

## **Chapter 1**

# **Elements of Theory in the Analysis of Welfare Arrangements in Old Age**

### **Introduction**

Research on welfare state, irrespective of the disciplinary focus, has involved rather open and pluralistic processes, both from a theoretical and from a methodological perspective and only very rarely has drawn on a clear well-established pre-existing theory (Pierson, 2000). This means that, similarly to what Mossialos and Oliver have stated for the analysis of health systems, the analysis of welfare arrangements in old age is unlikely to be bounded by one sole theory and instead requires crossing different theoretical frameworks (Oliver and Mossialos, 2005).

The theoretical model that shapes this study of welfare arrangements in old age in Portugal draws on three main theoretical fields: welfare state theory; family theory; and theory on social norms and values. Welfare arrangements are discussed throughout the thesis as the outcome of the crossing of three dimensions, corresponding to the three theoretical fields: institutional design of the welfare state; family dynamics of exchange of support; normative solidarity. The focus of institutional readings embeds the three analytical axes. The topic of the thesis involves assessing degrees of resilience and/or change in familialism as a logics of welfare provision in old age in Portugal. In that sense it calls on a reading that addresses the analysis of institutional development and the analysis of institutional resilience and change.

This chapter is set to identify and review the main theoretical references taken on board the research. It starts with a broader discussion on recent developments of institutional theory, namely on the contributions of new-institutionalism theories, both from the perspective of their heuristic potential for this study and from the perspective of their limitations. The first section of the chapter summarises the overall theoretical approach of the thesis.

The chapter then moves onto the discussion about the three specific theoretical fields that most influence the research design.

Section two starts with a revision of welfare state theory, in particular about theories on welfare state institutional development. It starts by addressing some theoretical frameworks that have been established in the mainstream literature as attempts to classify the institutional building of contemporary welfare states, introducing as well some alternative approaches, namely those that draw on gender approaches and those that introduce a Mediterranean model of welfare state. In this section, I clarify my position towards those proposals and set the theoretical boundaries of my analysis and interpretation of the process of welfare state emergence and development in Portugal.

Section three moves onto some insights on family theory, namely on the sociological approaches to state/family relations and to the place and meanings of family solidarity in the global system of welfare provision. The discussion reviews contributions of recent research on the roles of family in contemporary modern societies, namely its role as a locus for exchange of support, as well as contributions about the evolution of family policies within the welfare state project. This second theoretical axis defines my approach to the place of families in the Portuguese system and launches the basis for my discussion on familialism as a social policy model, leading to some reflections about the concept of familialisation of welfare provision and its heuristic potential for the research.

Finally, section four incorporates into the theoretical model of the thesis some elements from theories on social norms of exchange and solidarity. This section introduces in the discussion the topic of legitimacy and reproduction of familialism as a social policy model, resuming the discussion on institutional resilience and change and on the reasons why individuals conform to certain institutional configurations.

## **1. Welfare state, institutional development and welfare provision**

The literature on the variation in institutional structures of the welfare states of different countries is extensive. Although it is more or less consensual that the welfare states in the rich western democracies have similar broad social goals, it is equally consensual that they have different institutional approaches and means to achieve them.

If we look, for example, at the social insurance programs intended to provide income maintenance to individuals during old age and sickness, although there is a widespread acceptance of that obligation, different countries chose different institutional configurations for these programs. In some countries social insurance has been structured to provide benefits on the basis of a means-tested approach, meaning that each individual must provide proof of his need. In other countries legislation has been developed to encourage self-help, namely by means of state support to a wide range of non-profit organisations. There are countries where social insurance programs have an occupational basis and therefore segment the population, often treating citizens according to different rules depending on their occupational status. Other countries, on the other hand, put the emphasis on equality and provide for universal coverage to all citizens. Among these there are some that protect all citizens equally but only provide for a minimum safety net to avoid them falling into destitution. And there are some that go beyond that minimum and top it up with a relatively long ladder that tackles the effects of the life-course risks for the standards of life of citizens (Korpi, 2001; Schludi, 2001; OECD, 2005).

Confronted with this variety of institutional forms to tackle the same social problems and to achieve the same broad social goals, scholars from different fields of study have been asking about the origins of institutions, how they are formed and how they evolve, how and why they do (do not) change and how they impact on the behaviour of individuals (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Hall and Taylor, 1996; Crouch and Farrell, 2004).

Under the designation of new institutionalism, there are three schools of thought that have established more or less clear theoretical models to account for institutional development: historical institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism and sociological institutionalism (Hall and Taylor, 1996; Rittberger, 2003; Oliver and Mossialos, 2005). Providing different conceptual explanations, the three schools of thought are all oriented by the need to explain institutional stability and institutional change. However, as Rittberger so clearly puts it, they all have been more successful in accounting for the first than for the last (Rittberger, 2003).

In the analysis of institutional dynamics these seem to be the two dimensions to articulate: institutional resilience and institutional change. New-institutionalism approaches are often criticised for their limitations in addressing institutional change, namely by confining change to the result of exogenous events largely happening at a

random rate. However, those same approaches are praised by their heuristic potential in the analysis of institutional resilience (Rittberger, 2003).

This thesis tries to incorporate the contributions from new-institutionalism for the analysis of resilience of familialism as a logics of welfare provision. However, and because the thesis involves opening the discussion to elements of change in familialism, it also draws on some alternative theories to institutional behaviour, namely those that try to address institutional change as the result of endogenous forces (Greif, 2000; Lieberman, 2002; Rittberger, 2003).

The following sub-sections summarise briefly the main contributions of the three schools of thought within new-institutionalism, highlighting their heuristic interest for the thesis as well as their limitations and some alternatives to overcome those limitations. The three schools of thought are: historical institutionalism; rational choice institutionalism; and sociological institutionalism. As the comparative size of the subsections will reflect, historical institutionalism, followed by sociological institutionalism, have a greater weight in the thesis.

### **1.1. Institutional development and the articulation of path dependent processes: readings from historical institutionalism**

Historical institutionalism, and the diversity of proposals within that school, is particularly useful to understand the policy path that Portugal followed along the 20<sup>th</sup> century and how that preceding historical path can explain the current conditions for policy design.

