinary approach that brings together insights from economics and sociology, paying attention to (1) how women and men within households decide to allocate their labor to paid and unpaid work, and (2) how these decisions are embedded within specific configurations of social policies like parental leave and public child care. We analyze for whom and how specific policies and conditions affect employment, hours worked, occupation, and wages. We argue that microeconomic explanations for gender inequality in economic outcomes must account for historical and cross-national variation in state policies and conditions. These policies and conditions influence the gender balance of power within households in ways that affect women’s and men’s allocation of time to domestic work and work in the paid labor force. Moreover, they influence employer norms and expectations in ways that shape the allocation of workplace rewards.

Yet the specific importance of state policies and conditions is likely to vary in relation to individual investments in education and children. The economic fortunes of highly educated workers—especially those who are strongly committed to the paid labor force and well rewarded within it—may be less responsive to state policy conditions than those of other workers. The economic fortunes of mothers—especially those with young children—may be particularly responsive to the state policy conditions that influence caregiving.

Recent economic and political changes across advanced industrialized nations provide motivation to examine the mechanisms undergirding gender inequalities in employment, hours worked, occupational sex segregation, and wages. Economic fluctuations through the late twentieth century across advanced industrialized economies accompanied women's grand entrance into the labor market. The fall of state socialism and widening inequality within countries may have served increasingly to differentiate the work lives of women from those of men, and the well-educated from those with less education. A conservative turn in some European countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s ushered in a new era of family policy conditions focused on providing for the well-being of families by enabling women to care for children at home (Morgan and Zippel 2003). Germany and the Czech Republic were not the only countries that expanded parental leave; even the Scandinavian countries increased parental leaves in the face of declines in public child care. These policy shifts may threaten the economic equality of women.

THE PLAN OF THE BOOK

In this book, we conduct a cross-national analysis to consider how individual and collective economic opportunities are shaped by education and the domestic obligations associated with child-rearing and how state policies and conditions shape those relationships. We rely largely on data from the Luxembourg Income Study to investigate gender inequality in the labor market.

The LIS database is a collection of over one hundred household income surveys that provide demographic, income, and employment information for twenty-nine member countries (Luxembourg Income Study 2003). We include surveys from European and English-speaking countries that contain the demographic and employment information necessary for the analyses outlined in the remainder of the book. We analyze data from women and men collected in sixty-three micro-level data sets from twenty-one countries, span-

ning the years 1969 to 2000: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Table A.1 includes a full list of the countries, the abbreviations used throughout the book, and information on data availability by country. A map of the countries is shown in Figure A.1.

We use these data to examine four indicators of economic gender inequality: employment, hours worked, occupation, and wages. We use all available LIS data to explore how individual characteristics and state conditions structure inequality between countries and within them. Peculiarities in data collection over time and across countries limit our analysis of employment to twenty-one countries, of hours worked to fifteen countries, of occupation to eighteen countries, and of wage inequality to only twelve countries. This is an unfortunate but unavoidable shortcoming of our methodological approach and available data.

Each chapter also includes an in-depth analysis of the United States and the former West Germany. We limit our country spotlights to the United States and the former West Germany because they are the only two LIS countries that have over-time data on all four outcomes of interest to us. A reliance on such a small number of cases is generally ill advised, but differences in country conditions across these two cases and over time within them provide sufficient variation to generate some striking contrasts. Comparisons between the United States and West Germany clearly illustrate how states shape the contours of economic inequality.

We do not aim to rehash commonly understood stylized facts about gender inequality, although there are plenty of them in the book. Instead, we seek to show how state policies and conditions affect who works in the paid labor force. Gender inequality in hours worked, occupational sex segregation, and pay are also acutely affected by state policies and conditions directly and indirectly through their influence on employment. In summary, our understanding of gender inequality both in the cross-section of nations and over the life course requires a careful consideration of the institutional conditions that generate gender differences in employment prospects and outcomes.

The second chapter reviews the prevailing explanations for gender inequalities in economic outcomes. We outline the conditions hypothesized to affect gender inequality in employment, hours worked, occupation, and wages. Our central question is whether a tradeoff exists between women's in-

clusion in the labor market and equality within the market. In chapter 2, we explain why we think certain country-level conditions—and state policies and conditions like parental leave and public child care—should influence both labor market inclusion and equality measured within the market. We argue that specific features of government policy and practice—including aspects of family policy like the length of parental leave and public support for child care but also employment conditions such as unionization and the size of the part-time workforce—both shape the gendered obligations associated with child-rearing and structure inequalities within the labor market.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the empirical investigation of gender inequality in economic outcomes. Chapter 3 carefully examines cross-national variability in women's and men's employment. Chapter 4 is devoted to the factors associated with involvement in full-time and part-time work. Chapter 5 examines cross-national variability in occupational sex segregation, paying close attention to the extent to which women and men are concentrated in particular occupational categories. Chapter 6 considers how measures of the gender wage gap across countries might be reconsidered in light of differential patterns of employment, involvement in part-time work, and occupational sex segregation. Although chapter 6 illustrates some of the problems associated with a compendium measure that conflates employment and wage outcomes, the chapter also indicates how state policies and conditions influence cross-national and over-time accounts of the gender wage gap. Chapter 7 focuses on women in the United States and Germany in its examination of all four indicators—employment, hours worked, occupational segregation, and wages. We are acutely aware of the limitations of a focus on only two countries, but the chapter helps reveal how the same policies and conditions that affect gender inequality may also influence our understanding of inequalities on the basis of class, race, ethnicity, and nationality.

