Ideal (and Real) Types of Welfare State [#]

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Abstract

In the extensive literature that has been dedicated during the past fifteen years to the comparative analysis of the welfare states, a significant number of studies have focused on the identification of the ideal regimes or types, in addition to their empirical validation. The celebrated work, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism,* by Esping-Andersen (1990) constituted the point of departure for a vigorous academic debate which, as a response to some of the criticisms that were raised by the study, led to the construction of various alternative typologies, as well as a prodigious output of empirical studies aiming to identify what is termed in the present paper, real types. This paper seeks to contribute to the discussion on the current state of knowledge with regard to the differences and similarities in the welfare states following the scientific contributions made over the past fifteen years. Two general conclusions emerge in particular: firstly, that the diversity of typologies has not contributed to the desired clarification; and secondly, that the results of the studies are inconclusive, both with regard to the precise number of real types of welfare state – despite the fact that all of them confirm the existence of at least three types – and to the classification of the countries concerned. The existence of significant divergences, and even of contradictory results, highlights the need for continued research. However, rather than simply constructing new typologies, it is necessary to incorporate into empirical analyses a temporal evaluation of the effects of the reforms introduced in the welfare states.

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Contents

1. Introduction

In the extensive literature that has been dedicated during the past fifteen years to the comparative analysis of the welfare states, a significant number of studies have focused on the identification of the ideal regimes or types, in addition to their empirical validation. The celebrated work, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism,* by Esping-Andersen (1990) constituted the point of departure for a vigorous academic debate which has continued right up to the present day. In spite of the work's acknowledged merits, among which is the conceptualisation of the welfare state in terms of different regimes, various criticisms have been raised. The most intensely debated of these have been the classification of certain countries, the analytical focus on cash benefits, the omission of gender-dimension (not analysed in this paper) and, most recently, the very concept of regime. The divergence in relation to the number of regimes – and thus, the classification of various countries – gave rise to five typologies (Leibfried 1992; Castles and Mitchell 1993; Ferrera 1996a; Bonoli 1997; Korpi and Palme 1998).

The first part of the present paper comprises the presentation and critical analysis of some of the ideal typologies. A summary of Esping-Andersen's (1990) ´three worlds`, in addition to some of the main critiques expressed against the latter, is complemented by Esping-Andersen's (1999) commentary and revised classification, which were omitted in the literature. The proposals of Ferrera, Bonoli and Korpi and Palme were selected from among the above-mentioned typologies: the first two sought to "correct" Esping-Andersen's typology by means of the identification of a fourth regime encompassing the Southern European countries; the third and more ambitious work aimed to identify five institutional welfare state models. The various solutions, in terms of clusters, are all compared with each other and with reference to the ´three worlds`, in order to identify differences and similarities.

However, besides the theoretical debate, an extensive number of empirical studies have been published with the objective of identifying those regimes which we refer to in this paper as 'real'. The second part of this paper presents a summary of thirteen empirical studies, all carried out between 1994 and 2005, which have been selected on the basis of their diversity in terms of analytical focus, methodological options and the time horizon of each analysis. Although the thirteen studies are presented in chronological order, they could also have been arranged according to their main objectives, namely, to test the Esping-Andersen typology (Ragin, 1994; Kangas, 1994; Obinger and Wagschal, 1998; Wildboer Schut et al., 2001; Powell and Barrientos, 2004); to verify the existence of a fourth and/or fifth welfare state regime for the countries of Southern and Eastern Europe, respectively (Saint Arnaud and Bernard, 2003; MacMenamim, 2003; Soede et al., 2004; Ferreira and Figueiredo, 2005); finally, to test the robustness of the ´three worlds` through the analysis of other domains of State intervention (Kautto, 2002; Gal, 2004; Bambra, 2005a,b). In a further stage, the findings of the studies are compared, in terms of the number and composition of the clusters, both among each other and with the ideal typologies, particularly with Esping-Andersen's classification.

A final evaluation will permit us to draw conclusions as to whether or not such a substantial theoretical and empirical output has contributed to the clarification of divergences and the unequivocal confirmation of the classification of the majority of countries. To summarise, the intention is to verify whether the intense debate of the past fifteen years has served to contribute decisively to a greater knowledge of the differences and similarities among the welfare states in the various continents, in particular those in Europe.

2. The theoretical ideal types

2.1. The ´three worlds` of Esping-Andersen

Over the past fifteen years, many researchers have attempted to provide answers to two central questions: firstly, how do the welfare states differ from and resemble each other? Secondly, can they be classified into different ideal-types and if so, how?

The publication of the celebrated work, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* by Esping-Andersen (1990), which continues today to be regarded as a reference work, in spite of the diverse critiques that it has generated, initiated an intense academic debate which Abrahamson (1999) has described as the 'welfare modelling business'.

Esping-Andersen (1990) found that little attention had previously been directed towards the study of the welfare state itself, a position which is evident in the question that he starts out by formulating thus: "If welfare states differ, how do they differ? And when, indeed is a state a welfare state?"(p.18). Having opted to approach the concept of the welfare state from the perspective of political economy, rather than from that of the social programmes in themselves, he acknowledged the following limitation:

  "The broader approach implies a trade-off. Since our intention is to understand the ´big picture`, we shall not be able to dwell on the detailed characteristics of the various social programmes. (...) A related trade-off is that large comparisons, such as ours, prohibit detailed treatments of individual countries". (p.2)[1]

However, the above questions also included his criticism of the conceptualisation of welfare states in terms of social expenditure, because: "expenditures are epiphenomenal to the theoretical substance of the welfare state" (p.19). For both reasons, Esping-Andersen organised his analysis around the concept of the welfare state regime - not simply the welfare state – arguing that: "to talk of a ´regime` is to denote the fact that in the relation between state and economy, a complex of legal and organisational features is

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[1] It is of interest to note that Esping-Andersen admitted that "readers knowledgeable of any of the 18 nations included in the study, will feel that my treatment of ´their` country is superficial, if not outright misrepresentative" (1990:2).

systematically interwoven" (p.2).[2] In order to define a welfare regime, Esping-Andersen used two major dimensions: i) the level of decommodification, that is, the degree to which one can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living without reliance on the market; and ii) the type of stratification, that is, how and to what extent welfare systems differ in the structuring of social citizenship.

Based on the above criteria, he identifies three ideal types or regimes – liberal, conservative and social-democratic – each differing with respect to the historical and political development in various societies.[3]

The Liberal Regime is characterised by reliance on the market. It provides support only to those in need, i.e., those who are unable to meet their basic requirements in any other way. Entitlements rules are strict and stringent means-testing is used to determine the level of benefit, which tends to be a ´minimal subsistence level`. There are no separate collective provisions for specific occupational groups (apart from civil servants' schemes). The collective provision is funded from taxation. The state encourages the market solution by guaranteeing only a minimum and by the tax system making the market the key institution. Consequently, the degree of decommodification is low. In terms of stratification, this regime promotes a clear distinction between state-welfare recipients and the rest of the population.