There is one key concept that has been at the core of debates about institutional development since the beginning of the nineties: path dependence. As Crouch and Farrell very well summarise it, path dependence is a concept that has been used mainly as a tool to understand and account for institutional stickiness (Crouch and Farrell, 2004). Historical institutionalism is also referred to as path dependency theory.

At its broader scope, path dependency is a logics of analysis that not only provides explanations for the origins of each particular institutional configuration (linking it to a set of events/forces compelling into a certain direction), but also explains why institutions fail to respond to changes, even when the responses could lead to improved outcomes.

There are many contributions to path dependency theories. At the origin, path-dependency theory came embedded in a determinist coat and was presented as a near-inexorable force determining outcomes over the long term. Applied to the emergence and evolution of welfare state institutions this would mean that once a country engages in a certain path of development of its institutions, that path exercises an influence so compelling that outcomes and future paths of evolution are more or less completely determined (Putnam, 1993).

More recently, however, some authors have been trying to break the determinist character of path dependency analysis, although keeping its central argument of chained events. Crouch and Farrell suggest it is possible to reconcile the logics of path dependent processes in the analysis of institutional development with the possibility of individuals searching for alternative paths with some success (Crouch and Farrell, 2004). In the words of these authors, “(...) paths are institutions, clusters of patterned behaviour that constrain the actions of individuals in particular ways. (...) Individuals change and innovate, not by breaking free from all institutional constraints, but by changing structures of the institutions themselves” (Crouch and Farrell, 2004).

The criticism put forward by Crouch and Farrell on the deterministic uses of the concept of path dependency is of great interest for the analysis of the institutional configuration of national examples of welfare state like Portugal, a country that is systematically left out from the mainstream typologies. They point out the well-established typology of welfare state regimes by Esping-Andersen (Esping-Andersen, 1990) as an example of how a rather deterministic use of path dependency to account for institutional development results in labelling as residual or “empirical noise” all those national systems that do not fit the overall characterisation of available paths.

Adopting a theory of institutional development that accepts that there is more than one path of institutional development available, even if only one becomes established, has broader heuristic potential. On one hand, it provides an explanatory framework that accounts for institutional resilience and that identifies the forces that combine to constrain institutions to evolve in a certain direction, even if the outcomes are not optimal. But, on the other hand, it also opens way to recognising that institutional change is possible (even if costly and hard) and in fact, it helps setting the parameters under which change will be more or less difficult to achieve (Crouch and Farrell, 2004).

More recently some authors have been trying to come up with some alternative theories to articulate institutional change from an endogenous perspective. Rittberger identifies that as one of the big challenges to new-institutionalist theories: the challenge of developing a theory that articulates the way past and existing institutions influence or are likely to influence the direction and rate of institutional change (Rittberger, 2003).

Rittberger cites Liberman and his work on the evolution of policies on racial matters in the USA as an alternative to path dependency theory. Liberman sees institutions as multi-layered, meaning they embed different interconnected patterns of institutional, ideological and organisational design. He further suggests that these layers or orders are often in friction. According to Liberman it is in the friction between orders that the seeds of institutional change can be found (Lieberman, 2002).

One other approach that also tries to conceptualise endogenous institutional change in a path dependent perspective is that of Greif. Greif introduces the notion of quasi-parameters as the set of social and technological factors that are simultaneously at the base of certain institutional configurations and that can be affected by the behaviour attached to certain institutions. Greif suggests that changes in quasi-parameters can reinforce or undermine existing institutions. These quasi-parameters include elements such as demography, wealth distribution or political powers (Greif, 2000).

Although these recent proposals seem at times rather fuzzy or unclear from a conceptual perspective, they open the discussion to a dimension that is often absent from research on welfare state institutional development: endogenous institutional change taking place within and as the result of the institutional building in place.

## **1.2. Rational choice institutionalism and microanalysis of institutional dynamics**

Rational choice institutionalism draws on a *calculus* approach. The emphasis is put on the maximisation of individual/collective benefits as drivers for choosing a particular institutional design.

A variation within rational choice institutionalism is the distributional approach that sees institutions as the reflection of the bargaining power of different actors. Institutions, in the sense that they lock in social equilibriums that favour certain interests, remain as long as there is no change in the interests or in the distribution of

power among interest groups. Resistance to change comes primarily from the actors that benefit the most from existing institutional designs.

Although the thesis does not draw significantly on rational choice institutionalism, there are some insights that are of interest to understand the 'game' of welfare provision within the Portuguese system. However, the thesis puts the emphasis on a macro-perspective setting as a goal to provide some holistic synthesis to explain the welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly and the dynamics of familialism as a logics of welfare provision in old age. Rational choice institutionalism involves a micro-level analysis that is not taken as central in the thesis.

### **1.3. Sociological institutionalism and culture as an institution**

Sociological institutionalism relates institutional design to a set of shared assumptions about what is legitimate. Actors comply with institutions in the sense that they reflect or materialise what they collectively perceive as the right thing to do. Given that normative change is difficult, institutional change is also difficult.

From a broader perspective it can be said that sociological institutionalism draws on general sociological theory on values and on theories of social change. Social norms and values are seen as the cement of societies and what explains the predictive character of individual behaviour (Therborn, 2002). It is the socialisation in a universe of collectively shared assumptions about how to behave that equips individuals to adjust their behaviour in each specific situation after assessing the degree of social desirability attached to alternative behaviours.

In line with this, institutional stickiness is explained by the adherence of individuals to the shared assumptions that institutions themselves represent. Culture, in that sense, is taken as an institution and not as an external element to the institutional design. Even when the outcomes of a certain institutional design are not optimal, individuals may still adhere to whatever behaviour is defined as socially desirable, since they still adhere to what is symbolically attached to that institutional configuration. Because social norms and values are the most resilient elements in human behaviour, institutional change is difficult.

The three schools of new institutionalism set the tone for the analysis of familialism as a logics of welfare provision in old age. Familialism is discussed from an

institutional perspective that articulates its different dimensions and that tries to capture its inner logics. The thesis will show that new institutionalism frameworks are useful to explain the stickiness of familialism in the Portuguese welfare state system and to discuss how and why it is expected to change and/or remain as a structuring element in the lives of the Portuguese elderly.