The last chapter of the book returns to the question of a tradeoff between labor market inclusion and economic equality within the market. This work makes clear that state policies and conditions that foster women's employment in the paid labor force do not necessarily engender equality within the labor market as measured by hours worked, occupational sex segregation, and pay. Persistent gender inequalities in domestic obligations—especially those related to children—have great consequences for women's labor market prospects. Tensions between domestic inequality and workplace inequality are aggravated in some environments more than in others, and gender-neutral economic conditions often disadvantage women.

Although there is clear support for explanations that emphasize the importance of investments in education and work, a review of the economic progress of women in the United States and other advanced industrialized nations also reveals ways in which gender inequality is institutionalized by states. State policies and conditions affect gender divides in the home and the workplace, especially in relation to their provision of supports for women and men to care for children. State policies and conditions institutionalize gender inequality by endorsing behavioral patterns and setting expectations that shape and constrain future behavior. Our central concern is with how state conditions influence the behavioral patterns and expectations surrounding women's and men's allocation of time to home and work. State-level policies and conditions also affect gender inequalities directly and indirectly within the market by providing employment opportunities that shape workplace expectations about ideal workers and guarantee workplace protections for different classes—and genders—of workers.

CONCLUSION

The Treaty of Rome (1957), the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, and other legislation and executive orders were watershed events that led to the protection of the rights of women as workers throughout the advanced industrialized economies. Research shows that affirmative action and equal employment opportunity legislation has diminished explicit discrimination against women in the workplace in the United States (Darity and Mason 1998) and many other countries (Hakim 1996; Simonton 1998). Not surprisingly, the past several decades have witnessed women's significant gains on a number of indicators of economic well-being, and their employment experiences across advanced industrialized countries increasingly approximate men's.

Nevertheless, while many barriers to equality in the workplace have fallen, women continue to lag behind men in many measures of economic equality. This book details the contemporary mechanisms that, in contrast to the overt and legally sanctioned employment discrimination of the early and mid-twentieth century, generate gender inequality in the United States and other advanced industrialized nations in ways that are subtle yet deeply embedded in family policy, the organization of work, and the societal norms governing gender relations and the care of children.

Our research analyzes the impact of particular state policies and conditions

on the work lives of different groups of women and men. We take advantage of cross-national and over-time variation in economic outcomes and the conditions thought to produce them to investigate the underpinnings of gender inequality in the labor market. The core argument of this book is that gender inequality in the workplace is routinized through policies and conditions that are generated and reinforced by states.

We attempt to avoid normative prescriptions for the organization of women's and men's work and family lives. Our research implicates particular aspects of government policy and practice for gender inequality across different outcomes, however, and shows that gender inequality in the labor market has deep institutional underpinnings.

We study gender inequality in the labor market because work in the paid labor force shapes the contours of inequality in many other domains. Work carries both economic and psychic rewards that are distributed unevenly between women and men. While much attention has been paid to the variable influence of labor force attachment on economic instability and inequality across countries (Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999), one of the key insights of feminist critiques of the welfare state literature is that women's long-term economic stability and well-being often are tied either to the economic independence associated with work in the paid labor force or to the economic security associated with marriage (Christopher et al. 2002; Sorensen and McLanahan 1987).

Not being in the labor force carries unique economic risks and psychic costs for women, although men are also at risk from specialization. For women out of the labor market who depend on a male breadwinner, there is a risk that the breadwinner will cease to provide through death, divorce, or unemployment. One cause of the "feminization of poverty" is the high number of women without much labor force experience suddenly finding themselves without a breadwinner upon whom to rely. In terms of psychic costs, women out of the labor market may have less power or control within relationships, and they may be more likely to experience the stress of economic insecurity. Although men may experience improved economic standing after divorce, they are also more likely to lose children and family in a divorce and thus may lose access to family care when ill or elderly (Goldscheider 2000).

Studies of occupational segregation also confirm that separate is not equal. "Women's" jobs generally receive lower pay, have less prestige, and provide fewer opportunities for advancement (Padavic and Reskin 2002), entailing

both economic and psychic costs. Occupational sex segregation may create problems for men too. Some “men’s” jobs carry disproportionate health risks, and men’s concentration in manufacturing has made them especially vulnerable to deindustrialization.

The accumulated cost of lower labor force involvement, fewer hours worked, concentration in low-wage jobs, and low pay makes women more likely to live in poverty, more likely to raise a child in poverty, and less likely to be economically secure in retirement. Clearly, employment, hours worked, occupation, and earned wages have important implications for economic and social stability and security in both the short and long terms. Hence, our investigation into the causes of gender inequality in the workplace is not purely academic, but has broad relevance and application for policymakers and the public alike.