The Conservative Regime places the family at the centre of welfare provision. It is characterised by a large number of different social insurance schemes for different occupational groups (with special schemes for civil servants). Entitlements rules are fairly strict and are based on the history of paid contributions. The levels of benefits are high and earnings-related. The collective schemes are financed through compulsory contributions. The private provision plays a marginal role. The level of decommodification is medium, but is largely concentrated among employed people with a high contribution period. In terms of stratification, this regime tends to preserve the differences based on occupational status.

The Social-democratic Regime offers a high level of collective provision for all residents, giving the state a key role in welfare provision. Entitlements are based on residency and the levels of benefits are high. The collective provision is financed through taxation. The universalistic nature of this regime makes private provision unnecessary. The level of de-commodification is high, depending on the level of benefit. Because of its universalistic nature, this regime promotes equality of citizens.

Esping-Andersen tested empirically his theoretical typology on 18 OECD countries in 1980. In order to evaluate the decommodification level, he selected the three most important cash benefits programmes (pensions, sickness, and unemployment) and a set of

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[2] In *Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies*, Esping-Andersen defined more rigorously the concept of the *regime* as: "the ways in which welfare production is allocated between state, market, and households" (1999:73).
[3] These three regimes were denominated in accordance with the underlying political ideology and followed the famous distinction made by Titmuss (1974) as the residual, the achievement-performance and the institutional social policy models.

indicators illustrative of the "ease with which an average person can opt out of the market" (1990:49).[4] The total decommodification score showed that the welfare states cluster into three distinct groups (Table 1).[5] On the basis of his findings, Esping-Andersen concluded that "the idea that welfare states cluster into distinct groups *becomes more evident*" and that "*based roughly* on how nations cluster around the mean, we can distinguish three groups of countries" (1990:54; emphasis added). In spite of the several borderline cases, he concluded that each group showed the expected countries according to his theory of regimes. Hence, the identification of the three clusters with the social-democratic, conservative and liberal regimes, respectively.[6]

Table 1- Rank-order of welfare states

(Total decommodification score)[a]

Liberal regime	
Australia	13.0
USA	13.8
New Zealand	17.1
Canada	22.0
Ireland	23.3
UK	23.4
Conservative Regime	
Italy	24.1
Japan	27.1
France	27.5
Germany	27.7
Finland	29.2
Switzerland	29.8
Social-democratic regime	
Austria	31.1
Belgium	32.4
Netherlands	32.4
Denmark	38.1
Norway	38.3
Sweden	39.1
Mean	27.2

(a) The higher the score, the greater the degree of
decommodification; regime label added.
Source: Esping-Andersen (1990:52, Table 2.2)

Esping-Andersen's conclusions give rise to two separate questions, which are not discussed in the literature. The first refers to the dividing points selected. If, as an alternative, the clusters had been identified in terms of the highest index increases, a different composition would have been obtained:

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[4] The old-age pensions decommodification index was constructed through the assessment of five indicators: replacement rate (net of taxes) for minimum pension, standard replacement (net) rate, contribution period, individual's share of pension financing, and the take up rate. The indicators for sickness and unemployment benefits followed a similar logic (Esping-Andersen 1990:54).

[5] Methodological issues in Esping-Andersen (1990:49-50 and Appendix).

[6] Esping-Andersen (1990:77) concluded that decommodification and stratification indices led to very similar clusters. This conclusion, however, was not totally confirmed by the results (52, Table 2.2; 74, Table 3.3): only three countries (Germany, Sweden and the USA) showed the same classification in the both dimensions.

- Australia, USA, New Zealand (*Liberal regime*)
- Canada, Ireland, UK, Italy, Japan, France, Germany, Finland, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands (*Conservative regime)*
- Denmark, Norway, Sweden (*Social-democratic regime*)

The second question arises from the recognition that analysis of the combined score would serve to facilitate the identification of the three clusters. Thus, the term of comparison would correspond to the results that had previously been obtained for each of the three social programmes (Table 2).

Table 2 - The rank-order of welfare states: decommodification level by

social programme

Pensions		*Sickness*		*Unemployment*	
Sweden	17.0	Denmark	15.0	Netherlands	11.1
Belgium	15.0	Sweden	15.0	Norway	9.4
Denmark	15.0	Norway	14.0	Switzerland	8.8
Norway	14.9	Austria	12.5	Belgium	8.6
Finland	14.0	Switzerland	12.0	Ireland	8.3
France	12.0	Germany	11.3	Denmark	8.1
Austria	11.9	Netherlands	10.5	Canada	8.0
Netherlands	10.8	Finland	10.0	Germany	7.9
Japan	10.5	Italy	9.4	UK	7.2
Italy	9.6	France	9.2	USA	7.2
New Zealand	9.1	Belgium	8.8	Sweden	7.1
Switzerland	9.0	Ireland	8.3	Austria	6.7
Germany	8.5	UK	7.7	France	6.3
UK	8.5	Japan	6.8	Finland	5.2
Canada	7.7	Canada	6.3	Italy	5.1
USA	7.0	Australia	4.0	Japan	5.0
Ireland	6.7	New Zealand	4.0	Australia	4.0
Australia	5.0	USA	0.0	New Zealand	4.0
Mean	10.7	Mean	9.2	Mean	7.1

Source: Esping-Andersen (1990: 50, Table 2.1); rank-order added.

If dividing points were established in the method used by Esping-Andersen, the ranking order of the countries would not lead to consistent clusters (Table 3). In fact, only nine countries were part of the same regime for all social programmes and only seven of them were in correspondence with the combined score (the UK and Austria were the exceptions). The best correspondence (13 countries) with the combined score was shown by the pension cash benefits. It is worth emphasising the total correspondence between the clustering of the sickness programme and the cluster-assignment resulting from dividing points change; the other two programmes also showed a large correspondence. This finding seems to indicate a certain weakness with regard to Esping-Andersen's methodology.

Following Titmuss (1974), Esping-Andersen (1999) also recognised the importance of the typologies in comparative research of welfare states, in particular because: "they allow for greater analytical parsimony and help us to see the forest rather than myriad trees" (p.73).[7]

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[7] According to Titmuss: "the purpose of model-building is not to admire the architecture of the building, but to help us to see some order in all disorder and confusion of facts, systems and choices concerning areas of our economic and social life" (1974:30).

Table 3 – The three clusters by social programme

	Total score	Pensions	Sickness	Unemployment
Liberal	**Australia** USA New Zealand Canada Ireland UK	**Australia** Ireland USA Canada	USA New Zealand **Australia**	New Zealand **Australia**
Conservative	**Italy** **Japan** **France** **Germany** Finland **Switzerland**	**UK** **Germany** **Switzerland** New Zealand **Italy** **Japan** Netherlands **Austria** **France**	Canada **Japan** **UK** Ireland Belgium **France** **Italy** Finland Netherlands **Germany** **Switzerland** **Austria**	**Japan** **Italy** Finland **France** **Austria** Sweden USA **UK** **Germany** Canada Denmark Ireland Belgium **Switzerland**
Social-democratic	Austria Belgium Netherlands Denmark **Norway** Sweden	Finland **Norway** Denmark Belgium Sweden	**Norway** Sweden Denmark	**Norway** Netherlands

Source: Based on Esping-Andersen (1990: 50, Table 2.1; 52, Table 2.2); bold added (countries classified in the same regime).