The analysis will dwell on three main dimensions of welfare arrangements, each taking us to a specific theoretical field. The following sections address each of those theoretical fields. In a schematic manner, welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly will be discussed in the confluence of three dimensions or, using the terms of Lieberman, of three institutional layers (Lieberman, 2002): social policy framework; family dynamics of exchange of support; normative dispositions on solidarity.

## **2. State corporatism, path dependence and the Mediterranean model**

One of the most established, if not the most established path-dependent analysis of institutional development in the field of welfare state theory is that of Esping-Andersen (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

In his reference book (*The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*), Esping-Andersen suggests a very elegant typology of three institutional path-dependent logics of welfare state formation and development: the liberal type; the social-democratic type; and the conservative-corporatist type (Esping-Andersen, 1990). I will neither dwell in much detail on the differences between these three welfare state regimes since it is a matter already thoroughly discussed in the literature, nor will I engage in the discussion about how appropriate is the typology proposed by Esping-Andersen to account for each national welfare state. Both lines of reasoning are of marginal interest for this thesis.

Briefly, Esping-Andersen suggests there are three main paths of institutional development explaining the major variations in welfare state configuration. By seeing them as the result of specific approaches to managing social risks within labour markets, the state and the family, Esping-Andersen establishes a parallel between variations in welfare state configuration and historical processes of social stratification and ‘decommodification’ (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Social stratification is strictly linked to measure to what degree public policies tend to segment or integrate populations. ‘Decommodification’ is related to the measurement of how

much people are capable of meeting their living standards independent of pure market forces (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

The socio-democratic type, typically found in the Scandinavian countries, is characterised by a universalistic provision of welfare by the state, based on individual social rights and oriented by the principle of individual autonomy *vis-à-vis* the market. The liberal type, on the other hand, is characterised by a non-regulatory approach to the market, believed to be efficient in equipping the individual with the resources to provide for his own welfare. Only in situations of demonstrated need (therefore, of inability of the individual to make it by himself) will the state step in. The result is a residual state provision and the devolution of responsibilities for welfare provision to private forces, be those in the market or in the non-profit sector. An example of this type of welfare state configuration is the United Kingdom.

The essence of the conservative regime of welfare state lies in its blend of status segmentation and familialism. It designates a logics of institutional configuration that has developed primarily in the continental countries of Europe such as Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. The countries labelled as examples of the conservative type of welfare state are countries that have made the transition from origins to post-war welfare state capitalism under the guidance of conservative coalitions (in some cases even with an incursion through fascism), and that were in some cases heavily influenced by the social teachings of the Catholic doctrine of subsidiarity (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

The state corporatist institutional configuration puts the emphasis on compulsory social insurance, complemented with more or less ad hoc residual schemes for strata without a normal employment relationship. This results in taking the place of the worker in a heavily regulated labour market as the priority in terms of safeguarding. Social protection, in that sense, is biased towards the male breadwinner and calls on families to perform as central caregivers and be ultimately responsible for the welfare of their members.

Feminist scholars have criticised Esping-Andersen's typology for not taking into account the relations between state and family as a dimension of analysis of the impact of social policies. Family is considered only in the conservative-corporatist regime but not in the sense of gendered and generational divisions of labour (Lewis, 1992; Daly, 1994; George and Taylor-Gooby, 1996). Further more, several scholars highlight that concepts such as 'decommodification' have a gendered meaning, in the

sense of having different impacts when applied to men and to women (Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993).

More recently, responding to his critics, Esping-Andersen has reviewed his initial classification of welfare state regimes to incorporate the nexus between families and welfare regime. He acknowledges there are differences among welfare states in the welfare roles assigned to families and he demonstrates how different welfare state regimes require families to absorb social risks in varying degrees (Esping-Andersen, 1999). However, Esping-Andersen takes on board family still at a very aggregate level and fails to articulate in his analysis gender and intergenerational relations.

One other line of criticism to the proposal of Esping-Andersen is that coming from scholars arguing that there is a fourth welfare state regime that Esping-Andersen's typology does not account for: the Mediterranean regime.

In his work, Esping-Andersen has always avoided considering that countries such as Portugal, Spain, Greece, and to a certain extent Italy as well, could be anything different from a more or less incipient form of conservative welfare states, leaving them outside his empirical basis (with the exception of Italy) and allowing to extrapolate from his writings that they were expected to follow the same path of institutional development as the countries at the core of the conservative-corporatist regime (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Esping-Andersen, 1996).

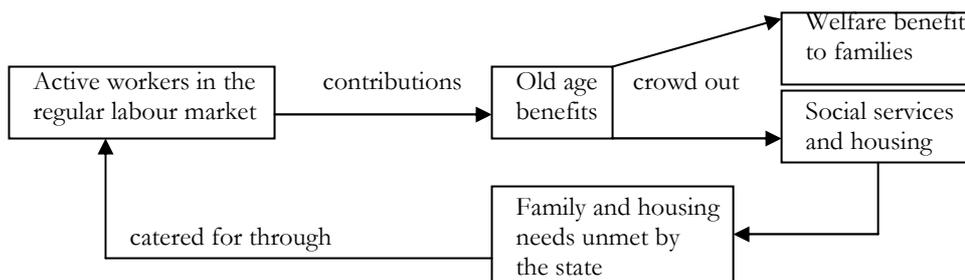
Whether or not the South European countries should be labelled as conservative-type welfare states is a question that remains open for debate. Some scholars like Maurizio Ferrera (Ferrera, 1996(b)) and Martin Rhodes (Rhodes, 1997) have been arguing that these countries show a specific path of institutional development and thus should be considered as a distinct regime type rather than examples of delayed development of otherwise conservative-type systems. These authors do not contest the similarities between the modes of stratification and solidarities emerging from the labour market structures in these countries when compared to the traditional countries labelled as corporatist welfare systems. Nor do they contest that the familialism taken to the extreme in the Southern European countries shows as well in the core principles of the institutional structures of conservative-corporatist systems. Those who argue that there is a specific South European or Mediterranean path of welfare state development put the emphasis on processes of policy making and appropriation of welfare programs and benefits, and in that sense, on elements of a peculiar political and institutional culture, and focus less on the structure of the

welfare state building (Ferrera, 1996(a)). Alternatively, they make it depend on a cultural-axiological dimension marked by the prevalence of family inclusion and intergenerational redistribution (Moreno, 1997).

The labelling aspect is of less interest in this thesis. I am primarily concerned with defining the conceptual framework that can help us to understand how and why the Portuguese welfare state has evolved in the specific direction of the last 40 years. The thesis will show that the path dependent analysis of the state corporatist model is one element of large explanatory power to account for the general pattern of institutional development in the Portuguese welfare state.

In a schematic way the path dependent logics of the conservative welfare state could be represented in a diagram as follows.

Figure 1.1. The relatively coherent circle of the conservative welfare state configuration



Because of the determinist imprint of path dependency explanations, the analysis of the conservative character of the Portuguese welfare state combines some elements that deviate from that path, not so much as to create a new path but at least to question the pre-established and expected path of evolution that one finds in the core countries of the conservative type. I am thinking in particular about the lack of any improvement in social assistance mechanisms and on the resilient familialisation of welfare provision, despite the global demographic, economic and social forces that contribute to its erosion.

Some authors have identified the conservative welfare state regime as the most incredibly path-dependent example of institutional development (Crouch, 1999). The reasons for this resilience remain under question. Some make it depend on the strong institutionalisation of familialism that, alongside with the Catholic imprint, makes

“conspicuously absent the ideologically fuelled partisan battles that are fought in other [systems](...)” (Esping-Andersen, 1996). One example would be the relatively low profile of gender-related debates within the institutional framework of these countries.

Others make the resilience of the conservative regime more dependent on its particularly efficient mechanisms of legitimisation, both by means of creation of interest groups that tend to become very inflexible towards change, therefore showing up as the first opponents to any attempt to institutional change; and by means of the universe of social norms that the institutions help breed and spread (Korpi, 2001).

Informed by all the contributions addressed above, the discussion on the specificity of the Portuguese welfare state draws on the following elements of theory:

1. A broad theoretical perspective that takes into account the historical context of the emergence of the welfare state and that explains social policies in old age as the expression of specific patterns of the relationships between state, family and market.
2. A theoretical perspective that articulates the specificity of the path-dependent events that have marked the national expression of the welfare state project in Portugal.
3. A theoretical perspective that brings into the analysis of social policy gender and intergenerational relationships, not only in terms of content of policies or in terms of actual flows of support among individuals, but also in terms of norms and values.

### **3. Family solidarity, welfare state and familialisation of welfare provision**

The question of family solidarity and its place in the global system of welfare provision in modern societies has been undergoing a significant revision over the past decade. After more than half-century of overshadowing, politically linked to the omnipresence of state’s interventions, the family as a primary unit of solidarity is being brought again to the scientific and the political debates.

This thesis addresses the topic of welfare provision in old age within a social policy context that has a familialist nature. The empirical emphasis is put on living arrangements and strategies that reflect the activation of family-based resources. In

line with that, the second theoretical pillar of the thesis draws on the different approaches to the role and the place of families in contemporary welfare states and to the broader issue of family solidarity and social giving.

### **3.1. Social giving and welfare state: from enemies to allies**

For quite some time it has been possible to identify a widespread idea that ‘giving’ has declined in contemporary societies, and has been replaced by rational behaviour and market exchanges. It is argued that rising individualism causes a decrease in generosity and an increase in rational egocentrism. Classical theories in Sociology in particular, such as those of Tönnies or Durkheim, tend to put things under a too straightforward dichotomy: the past is warmth and solidarity; the future is anonymity and isolation (Willmott, 1996).

To a large extent this thesis takes as a starting point the belief that ‘giving’ and the ‘social gift’ are still central in modern<sup>1</sup> societies, *albeit* with different modes of expression and in varied amounts.

‘Social gift’ is a concept developed by Godbout who defined it as the provision of a good or a service done without any guarantee of return beyond the creation or reinforcement of social ties between people (Godbout, 1992).

Since the mid-1940’s, the kinship economy and solidarity has been overshadowed by the political omnipresence of the welfare state. In fact, for quite a long time, family solidarity became a synonym of pre-modernity<sup>2</sup>. At the core of Sociological theory on social functioning Marcel Mauss emphasises the centrality of this ‘social giving’ in pre-modern societies but cannot see it being reproduced in modern societies (Mauss, 1988).

It was largely as a consequence of the euphoria around the concept of welfare state that sociological theory was invaded by all sorts of theses on the decline of the importance of family ties in the provision of welfare. Sociological theory after the Second World War was largely influenced by one of the most prominent among those theses, the work of Talcott Parsons. He developed a general theory on family

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<sup>1</sup> By modern societies, and modernity, it is meant very broadly the models of socio-economic organisation that have emerged with the industrial revolution and that have later evolved to become what we know today as the societies of advanced capitalism. (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

<sup>2</sup> Pre-modernity is considered in very general terms as referring to the set of modes of socio-economic organisation typical of rural societies before the advent of industrialisation and the expansion of the urban model.

and on how it is articulated with society as a whole, and introduced a model of family he saw as the best fit for the industrial economy. His analysis of the evolution of families in modern societies is marked by the belief that industrialisation has brought in the decline of the family as an economic unit of provision. Parsons described the modern family as a nuclear unit structurally isolated. In his view, this was the result of the transition to modernity, which had implied the breaking up of extended family ties and the emergence of the marital unit as the centre of obligations, leaving out filial obligations of each spouse. This family model, according to Parsons, has emerged not only because kinship has lost its importance as an economic unit, but also because the values and constraints of the industrial society were no longer compatible with family loyalties and solidarities. In that sense, the isolation of the nuclear family was seen as an answer to the needs of modern industrial economies (Parsons, 1955).

During the 1940's and 1950's many studies have reproduced this functionalist view of society. But that was a period marked as well by the expansion of the welfare state and of social theory eager to announce the social righteousness of such a project. Family-based solidarities were looked at with suspicion and the effect of substitution of family solidarity by public solidarity was seen as a good thing. Family solidarities were denounced as creators of inequalities and exercised outside the realm of any social rights. Rights that only the state could define and enforce. It is worth noting that this discourse would be later resumed by social scientists in countries such as Portugal, where family solidarities have remained resilient and have been a building block of the welfare state itself. Overall, at least to a certain extent, the development of the welfare state was seen by many, starting with Titmuss, as a good solution to replace the logics of 'social giving' characteristic of family solidarities, given that it provided welfare under the logics of solidarity but in a fairer way and promoting equality among citizens (Titmuss, 1971).