Yet, he pointed out a fundamental issue:

"[The typologies] provide a snapshot of the world at one point in time and do not easily capture mutations or the birth of new species. Any typology of welfare regimes therefore remains valid only as long as history stands still". (1999:73)

With his ´three worlds`, Esping-Andersen "created a new open field for discussion about which welfare state systems represent welfare state models" (Aspalter, 2002:1). However, as we shall attempt to demonstrate, some of the later theoretical and empirical studies were based on different analytical and methodological options from those of Esping-Andersen, a fact that should not be overlooked in the process of comparing the respective conclusions.

2.2. Criticisms of the ´three worlds`

The importance of the typology proposed by Esping-Andersen can be judged by the intensity of the debate that it aroused, which has continued until the present day. The themes of this debate have focused on several areas of criticism (see Cnaan, 1992; Gough, 2002a; Wildboer Schut et al., 2001). In view of their having served as points of departure for new research works, we can highlight the following areas: [8]

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[8] A further criticism, not considered in this paper, was also prominent in the debate, namely, the neglect of gender-dimension (Lewis, 1992, 2002; O´Connor, 1993, 1996; Orloff, 1993, 1996; Siaroff, 1994; Sainsbury, 1994, 1999). Siaroff´s typology, based on gender inequalities, included a fourth regime that was characterised

i)   The range of countries;
ii) The analytical focus on cash benefits;
iii) The concept of welfare regimes.

The first area of criticism refers to the incorrect classification of certain countries, namely, Australia and New Zealand, Japan and Italy. The assertion of a fourth or even a fifth regime resulted in the presentation of new typologies (Leibfried, 1992; Castles and Mitchell, 1993; Ferrera, 1996a; Bonoli, 1997; Korpi and Palme, 1998).

The second area of criticism is concerned with the identification of the three regimes on the basis of the exclusive analysis of cash benefits. The omission of domains and types of State intervention, in which more significant differences might be expected among the welfare states (for example, in the cases of health care and social services), constituted a motive for questioning the validity of the typology. As a result, numerous empirical studies were conducted with the aim of confirming Esping-Andersen´s three-fold division.

The third, and most radical, criticism was put forward by Kasza (2002), in which the very concept of the welfare regime came under question, and moreover, its value as an instrument of comparative analysis. Concentrating his analysis on State intervention, as the essential component of the welfare mix, Kasza defended that each type of regime and the respective countries in it should abide by two requirements: i) most of the key policies must reflect a similar approach to issues of public welfare; and ii) the coherency between these policies should be guaranteed by a defined set of principles (p.272).[9] So, it is precisely the concept of the welfare regime as a package of public policies that conforms to certain principles that Kasza rejects, arguing that, with few exceptions, governments implement unconnected or even contradictory social policies. In Kasza's view, there are five reasons by which the internal incoherency of every welfare state can be explained:

> "(1) each welfare policy tends to change incrementally over many years; (2) different welfare policies in the same country typically have different histories; (3) discrete sets of policy actors are involved in the various fields of welfare policy; (4) variations in the policymaking process affect the substance of policy; and (5) borrowing from foreign models introduces diverse practical and normative elements into each country's welfare". (p.282)

Kasza proposes that the way to overcome the divergences on the ideal number of regimes is to restrict comparative analysis to a specific domain (for example, pensions, unemployment, health), and to expand the number of countries analysed. (p. 284).

The new typologies and empirical studies associated with the three above-outlined criticisms will be examined in the later sub-sections of this paper.

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by a late mobilisation of women, observable in the Mediterranean and Asian countries. However, for Wildboer Schut et al. (2001:17), the interest of this classification was condensed in the study of the gender-sensitive aspects of the welfare state. Bambra (2004) sought to demonstrate, with a defamilisation index, that the critique of Esping-Andersen was not empirically robust: with the exceptions of Canada, Ireland, the UK and Japan, the results coincided with the ´three worlds`.

[9] To Kasza (2002:272): "the principles may derive from the political ideology of governmental forces [Scandinavian social-democratic countries], or from Catholic or other religious traditions [Southern Europe], or from secular cultural values [Japan]".

2.3. The ´three worlds` revisited by Esping-Andersen

In *Social Foundations of Post-Industrial Economies*, (1999), prior to embarking on an analysis of the criticisms of his ´three worlds´, Esping-Andersen expressed the following observation on the existence of conceptual confusion:

> "Some speak of welfare states, some of welfare regimes, some simply of social policy, as if the meaning were the same. It is not. Social policy can exist without welfare states, but not the other way around". (p.34)

The above-quotation sheds light on the irrelevance of the critiques based on approaches which focus on social programmes rather than on Esping-Andersen's concept of a welfare regime (p.73). Nevertheless, two specific criticisms have drawn Esping-Andersen's attention: the insufficient analysis of the role of the family and the existence of three or more regimes. In response to the first, Esping-Andersen defends the importance of ´familialism` or ´de-familiarisation`, i.e., of the extent to which the household's welfare and caring responsibilities are relaxed by state or market provision, in order to attain a better understanding of the role of the family in the welfare mix, as well as a more complete characterisation of the regimes.

With regard to the second criticism, he identified three issues concerning the robustness of any typology: i) "if alternative attributes were considered, the classification might break down or, at least, require additional regimes"; ii) "since [they] refer to one time-point, we shall miss out on possibly decisive transmutations"; iii) "since they are ideal types, there are bound to be ambiguous cases" (p.86). The omission of these questions would justify the conclusions of many empirical studies that stressed the erroneous classification of various countries, including the UK and Holland. In the former of these two cases, the reforms of the British welfare state undertaken during the 1980s and 1990s would be determinant and would not have been encompassed in the ´three worlds`. The classification of Holland would depend, for its part, on the analytical focus: whether the regime was social-democratic (cash benefits) or conservative (social services included) (p.88). He concludes:

> "[T]he real problem is how to deal with systematic deviants. The issue here is whether a three-way typology adequately exhausts the variance. If there are cases that follow a wholly different underlying logic, we would have to construct yet another, separate ideal-type - a fourth 'world of welfare capitalism' " (1999:88).