Sociological theory on family has evolved since Parsons. During the 1960's many studies questioned the role of kinship relations for the functioning of modern families. Many of these studies were a critique to Parsons' idea of rupture of kinship. Contrary to what Parsons had suggested, many of these studies questioned the idea of rupture between the marital nucleus and relatives on vertical and horizontal lines (Townsend, 1963). More recently, other researchers have explored further the empirical findings of that period and developed some conceptualisation around it.

Kellerhals suggested that between the nuclear family and the extended family there are three main types of relations: expressive, normative and instrumental (Kellerhals, 1994). He points out that most studies carried out since the 1960's show that as far as emotions and affections are concerned, the family appears as the primary locus of personal investment and fulfilment. The same way, most studies seem to demonstrate that family remains the model of behaviour and normative beliefs (Kellerhals, 1994).

It is the instrumental dimension of kinship relations that has been more appealing to a great deal of researchers. This is very much related to the growing interest shown by public institutions on the ability of primary groups to act as instances of social support, which has made financing in this area of research somehow easier. Already since the 1970's many studies have been carried out and all seem to point in the same direction: kinship networks have a fundamental role in the provision of support. Some studies have shown the importance of financial transfers within the extended family, ranging from money transfers from parents to children, to helping with the acquisition of house or in key events such as the birth of children (Pitrou, 1978; Finch, 1989). Other analyses have shown the importance of the extended family in service provision, ranging from house chores to childcare or the search for a job (Pitrou, 1978; Finch, 1989; Finch, 1993; Kellerhals, 1994).

The debate seems to revolve around whether this family-based solidarity is a constant exchange or a resource to activate on and off in moments of crisis. All seem to agree though on the centrality of the extended family in the lives of individuals in modern societies.

Bengtson has presented an analysis on the increasing importance of multigenerational bonds in contemporary societies, something he anticipates will grow in the future. Contrary to the thesis of the decline of family solidarity, he presents a thesis on the importance of long-term relationships within kinship. This was supported by empirical research on the American society and shows how multigenerational bonds will increasingly be called upon to provide basic family functions that the nuclear family cannot provide (Bengtson, 2001). He uses the concept of intergenerational solidarity to account for those long-term relationships and identifies six different dimensions where it can be measured: affectual solidarity (the sentiments and evaluations family members express); associational solidarity (the type and frequency of contact); consensual solidarity (agreement in opinions, values

and orientations across generations); functional solidarity or assistance (the giving and receiving of support across generations); normative solidarity (expectations regarding filial obligations and parental obligations, as well as norms about the importance of familistic values); structural solidarity (the opportunity structure for cross-generational interaction reflecting geographic proximity between family members) (Bengtson, 2001). Despite some criticism on the relatively functionalist character of the concept of solidarity (in particular, by leaving outside conflict as a dimension of relationships between kin), the proposal of Bengtson encompasses the potential for capturing the multi-faceted sides of relationships within the family network.

For the last decade we have witnessed a definite return of family and family solidarities to the social and political debates. This return is far from being neutral and in fact it is loaded with political and social implications. In a time when the welfare state is running out of steam to tackle the needs for welfare provision, calling for intergenerational solidarity based on family may be the easy way out, a call that has been available for public powers given that families seem to agree on taking an important role in the responsibility for welfare provision between generations (Bawin-Legros, 2001).

From structural enemies, welfare state and family are being presented as the new alliance in social policy design in areas such as care for the elderly (Bawin-Legros and Stassen, 2002). This however comes with several consequences and implications that one must carefully address. In the next sub-section a discussion on some of those consequences and implications is introduced.

### **3.2. Roles of families and the cycle of giving**

The question of family solidarity has been gaining increasing visibility for the last decade all across the most developed nations. This happens due to a multiple set of factors: the crisis of the welfare state; the rising costs of benefits and social insurance schemes; the emergence of new risks linked to unemployment, to new forms (often unstable forms) of employment, to the break-up of families and to the ageing of the population (Bawin-Legros and Stassen, 2002). After a long period of questioning the traditional, pre-modern regimes of solidarity, many social and political actors want the family, seen as the basic unit of social life, to resume the leading role. Sustained in

a variety of research results, we see public/official recognition of what was always done by families, and an open call for intergenerational solidarity based on the family (OECD, 1996).

In societies characterised by insufficient and/or deficient welfare state provision, the topic of family solidarity is not new but does not have the same visibility one finds in more developed systems. In Portugal, some scholars have been focusing on the analysis of family networks as welfare providers and of their role as buffers for the weaknesses of state provision (Santos, 1990). Yet, in terms of the rhetoric of social and political actors, we do not see the same type of engagement in proclaiming the importance of families as welfare providers. Probably the reason for this has to do with the fact that welfare provision is a building block of the system in Portugal and is taken as a 'fact of life' both by politicians and by the population in general. This will be examined empirically along the thesis.

Family solidarity as a concept became more or less established as comprising the whole range of domestic, affective and financial services that are shared by those connected by kinship links. The limits of this kinship links, however, are still poorly defined (Lash, 1990; Bauman, 1992; Bawin-Legros and Stassen, 2002).

Many researchers have emphasised the challenges of accepting the solidarity exercised within family networks as 'natural', namely when we see a use of that status by public powers to legitimise social disinvestment. That debate offers very important contributions for designing a conceptual framework of family solidarity to address the dynamics of familialism in a country like Portugal.

Overall, the issue under analysis in family/state relations seems to be that of establishing a parallel between family ties and public transfers. The empirical research carried out in different national contexts has shown that these are two distinct spheres that cannot be thought of as replacing each other .

Family ties are, in essence, very unequal and dependent on a wide range of factors. Family solidarity tends to know only one route, the vertical route, and therefore tends to be dependent on parenthood. Several studies have shown it is also dependent on occupational status of children (Bawin-Legros, 2001). The provision carried out by the state does not take place bounded by these social and demographic constraints.

On the other hand, family solidarities tend to follow rather selective logics: they are more often related to the preferences of the provider and less to those of the receiver

of support; they are gender biased, this meaning that different elements in the network of providers are attributed different responsibilities. Research on the topic has demonstrated, for example, that support in the form of personal care or help with household chores is delivered mainly by women, while support in the form of help with financial issues, for example, is more likely to be delivered by men (Cancian and Oliker, 2000). The provision carried out by the state does not have, in principle, this discriminatory distribution.

Some authors have made attempts to overcome this type of criticism to family solidarity. Godbout and Caillé have proclaimed as an absolute fact the three-phased cycle of giving: give-receive-return. Godbout and Caillé tried to build up the idea of asymmetry and reciprocity in family exchanges of support. They argue that although it is undeniable that family solidarity is markedly asymmetric, the reciprocity that also characterises it tends to progressively build balance and symmetry (Godbout, 1992).

In the analysis of the roles of families as welfare providers, namely focusing on the roles they play in the lives of the elderly, it is taken as central the need to consider both the potential and the social/political downsides of the type of solidarity that takes place within the family sphere, namely from a gender and an intergenerational perspectives.

### **3.3. Welfare mixes and (de)familialisation of welfare provision**

In the area of conceptualising the nature of the relations between state and family, especially when doing it from the perspective of social policy analysis, there seems to be one perspective that gathers extensive consensus: the welfare mix approach. This term, proposed originally by Adalbert Evers (Evers, 1993), has become a concept in itself and has originated a long debate (and controversy) about the respective roles of the different spheres of society in the global provision of welfare. One element of this debate is precisely about the roles of the state and families and the nature of the relations between the two.

The phenomenon of changing boundaries between family and the state in the domain of welfare support is a phenomenon that can be identified in all western welfare states. With varying degrees, all states seem to be considering the potential of families as welfare providers and requiring they take on a more explicit responsibility for sustaining the well being of their members (Rodger, 2000). The concept of

welfare society sponsored by the OECD puts it quite bluntly as a social system in which welfare assumptions are an organic part of everyday life (Rodger, 2000).

This type of approach often leads to the consideration that the state can have negative effects on 'social giving'. By performing tasks that were done by primary networks of support, the state may be creating incentives for individuals to abandon their social obligations. This is the main argument of those defending the thesis of the crowding out effect of state provision on family and informal networks of exchange of support (Mead, 1986).

Others though, make use of the welfare mix argument to articulate the need for public policies to realise that sectors and areas that have been taken for granted for a long time and that have been conceptualised as self-sufficient spheres of society, need public policies addressing them explicitly if they are to function and reproduce themselves (Evers and Svetlik, 1993).

Another approach to the nature of the relations between state and family in welfare provision focuses on the concept of welfare state familialisation. This approach is to a considerable extent subsidiary to the critique scholars like Jane Lewis, Peter Taylor-Gooby or Mary Daly have developed to the typologies of welfare state discussed in the previous section, namely to that of Esping-Andersen (Daly, 1994; George and Taylor-Gooby, 1996; Lewis, 1998). They have brought into the analysis of the welfare state dimensions that had been traditionally absent, in particular the gender dimension (Lewis, 1992) and the care dimension (Daly and Lewis, 2000), highlighting national variations in the ways social policies and the welfare state building in general deal with the roles of women in society and with the status of caring in the social division of labour.

As a response to this critique, Esping-Andersen, in some of his more recent work, suggests addressing national differences in institutional arrangements as a result of different paths of articulation between state and family. The familialised path would be the one that puts the burden for the provision of welfare mostly on families. On the contrary, a de-familialising regime would be one that seeks to unburden families and to diminish individual's welfare dependence on kinship (Esping-Andersen, 1996).

The analysis of the welfare of the Portuguese elderly will be very much bounded by the need to assess the degree of familialisation of the Portuguese global system of welfare provision. The argument of familialism that is developed along the thesis

risers from here and dwells on the type of welfare mixes that have been established in the Portuguese system and on their implications from a social policy perspective.

#### **4. Legitimacy and reproduction of welfare arrangements: a normative view on the welfare state**

##### **4.1. Conceptual elements of normative action**

As put by Therborn, a norm and its adjective 'normal' may be thought of as comprising three dimensions. It may refer to a topic of concern, a definition. It may refer to the distribution of something in a population, in the sense of what is typical or more frequent in that population. And it may designate a prescribed action by identifying what we ought to do (Therborn, 2002).

These three dimensions all lead towards reducing uncertainty by telling actors what to expect. In that sense they contribute to social order. This does not mean norms generate homogeneity of action. Actors do not necessarily conform to norms at all times. Sometimes they deviate from the norms. This however does not make the norm invalid. It means an expectation was not fulfilled and the behaviour taken classified as deviant or abnormal.

In this thesis the primary focus is put on the third dimension of norms: norms taken as normative action.

Generally, normative action can be defined as action driven by a norm about the right thing to do and encompasses all the mechanisms for the maintenance of the norm, namely a system of rewards and sanctions.

Norms are a founding element of sociological theory but, as Therborn points out, it is difficult to find any substantial work on the topic of normative action. After the centrality of norms in the theoretical frameworks of scholars such as Parsons (Parsons, 1955), it is as if mainstream sociology takes norms for granted (Therborn, 2002). Although norms are taken as central for the functioning of social systems it is as if they have stopped being a challenging topic for sociological debate.

In a cross-disciplinary perspective the topic of normative action has been a field for controversies. These controversies are very much related to disciplinary variations in explaining social action. Variations can be identified by the different disciplinary notions of the key explanatory variables in a theory of social action.

Economics, for example, draws on a utility maximisation perspective and on a baseline scenario of constant preferences. Actors behave in anticipation of the outcomes of their behaviour being they will chose the behaviour that maximises the benefits they will get from behaving in a certain way in a given situation. Individual behaviour in that sense is decided on a calculus base and not framed by general norms that surpass the individual interest of utility maximisation.

Sociology on the other hand tends to consider that actors vary in their preferences and interpretations of a given situation, assessing the appropriateness of the behaviour to take according to their norms and values. The behaviour chosen will be that which conforms to the prescribed right thing to do, even if it does not bring optimal outcomes to the actor.