Esping-Andersen acknowledged that Australia, Japan and the Southern European countries presented characteristics which were not entirely compatible with this ´three worlds`. Nonetheless, and for the sake of analytical parsimony, he maintained that the first two cases should be viewed as variants (although with a separate logic) and not as specific regimes. The case of the Mediterranean countries merits greater attention, given that the creation of a specific regime would depend principally on the role of the family in the welfare mix. To this end, Esping-Andersen identifies and assesses two dimensions of familialism (the public policies aimed at families and the welfare burden assumed by the latter), arguing that Spain, Portugal and Italy do not justify being classified under a specific

regime status, since these countries display no significant differences when compared with the other countries of Continental Europe (1999:93).[10] He concluded thus:

"[T]he question of how to identify and classify welfare regimes will remain open because, as noted, researchers differ in terms of what attributes they consider vital and how to measure them". (p.94)

Perhaps to prove his affirmation, Esping-Andersen (1999:84-5) presented a new classification based on four characteristics: the role (central, marginal or subsidiary) of the state, market and family in the welfare mix; the dominant mode and locus of solidarity in the welfare state; and the degree of decommodification. The countries were classified according to the model of welfare state and to the dominance of the family in the welfare mix (Table 4). [11]

Table 4 – New classifications by Esping-Andersen (1999)

Models of Welfare State			Dominance of the Family	
Residual	Universalist	Social insurance	Familialist	Non-Familialist
Australia	Denmark	Austria	Austria	Australia
Canada	Finland	Belgium	Belgium (b)	Canada
New Zealand	Netherlands	France	France (b)	Denmark
UK (a)	Norway	Germany	Germany	Finland
USA	Sweden	Italy	Italy	New Zealand
	UK (a)	Japan	Japan	Norway
		Spain	Netherlands	Sweden
			Portugal	UK
			Spain	USA

(a) To a degree; (b) Less so;
Source: Based on Esping-Andersen (1999:85-6).

The combined analysis of these two classifications leads to four groups of countries:[12]

- *Residual/ Non-Familialist*: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and USA;
- *Universalist/ Familialist*: the Netherlands;
- *Universalist/ Non-Familialist*: Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden;
- *Social insurance/ Familialist*: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain.

There are three noteworthy observations on this new classification: the particularity of the Netherlands; the correspondence between the first cluster and the liberal regime; and the existence of a Scandinavian group.

2.4. 'New' typologies: how many regimes?

The debate since the publication of the ´three worlds` has involved two essential questions: what is the number of ideal types of welfare state? Is it three, four or more? Furthermore, which countries should be incorporated into which type? Throughout the 1990s, various

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[10] See results in Esping-Andersen (1999:93, Table 5.5)

[11] The new set of countries included Portugal and Spain, but excluded Ireland and Switzerland.

[12] Portugal and the UK were excluded, for different reasons.

typologies were presented (viz. Arts and Gelissen (2002)), but, as Abrahamson (2002:33) argues, none of them produced any clarification, given that in certain cases, the authors merely attributed new names to regimes that had already been identified. Both issues regard the classification of the following countries as specific regimes or as sub-regimes: the South-east Asian countries, Australasia, the Southern and Eastern European countries.[13]

The theoretical and empirical interest in classifying the countries of Southern Europe involved, between 1992 and the present time, a large number of researchers, due to their discontent with the classification of Esping-Andersen (1990).

One of those in agreement with Esping-Andersen was Katrougalos (1996:43), who asserted that those countries constituted a sub-category or variant of the conservative regime, in view of their relatively under-developed welfare states which displayed in common the immaturity of the social protection systems and some similar social and family structures.[14]

In contrast, the typologies of Ferrera (1996a) and Bonoli (1997) – Table 5 – included a fourth regime to encompass the Mediterranean countries.[15]

The innovative contribution of Ferrera (1996a,b) was based on two facts: the lack of interest manifested up to that time in analysing the Mediterranean countries as a group, or, in the scarce studies that included them at all, in classifying them as a sub-group of the conservative regime, characterised by a lower level of development. Clarifying that his main purpose was "to compile a preliminary, descriptive checklist of features rather than outline a coherent and rigorous 'type'", Ferrera decided "to sketch out a closer profile of Southern European policy and politics" (1996a:18). Confining his study to the Western European countries, he selected, first, the following indicators: i) eligibility rules; ii) structure of benefits; iii) financing; and iv) organisational-managerial arrangements.

It is apparently on the basis of the aforementioned indicators that Ferrera proposed the grouping of the systems into four institutional configurations or distinct ´families`. Of these, three displayed profiles that differed very little from the regimes of Esping-Andersen (1990), almost certainly due to the fact that they were based on similar indicators. However, Ferrera's clusters did not coincide with that of Esping-Anderson, namely, *Anglo-Saxon* (Ireland, UK); *Bismarckian* (Germany, Austria, Belgium, France, Holland, Luxemburg and Switzerland); S*candinavian* (Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland). The fourth "family" (*Southern Europe*) comprised the Mediterranean countries, the social

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[13] The debate with reference to the Asian and Australasian countries is not considered in the present analysis. For the Asian countries, see, for example, Jones (1990, 1993), Kwon (1997) and Gough (2000b). The inclusion of Australia and New Zealand in the liberal regime was contested by Castles and Mitchell (1992, 1993), who instead supported a fourth regime (designated *Radical*, and which would include the UK), the concept of which was rejected by Esping-Andersen (1999:89-90).

[14] This fourth regime is also supported by Gough (1996) and Adão and Silva (2000).

[15] In addition, Leibfried (1992) identified four models differentiated by the level of development of social citizenship, as well as the effectiveness of the system in combating poverty. The fourth model (*Rudimentary*), applicable to Spain, Greece, Portugal, France and Italy, could be characterised as a "welfare state as half-institutionalised promise", owing to the absence of social minimums (p.23). The notion of a specific ´regime` based on an insufficiency of social assistance led Esping-Andersen (1999) to affirm that "Leibfried misses the mark because he is studying a qualitatively different phenomenon" (p.74).

protection systems of which presented, with highly heterogeneous degrees of maturation**,** their own specific profiles, described by Ferrera in the following two points:

 "(i) the peculiar ´excesses` in income maintenance: peaks of generosity accompanied by vast gaps in protection, and (ii) the departure from institutional corporatism in the field of health care and the (partial) establishment of national health services, based on universalistic principles". (1996a:29)

The fact that the two systems – health and social security – are governed by different principles might effectively represent an important element of differentiation[16]. However, the polarisation of material cover can only be explained by the lower level of development of the systems, as acknowledged by the EC (1993), Ferrera et al. (2000) and Vogel 2003).

However, Ferrera identified two additional characteristics:

 "(iii) the low degree of state penetration of the welfare sphere, in a broad sense, and the peculiar mix between public and non-public actors and institutions; and (iv) the persistence and formation – in some cases – of fairly elaborate ´patronage systems` for the selective distribution of cash benefits" (Ferrera, 1996a:29)[17].

It seems that these characteristics have been decisive in the characterisation of the southern European systems. In effect, Ferrera wrote:

 "The Southern European welfare state is characterised by a peculiar mode of political functioning which distinguishes it not only from the highly homogeneous, standardized and universalistic welfare states of Northern Europe, but also from the more fragmented continental systems" (1996a:29).

This conclusion gives rise to two questions, each of a different nature. Firstly, the comparison seems to be based on different dimensions: the political functioning of the Latin countries and the principles of organisation for the other countries. Secondly, and without commenting on the major susceptibility of the State to influence from interest groups (particularly in the case of health), Ferrera´s reflection on political clientelism appears to be a forced generalisation on the domain of social security, at least with regard to Portugal. As Ferrera himself states:

"The electoral manipulation of welfare benefits is a well-known phenomenon in all democratic countries [...], however, the relationship between welfare and voting is commonly understood in general and impersonal terms and not as an immediate/personal one, i.e. as a ´real` exchange of individual votes for individual benefits." (1996a:25)

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[16] The coexistence of both principles suggests that Kasza (2002) was correct.
[17] According to Ferrera, the first characteristic explains a deficit of *´stateness`*, i.e.: "broadly, the degree of decision-making autonomy of state officials vis-à-vis non-state actors as well as their capacity to implement decisions" (1996a:25, 35).

Table 5 - Types of welfare state and their characteristics

Esping-Andersen (1990)
1. *Liberal*
   Low level of decommodification; market-differentiation of welfare
2. *Conservative*
   Moderate level of decommodification; social benefits mainly dependent on former contributions and status
3. *Social-democratic*
   High level of decommodification; universal benefits and high degree of benefit equality

Ferrera (1996)
1. *Anglo-Saxon*
   Fairly high welfare state coverage; social assistance with a means test; mixed system of financing; highly integrated organisational framework entirely managed by a public administration
2. *Bismarckian*
   Strong link between work position and social entitlements; benefits proportional to income; financing through contributions; reasonably substantial social assistance benefits; insurance schemes mainly governed by unions and employer organisations
3. *Scandinavian*
   Social protection as a citizenship right; universal coverage; relatively generous fixed benefits for various risks; financing mainly through fiscal revenues; strong organisational integration
4. *Southern*
   Fragmented system of income guarantees linked to work position; generous benefits without articulated net minimum social protection; health care as a right of citizenship; particularism in payments of cash benefits and financing; financing through contributions and fiscal revenues

Bonoli (1997)
1. *British*
   Low % of social expenditure financed through contributions (Beveridge); low social expenditure as a % of GDP
2. *Continental*
   High % of social expenditure financed through contributions (Bismarck); high social expenditure as a % of GDP
3. *Nordic*
   Low % of social expenditure financed through contributions (Beveridge); high social expenditure as a % of GDP
4. *Southern*
   High % of social expenditure financed through contributions (Bismarck); low social expenditure as a % of GDP

Korpi and Palme (1998)
1. *Basic Security*
   Entitlements based on citizenship *or* contributions; application of the flat-rate benefit principle
2. *Corporatist*
   Entitlements based on occupational category *and* labour force participation; use of earnings-related benefit principle
3. *Encompassing*
   Entitlements based on citizenship *and* labour force participation; flat-rate and earnings-related benefit principle
4. *Targeted*
   Eligibility based on proven need; use of the minimum benefit principle
5. *Voluntary State Subsidised*
   Eligibility based on membership or contributions; flat-rate or earnings-related benefit principle

Source: Arts and Gelissen (2002:144-5, Table 1); the typologies of Leibfried (1992), Castles and Mitchell (1993) and Siaroff (1994) are excluded.

Thus, Ferrera declares that in the Latin countries, both forms of "exchange" (impersonal and personal) have equal importance and that social transfers have been used to complement low salaries, in exchange for party political support and with the frequent intermediation of the trade unions themselves. We can reach agreement on a 'manipulation of the welfare system', for example by means of extraordinary pension increases during pre-electoral periods, or the facilitating of early retirement for determined occupational

groups. However, only with great difficulty can the logic of personal exchange be applied in a generalised sense to social benefits. On this subject, it is valid to recall the comment of Esping-Andersen:

> "Ferrera´s point has mainly to do with distributive practice – the pervasive use of social benefits [...] for purposes of political clientelism. [...]A perverted use of welfare programmes and public bureaucracies may define the character of a policy, but it is difficult to see how it defines a welfare regime unless the entire system was from the very beginning specifically designed for the purpose of clientelism rather than social protection. Such an argument would be very hard to sustain" (1999:90).

Sotiropoulos (2004) also acknowledged the distinction between the bureaucracies of the Mediterranean countries and those of the other Western European countries, given that: "until recently they were still characterised by a number of distinguishing interrelated characteristics" (p.419). In relation to the common tendency to associate Southern European bureaucracy with corruption and insufficiency, the author contended that: "these are behavioral patterns rather than structural characteristics" (p.406).

Another typology was presented by Bonoli (1997), for whom the existing classifications were found to be excessively limited by their uni-dimensional approach, expressed in the analysis of the "quantity" of provision (´how much` dimension'), or of the different provision models (´how` dimension) (p.352). His critique was directed at the typologies of Esping-Andersen and Ferrera. In spite of his accepting that the decommodification dimension incorporated quantity and quality indicators (for example, values of benefits and conditions of access), Bonoli arrived at the conclusion that "Esping-Andersen still ends up with a classification based on the quantity of welfare provided by individual welfare states" (p.354). On the contrary, the weakness of Ferrera's classification resides in the fact that the qualitative dimension is not taken into consideration. Bonoli's response was to develop a bi-dimensional classification, based on the Bismarckian and Beveridgean models (Table 6).

Table 6 - The Bismarckian and the Beveridgean models

	Bismarckian model	*Beveridgean model*
Objective	Income maintenance	Prevention of poverty
Benefits	Earnings-related	Flat rate
Eligibility	Contribution record	Residence or need
Coverage	Employees	Entire population
Financing	Contributions	Taxation

Source: Bonoli (1997:357)

In order to analyse empirically his typology, Bonoli selected two indicators: i) social expenditure as a proportion of the GDP and ii) the percentage of social expenditure financed through contributions (p.360). Next, he set the reference values for each indicator at 25% and 50%, respectively. As a result, the countries were grouped in one of four types of social protection system: British, Nordic**,** Continental and Southern (Figure 1). [18]

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[18] For an analysis of the relative situation of the various countries, see Bonoli (1997:361).

Figure 1- European Welfare States according to two dimensions

	SE financed through Contributions < 50%	SE financed through Contributions > 50%
SE/ GDP (%) > 25%	*Nordic* • Denmark • Finland • Norway • Sweden	*Continental* • Belgium • France • Germany • Luxembourg • Netherlands
SE/ GDP (%) < 25%	*British* • Ireland • UK	*Southern* • Greece • Italy • Portugal • Spain • Switzerland

Source: Based on Bonoli (1997: 361, Figure 1)

Bonoli concluded that the first three groups validated Esping-Andersen's typology, while the last group corresponded to the fourth regime proposed by Leibfried (1992). This amounts to a generous evaluation, in view of the number of exceptions observed. Compared with the reference values, Luxemburg, Portugal and Switzerland appear as mixed cases; whilst substantially differentiated by their respective social efforts, they presented a common equal emphasis on Bismarckian and Beveridgean social policy, evaluated by the model of financing. On the basis of these findings, Bonoli concludes that "it seems appropriate not to consider the four [groups] as sealed clusters of totally different welfare states" (p.362).

The more recent typology, based on the institutional characteristics of the social security systems, was developed by Korpi and Palme (1998). The evaluation of the pensions and sickness cash benefits was based on three dimensions:

i) The bases of entitlement (eligibility based on need, contributions, belonging to a specified occupational category or on citizenship/residence);
ii) The principle applied to determine benefit levels (minimum benefit, flat rate benefits or benefits related to previous earnings);
iii) The forms of governance (whether or not representatives of employers and employees participate in the governing of a social programme) (p.666-7).