Combining the two disciplinary perspectives is probably the most proficuous approach to fully understanding social action and the role of norms in shaping it: social action is neither just about following norms, taking them as the final goal, nor just acting in anticipation of the utility produced as the outcome of a certain behaviour.

In terms of how norms actually function in human interaction Therborn distinguishes three main types of norms: constitutive norms; regulative norms; and distributive norms (Therborn, 2002).

Constitutive norms define the broad system of action and membership in a given social system. An example would be codes of honour or definitions of human dignity. Regulative norms define actor's expected contributions in the system. One example could be family roles. Distributive norms set the mechanisms of reward/sanction distributed in the system (Therborn, 2002).

The full scope of norms covers all the spectrum of any social system. Norms are ubiquitous and as such, central to the functioning of any social system.

By relating norms to institutions, we can see institutions as delimited complexes of norms of the three types. In sociology, the institution of family has been a major reference in terms of the complex of norms: defining who is a member and the status of membership; assigning roles to each member; operating as an instance of sanctioning/reward for compliance with assigned roles.

One other issue related to the discussion on normative action is that of the determinants of norm conformity (or violation). There is no general theory on this but drawing on different contributions from different disciplinary subsets within

sociology, Therborn highlights some key variables that are worth noting: socialisation of actors and processes of identity formation; perceptions of compliance with norms by others; institutions and clarity of institutional design; coupling of norms and incentives/rewards (Therborn, 2002).

Finally, and still from a conceptual perspective, there is one topic of great importance when debating normative action: normative change. Within this, the issue of intrinsic processes of normative change is of central interest in the sense it opens the way to considering change in norms alongside their reproduction.

Normative change from an endogenous perspective is very much related to the interpretation actors make of norms. Norms tend to reproduce along generations, but each generation represents a potentially different set of actors that may interpret norms in a different way compared to the previous generation. The more internalised a norm, the less subject it is to interpretative variation (Therborn, 2002). Which means that the analysis of resilience of normative elements in social action involves assessing its degree of internalisation.

#### **4.2. Norms, culture and welfare state research**

Cultural norms have always remained implicit in ways of thinking about welfare within the tradition of mainstream social policy. It is only very recently that culture is included in debates as a core variable. In this thesis, and particularly in the discussion about familialism as a social policy model, when trying to account for the reasons for its resilience I shall be calling upon theories on the social policy uses of social norms and values as mechanisms of legitimisation and reproduction of welfare arrangements.

There are two main opposing views on the nature of welfare state legitimacy. The rationalist view of the welfare state refers to the function of benefits people can expect. On the contrary the concept of moral probity of welfare state focuses on the institutional form that is worth supporting.

An example of the first approach is the readings of Goodin and Legrand, suggesting that the larger the number of groups who benefit from the welfare state in some tangible and salient way the more likely the welfare state will have a broad support for government's intervention. The same authors argue that this type of reasoning

explains the centrality of middle classes in many welfare state programmes (Goodin and Grand, 1987).

An example of the second approach goes back to some of the early welfare theorists such as Titmuss. This author believed that the way the welfare state is organised has an impact on people's moral stances and behaviour. He also believed (or hoped) that people are motivated by concern for others (Titmuss, 1971).

More recently there are a number of researchers that try to bring these two approaches together. The premise for these researchers is that “ (...) institutions are not just instrumental arrangements but also expression of definite moral conceptions.” (Mau, 2004). Research on the topic has shown that there is some degree of correspondence between welfare institutions and welfare attitudes (Fargion, 2000; Andreb and Hein, 2001; Mau, 2004) . This research allows for the consideration of a normative side to the welfare state. It opens the way to consider that institutions and institutional development and policies are “ (...) founded and grounded upon a socially constituted and subjectively validated set of social norms and shared moral assumptions.” (Mau, 2004).

The idea that different welfare state architectures generate different levels of support for their underlying ideological and normative principles was introduced by Esping-Andersen (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The additional conceptual element here is to actually consider the normative side of the welfare state when accounting for the path of development different countries have followed (Jaeger, 2005).

Thinking in particular about the conservative familialised regime of welfare state, already discussed above, there has been some research that highlights the impact of the normative framework that emerged under the influence of Catholic teachings as a powerful instrument of resilience of the welfare state building as a whole (Hornbry-Smith, 1999).

Ferrera and Rhodes also use this type of approach to explain, for example, the different paths of social services development countries have followed. They argue, “Depending on the extent to which the traditional vision of women's responsibilities is entrenched, we might expect social care issues to enter policy agenda sooner or later. In short, the cultural heritage of any given country can either enhance or hinder legitimising the externalisation of caring functions traditionally confined to the family domain.” (Ferrera and Rhodes, 2000).

In the analysis of the Portuguese social policy building and of the welfare arrangements involving the elderly I shall try to articulate some elements on the normative milieu that explains them but that is simultaneously reinforced by them.