Based on these dimensions, they identified five ideal types of institutional structures: *Targeted, Voluntary State-Subsidised, Corporatist, Basic Security and Encompassing* (Table 7).
This typology was tested empirically for the same 18 countries as Esping-Andersen (1990), but with data for the year 1985. From the results obtained by Korpi and Palme, it was possible to draw the following conclusions (p.669-70):

• The *Targeted* model was found only in Australia;[19]
• The *Voluntary State-Subsidised* model did not characterise any country;

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[19] However, Korpi and Palme (1998:670) identified targeted programmes for poor people in all countries.

- The *Corporatist* model was found in six countries (Japan and five countries of continental Europe - Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and Italy);
- The *Basic Security* model was found in a heterogeneous group of eight countries (UK, Ireland, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, USA and New Zealand);
- The *Encompassing* model was found in three European countries (Finland, Norway and Sweden).

Table 7 - Ideal Models of Social Protection Institutions

Model	*Bases of Entitlement*	*Benefit Level Principle*	*Employer-Employee Cooperation in Programme Governance*
Targeted	Proven need	Minimum	No
Voluntary State-Subsidised	Membership, Contributions	Flat-rate or earnings-related	No
Corporatist	Occupational category and labor force participation	Earnings-related	Yes
Basic Security	Citizenship or Contributions	Flat-rate	No
Encompassing	Citizenship and labor force participation	Flat-rate and earnings-related	No

Source: Korpi and Palme (1998:666)

From a theoretical point of view, it is an interesting typology. However, the empirical test has a weakness: the 1985 data neglects all reforms of systems that took place during the 1990s. With respect to empirical analysis, Korpi and Palme made an important remark:

"(...) the ideal models refer to single social insurance programmes in a particular insurance area. However, more than one programme, and thus more than one institutional type, may exist in a given insurance area. (...) Thus, the clustering of countries must sometimes be based on tendencies and gradations rather than on clear-cut criteria close to ideal types". (p.669)

2.5. What do we learn from the comparison of the typologies?

Let us now move on to a comparison of the typologies from the perspective of the number and composition of the respective clusters. It should, however, be taken into account that the typologies analysed are based on different conceptual and methodological options. This justifies the *a priori* comparison of the analytical focus, indicators, countries selected and the time period of observation (Table 8).

Table 8 – Four typologies of the welfare state: the methodological options

Author	Indicators	Analytical focus	Data	Countries
Esping-Andersen (1990) (a)	*Old-age Pensions (b)*: replacement rate net of taxes (minimum pension); standard replacement (net) rate; contribution period; individual's share of pension financing; the take-up rate.	Social transfers: pensions, sickness, unemployment.	1980	18 (OECD)
Ferrera (1996)	Rules of access; benefit principle; financing regulations; organisational- managerial arrangements.	Social Protection: Social Security and Health	1993	17 (Europe)
Bonoli (1997)	Social expenditure as % of GDP; the % of social expenditure financed through contributions.	Overall social transfers	1989/ 1992	16 (Europe)
Korpi and Palme (1998)	Bases of entitlement; benefit principle; governance of social insurance programmes.	Social Transfers: pensions; sickness.	1985	18 (OECD)

(a) Decommodification only
(b) The variables for sickness and unemployment benefits follow a similar logic (Esping-Andersen, 1990:54)
Source*:* Elaborated by the author.

With reference to the object of analysis, two types of options are observed: the selection of specific programmes within the social security systems, as is the case of Esping-Andersen and Korpi and Palme; or an approach considering the social protection systems, with varying degrees of simplification, as preferred by Ferrera and by Bonoli. Regarding the choice of indicators, institutional characteristics dominate; only Bonoli opts for aggregated quantitative indicators. Concerning the countries selected, a clear divergence is observed between, on one hand, Esping-Andersen and Korpi and Palme (the same 18 OECD countries) and on the other hand, Ferrera and Bonoli (European countries only). Lastly, the time horizon of observations is restricted to the 1980s and early 1990s, so that even the most recent typologies do not incorporate the reforms introduced into the systems, particularly in social security, during the 1990s.

For our comparison of the typologies, we have used the correspondence of the regimes presented by Arts and Gelissen (2002). An initial analysis comprises the twelve countries which were selected in common by all of the authors. It is verified that only six countries (in bold in Table 9 below) are given the same classification:

- *Type I*: Ireland and the UK;
- *Type II*: France and Germany;
- *Type III*: Norway and Sweden.

When a wider analytical criterion is adopted, i.e., the totals of all twenty-two countries, we then observe that fourteen countries have the same classification (eight countries underlined, together with the six in bold in Table 9 below):

- *Type I*: Ireland, the UK, Canada, New Zealand and the USA;
- *Type II*: France, Germany, Luxembourg and Japan;
- *Type III*: Norway and Sweden;
- *Type IV*: Greece, Portugal and Spain.

Table 9 - Classification of countries according to four typologies

Author(s)	Type/Model				
	I	II	III	IV	V
Esping-Andersen (a)	*Liberal* Australia Canada **Ireland** New Zealand **UK** USA	*Conservative* Finland **France** **Germany** Italy Japan Switzerland	*Social-democratic* Austria Belgium Denmark Netherlands **Norway** **Sweden**		
Ferrera	*Anglo-Saxon* **Ireland** **UK**	*Bismarckian* Austria Belgium **France** **Germany** Luxembourg Netherlands Switzerland	*Scandinavian* Denmark Finland **Norway** **Sweden**	*Southern* Greece Italy Portugal Spain	
Bonoli	*British* **Ireland** **UK**	*Continental* Belgium **France** **Germany** Luxembourg Netherlands	*Nordic* Denmark Finland **Norway** **Sweden**	*Southern* Greece Italy Portugal Spain Switzerland	
Korpi and Palme	*Basic Security* Canada Denmark **Ireland** Netherlands New Zealand Switzerland **UK** USA	*Corporatist* Austria Belgium **France** **Germany** Italy Japan	*Encompassing* Finland **Norway** **Sweden**		*Targeted* Australia

(a) Decommodification only.
Source: Arts and Gelissen (2002: 149-150; emphasis added)

Of the countries for which a divergent classification is observed, the most prominent are the hybrid cases of Holland and Switzerland, which 'belong' simultaneously to three types.[20] Moreover, for the countries with common classifications, partial comparison of typologies produces another analytical perspective. The Ferrera/Bonoli comparison results in an identical classification, as expected, with the sole exception of Switzerland. The comparison of Ferrera and Esping-Andersen produces a significant similitude, since, on eliminating Holland, eight of the remaining twelve countries present the same classification. Less expressive results emerge from the comparison of Korpi and Palme with Esping-Andersen: only eleven countries have the same classification.

The divergences in the classifications of the European countries justify the following remarks: i) the case of Italy can be taken to represent the crucial question as to whether a

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[20] The inclusion of Switzerland in the Southern Europe model can be explained by possible incompatibilities in the data used (Bonoli, 1997:370).

specific regime for the Latin countries exists or not; ii) in the cases of Denmark, Austria, Belgium and Finland, the classifications of Esping-Andersen, Ferrera and Bonoli are clearly dominant.

One of the aims of the next part of this paper is to discover to what extent the various empirical studies carried out have contributed to the clarification of the above-mentioned divergences.

3. Empirical Studies

3.1. Confirmations and Contradictions

The attempts to identify the ideal typology have been accompanied by an even more abundant production of empirical studies. A highly significant number of studies sought to test the three regimes of Esping-Andersen (1990), based either on the same or different groups of countries and using the same or different methodologies. Other studies attempted to confirm the existence of a larger number of regimes, using different country-groups and methodologies to those of Esping-Andersen. The majority of the studies present different approaches to the concept of the welfare state.[21]

Thirteen empirical studies carried out between 1994 and 2005 are presented below in chronological order. The selection is based on two criteria: the attempt to develop a constructive response to the three critiques of the "three worlds"; the diversity of conceptual and methodological options. This diversity, which is displayed in summarised form in Table 10, requires great prudence when comparing the results obtained, due in particular to the use of data relating to a time-span of more than twenty years, during which period the European systems of social protection underwent many changes.

Table 10 – Empirical studies: countries, data and methods

Author (s)	Countries	Data	Method
Ragin (1994)	18 OECD	1985	Cluster analysis
Kangas (1994)	18 OECD	1985	Cluster analysis
Obinger e Wagschal (1998)	18 OECD	1980	Esping-Andersen (EA)´s method
Wildboer Schut et al. (2001)	11 OECD	Early-1990s	Principal component analysis
Kautto (2002)	15 (European)	1990 & 1997	Cluster analysis
Saint-Arnaud & Bernard (2003)	20 OECD (a)	1993/98	Cluster analysis
MacMenamim (2003)	22 (a)	2001/02	Cluster analysis
Soede et al (2004)	23 (a)	1998-2001	Principal component analysis
Powell & Barrientos (2004)	21 (a)	1990/96	Cluster analysis
Gal (2004)	10	1998/99	Method of EA
Bambra (2005b)	18 OECD	1998	Method of EA
Bambra (2005b)	18 OECD	1997/99	Method of EA
Ferreira & Figueiredo (2005)	EU-15 and EU-25	2001/03	Cluster analysis

(a) These studies examine the four Mediterranean countries; the last two also included some Eastern European countries.
Source: Elaborated by the author.

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[21] With regard to the definition of the welfare state, see, for example Barr (1992).

The criticism of Esping-Andersen's methodology (e.g. Ragin, 1994; Kangas, 1994; Shalev, 1996; Pitruzzello, 1999; and Pierson, 2000) gave rise to the first two studies, which tested the ´three worlds`, but using another statistical methodology. [22]

Using a cluster analysis and data for 1985, Ragin (1994) examined the pension cash benefits in the 18 OECD countries.[23] He concluded that the ´three worlds` failed the test, given that only nine countries confirmed Esping-Andersen's classification:

- *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, Switzerland, USA;
- *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Italy;
- *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Norway, Sweden;
- *Undefined*: Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, and UK.

The findings would be the same if the pension decommodification index – instead of the combined index – had been used. It is of interest to note the improved correspondence with Esping-Andersen's (1999) classification.

Kangas (1994) applied a cluster analysis to sickness cash benefits in 15 OECD countries (data from 1985). He identified four clusters, due to the liberal regime sub-division: [24]

- *Liberal*: Canada, USA;
- *Radical*: Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, United Kingdom;
- *Conservative*: Austria, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands;
- *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden.

Once again, the results did not confirm Esping-Andersen's typology. However, the comparison with the sickness insurance decommodification index would be more supportive (ten countries in the same clusters).

Obinger and Wagschal (1998) applied a cluster analysis to the original data on social stratification and the same countries used by Esping-Andersen. They found support for four regimes:

- *Liberal*: Canada, Japan, Switzerland, USA;
- *Radical*: Australia, New Zealand;
- *Conservative*: Austria, France, Italy;
- *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Norway, Sweden;
- *Hybrid European*: Belgium, Germany, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, UK.

We can observe that the radical and hybrid clusters do not entirely confirm the results of the first two studies.

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[22] The methodology of Esping-Andersen (1990) consisted of a two-stage process of qualitative grouping, followed by multiple regressions.
[23] The cluster analysis is applied in half of the selected studies. According to Gough (2001), this statistical methodology is "robust, meaningful and simple" (p.169).
[24] With the exception of Ireland, the *Radical* group coincides with Castles and Mitchell (1993).

In the study of Wildeboer Schut et al. (2001), 11 OECD countries were examined. They applied a non-linear principal component analysis to 58 indicators related to the social security systems and the labour market.[25] Data covering the early 1990s was used, which constitutes a limitation that is recognised by the authors. The results validated the typology of Esping-Andersen (1990), with the exception of Holland.

- *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, UK, and USA;
- *Conservative*: Belgium, France, and Germany;
- *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden;
- *Hybrid case*: the Netherlands

In an innovative way, Wildboer Schut et al. also examined each cluster concluding that: "not all the countries share the same characteristics of their cluster to an equal degree" (p.25). Some of the most noteworthy aspects are reported below:

Liberal group
The USA is the most residual (...) and moreover, the characteristics often fall into the most extreme category; Australia is less residual than the USA; Canada is less uniformly liberal than the USA and Australia; the *UK* is moderately residual (...) with a certain distortion in the direction of the social-democratic group. (p. 25-28)

Conservative group
Belgium and France display the corporatist characteristics with few exceptions (e.g. social assistance); Germany has a clearly corporatist system, with a number of aspects related to the liberal (e.g. child benefit) and the social-democratic groups (e.g. disability benefit insurance). (p.28-30)

Social-democratic group
Sweden displays all characteristics without distortion; Denmark shows a slight distortion in the direction of the liberal group (e.g. many flat-rate benefits); Norway is, in certain respects, less social-democratic (e.g. very low coverage of voluntary insurance). (p.30/1)

In the above classification, the USA, Germany and Sweden are identified as the respective prototype for each group. Certain academics have contended (for example, Alber, 1995; Anttonen and Sipilä, 1996; Gough, 1996; Daly and Lewis, 2000; Room, 2000), in their critiques of Esping-Andersen's (1990) proposition, that the ´three worlds` would not be validated if the approach to the welfare state were to encompass other public social policies, such as education, health and social services.

Kautto (2002) tested this hypothesis, applying a hierarchical cluster analysis to benefits in cash and benefits in kind (education excluded) in the EU-15. Based on data for the years 1990 and 1997, two indicators were constructed: i) service effort (expenditure on benefits in kind in % of GDP); and ii) transfer effort (expenditure on cash benefits in % of GDP). The number of clusters depends on the analytical focus. The findings based on service

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[25] List of indicators in Wildboer and Schut (2001:35-39).

effort (SE) did not confirm the ´three worlds`, since only "two clusters robust enough" were identified (p.62): [26]

- *A high SE group*: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, France, Germany and UK;
- *A low SE group*: Netherlands, Austria, Greece, Ireland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

However, the analyses of the service and transfer efforts (TE) showed the existence of three distinct groups (p.62):

- *A ´service approach` group*: Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, France, Germany and the UK (high SE, and average or high TE);
- *A ´transfer approach` group*: Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Italy (high TE, average or low SE);
- *A third group*: Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain (low SE and low TE).