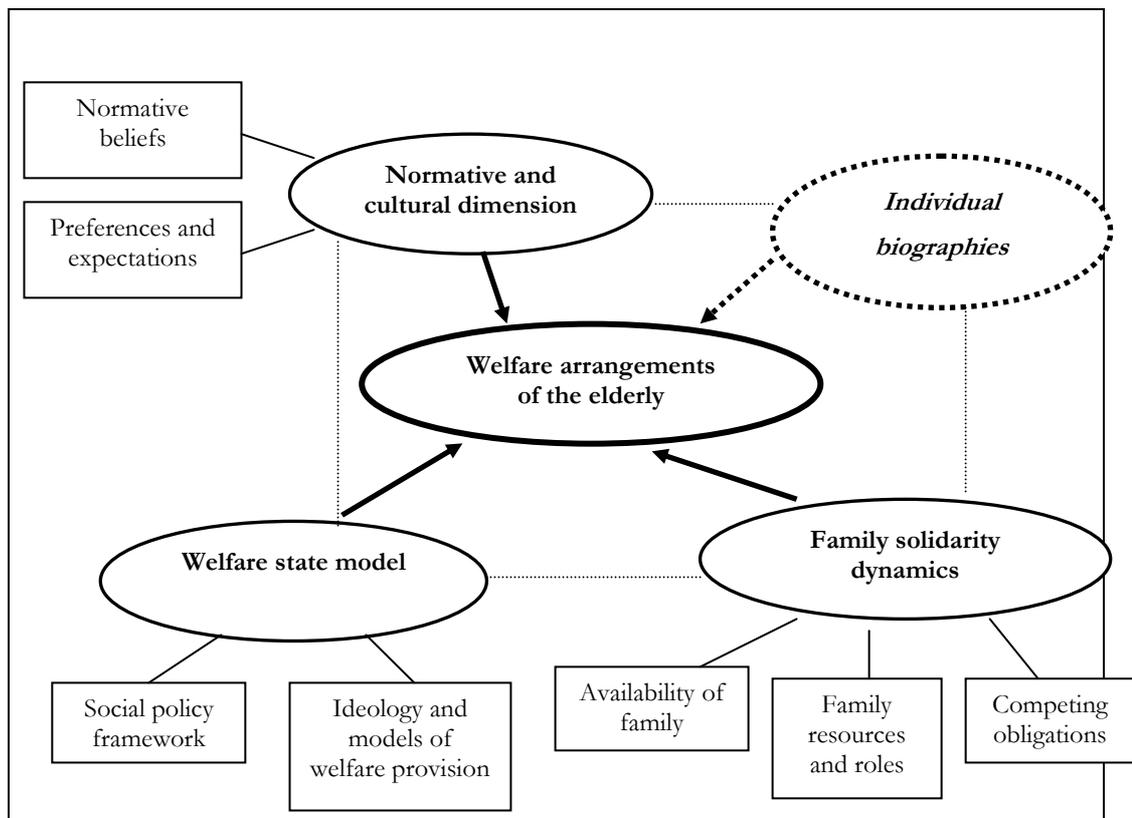
## **Conclusion**

This chapter briefly presents the theoretical framework(s) used in this study. When addressing welfare arrangements and welfare state dynamics, any researcher will be confronted with a multiplicity of perspectives each emerging from different research problems and each leading to different research designs. It is, in that sense, of great importance to take a position, certain that the position taken will define the lens through which the phenomena of interest will be interpreted.

This thesis addresses the welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly from an institutional perspective. That means it focuses on the inner logics of the social system and not on individual drivers. The broad theoretical approach is therefore influenced by theories on institutional development, namely by the several contributions from new-institutionalism schools. Among those, historical institutionalism and sociological institutionalism gain relevance in the sense that welfare arrangements will be primarily addressed from a macro-perspective that highlights path-dependent constraints and normative constraints.

The operationalisation of welfare arrangements is done articulating contributions from three theoretical fields or research areas. The diagram below summarises the conceptual design for the research on welfare arrangements in old age from the perspective of the three research areas.

Figure 1.2. Conceptual design for the research on welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly



What the diagram is intended to depict is an understanding of welfare arrangements in old age as the output of a complex set of factors and forces, originating in different spheres of the social space, often interacting and mutually influencing each other. Any attempt to establish a straightforward causal link between welfare arrangements and one of the dimensions represented in the diagram is therefore considered reductionist and inaccurate. It is reductionist because welfare arrangements in old age are understood as complex and multi-sided phenomena in the intersection of different dimensions of life. It is inaccurate because simple causality cannot be established between phenomena where imbrications are a key element.

Firstly, welfare arrangements are considered as a phenomenon that takes place within an institutional setting whose logics of development and functioning must be unravelled. For that I am influenced by path-dependency theory and analyses that tackle the institutional development processes of contemporary welfare states. In terms of the analysis of the Portuguese welfare state that means considering that welfare arrangements and social policies related to old age as a domain for path-

dependent processes, although from a non-deterministic point of view we can try to identify opportunities for change and innovation.

Secondly, welfare arrangements are located in the broader scene of family solidarity, from the perspective of unravelling the different dimensions and implications of social solidarity exercised in that domain. For that, I am influenced by different contributions to Sociology of Family, namely by some institutionalist analyses that focus on the stances of articulation between family and state.

Finally, welfare arrangements are seen as the result of a broad and complex set of institutional and cultural factors. When analysing people's choices and preferences it is important to take into account the normative dimension of the welfare state and to discuss how that normative dimension can help explain the resilient character of some processes.

In the diagram, a fourth dimension of analysis is also represented, that would lead us to the consideration of individual determinants, which are very much related to individual biographies in the setup of different welfare arrangements. Although this line of analysis is acknowledged, it is not included in this thesis.

The three conceptual levels of analysis that are used in the thesis, and that are represented in the diagram above, are considered, in this thesis, and for heuristic purposes, as different dimensions of a multidimensional picture: welfare arrangements of individuals.

Having said that, it should not be inferred from the approach chosen any statement about the nature of the linkages between the three dimensions. Those linkages are acknowledged to exist, and more than that to not always reflect a balanced distribution of power in terms of the weight each has at a given period in time in shaping welfare arrangements. This is particularly so when considering the period of time addressed in the thesis and the political economy dynamics in that same period.

Globally, welfare arrangements, understood as the outcome of the institutions in place, the dynamics of families (namely the economic dynamics) and the system of values and norms, reflect the nature of the linkages between those three dimensions. It is not within the scope of this thesis to disentangle those linkages, which among other things would imply a more in depth historical analysis, using time series data and covering a longer period of time.

In line with the above, it is not the purpose of the thesis to provide any analysis on the relative weight of each dimension in shaping welfare arrangements. Theoretically,

it is possible to pinpoint some elements that suggest different weights in different moments in time. For example, a known consequence of joining the EU in the history of Portugal was the fast convergence of mentalities, therefore of the universe of norms and values, with the more advanced European societies. And this without the country experiencing the same rate of convergence in its economic structures.

One other example, more distant in time, is related to the emergence of the welfare state itself, in sequence of harsh political battles in the aftermath of the democratic revolution. Both examples point to potentially different weights of the normative dimension (in the first example) or the political/institutional setting (in the second example).

This type of differences are implicitly acknowledged along the thesis when the analysis articulates some of the trends identified in each dimension with the global dynamics of the political economy of the period under investigation. The later are not addressed per se in the thesis since they fall outside its scope.

In the chapter that follows, I begin discussing historical and institutional processes of emergence and consolidation of the welfare state in Portugal.

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