The correspondence with Esping-Andersen was limited to the number of clusters giving a completely different cluster assignment.

Saint-Arnaud and Bernard (2003) tested the typologies of Esping-Andersen/Ferrera/Bonoli. They applied a hierarchical cluster analysis to 36 indicators of public policy, social situation and civic participation. [27] The data used relates to the period 1993-98. The results revealed the existence of four clusters:

- The *Liberal* countries (Australia, Canada, Ireland, Island, New Zealand, UK and USA);
- The *Conservative* countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands);
- The *Social-democratic* countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden);
- The *Familist* countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain).

In general terms, the clusters identified verify the typologies tested. In support of Esping-Andersen (1999:90), various characteristics common to the systems of the first and fourth groups were observed. From an innovative perspective, Saint Arnaud and Bernard proposed to evaluate the stability of the regimes over time, by replicating their analysis through the period 1986–1990. The results revealed an interesting alteration, namely, that Italy and Spain moved into the conservative regime (p.84).

The hypothesis that the Eastern-Central European countries (represented by the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland from a total of 22 countries) constitute a specific regime was tested by MacMenamim (2003).[28] A cluster analysis was applied to 55 indicators relating to three areas: political institutions, social welfare and economic structures.[29] The date used was related to 2001/02. The results in respect of the most appropriate number of clusters were inconclusive. With regard to the three countries, it was possible to reach the

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[26] According to Bambra (2005b:60), Germany and the UK joined the first group during the 1990s, which can be partly explained by the aging of their populations.
[27] Indicators listed in Saint-Arnaud and Bernard (2003:82-83).
[28] According to Deacon (1993:195-7), the classification of the Eastern European systems as a specific regime or as a variant depends on the countries studied.
[29] List of indicators in MacMenamim (2003:17).

following conclusions: they always appear in the same cluster, regardless of its number; they form a specific cluster in the solutions to six or more clusters; they are found together with Ireland, Greece, Portugal and Spain in the solutions to three or four clusters; and they never appear in the cluster incorporating Australia, Canada, Switzerland, the USA and the UK (p.12-3). While they display a strong homogeneity among themselves, the countries of Eastern-Central Europe only justify classification as a specific regime in the hypothesis of a high number of regimes, which has been rejected by Esping-Andersen.

Soede et al. (2004) sought to confirm the existence of specific regimes for the Southern and Eastern European countries. The 23 countries selected were theoretically classified into six groups (Table 11).

Table 11 - Theoretical classification of countries

Social-democratic	Conservative	Liberal	Hybrid	Mediterranean	Eastern European(a)
Denmark	Austria	Australia	Netherlands	Greece	Czech Republic
Finland	Belgium	Canada		Italy	Hungary
Norway	France	Ireland		Portugal	Poland
Sweden	Germany	UK		Spain	Slovakia
	Luxembourg	USA			

(a)   The shortage of available data explains the exclusion of six new Member States of UEM.
Source: Soede et al. (2004:29)

They applied a principal components analysis to 85 characteristics of the social security systems and labour market and collected data from 1998 to 2001.[30] Five regimes were identified:

- *Liberal* (the USA being the most residual system, followed by Australia)[31]
- *Conservative*
- *Nordic* (Norway excluded)
- *Mediterranean* (Greece and Spain as the most distinct examples of this model)
- *Eastern European*

These findings were in close correspondence with Saint-Arnaud and Bernard (2003) – the first to the fourth groups – and de MacMenamim (2003) – homogeneity of the eastern European systems. The Netherlands and Norway were classified as hybrid cases.

Powell and Barrientos (2004) also tested the three-fold division of Esping-Andersen collecting data from 1990 to 96 in 21 countries. They applied a hierarchical and k-means cluster analysis to three variables characterising the welfare mix and the active labour market policies (p.92): i) public spending on social security, education and active labour policies as a proportion of GDP; ii) private insurance premia as a proportion of GDP as a measure of household expenditure on private insurance; and iii) an index of the strictness of employment protection.[32]

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[30] Indicators listed in Soede et al. (2004: 135-144, Appendix A1).
[31] This cluster is in correspondence with Wildboer Schut et al. (2001); the classification of Australia did not confirm the existence of a ´radical` regime claimed by, for example, Korpi and Palme (1998).
[32] This index incorporates information on procedural constraints on termination, required period of notice and severance pay, and difficulty of dismissal (p. 92).

Table 12 shows the cluster assignment based on the three variables. Powell and Barrientos concluded that these findings largely confirmed the clustering of Esping-Andersen (p.96). However, only 13 countries showed the same classification. Regarding this aspect, Powell and Barrientos recognised some "'rogue' classifications", but argued that "the cluster analysis is a heuristic device that is sensitive to the selection of routines" (p.97).It is remarked that the clustering of Powell and Barrientos showed the closest correspondence with the typology of Korpi and Palme (1998).

Table 12 - Clusters of countries (data 1990-96)

Social-democratic	Conservative	Liberal
Finland	Italy	Australia
Denmark	Portugal	Ireland
Sweden	Greece	USA
Norway	Spain	UK
France	Germany	Switzerland
Netherlands	New Zealand	Canada
	Belgium	Japan
	Austria	

Source: Powell and Barrientos (2004: 97, Table 2).

Gal (2004) examined the role of work injury programmes in 10 countries that represent various types of welfare regimes, by taking into account two dimensions: decommodification and self-development.[33] This new concept seeks to measure the degree to which the welfare states provide individuals with skills and intellectual tools to engage in paid work (p.57).[34] Two countries were selected from each of the four regime types of Esping-Andersen, Australia was included as a typical Australasian welfare state and Israel as a hybrid case (p.61). Gal constructed two indices using the same statistical methology of Esping-Andersen and data from 1998/9.[35] The rank-order of the countries based on the decommodification index roughly fitted the 'three worlds': [36]

- *High score*: Australia, Sweden;
- *Middle score*: France, Denmark, Germany, Spain and Israel;
- *Low score*: Greece, USA, and the UK.

In particular, the scores received by Australia, Denmark, Spain and Israel were not as expected (p.63). Second, a ranking order was based on a joint-decommodification/self-development index: [37]

- *High score Group*: Denmark and Sweden;
- *Middle-to-high score Group*: Australia, Germany, France and Israel;
- *Low score Group*: Spain and the UK.

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[33] Under the following definition: "work-injury programmes are programmes that provide cash and in-kind benefits as compensation for temporary or permanent incapacity due to work-originating injury or illness, and those that offer market-oriented rehabilitation to the victims of work-injury (p.61).

[34] The second dimension was based on the "decommodification-for-self-development dimension", suggested by Room (2000:337).

[35] The indicators, statistical method and results can be seen in Gal (2004: 61-4).

[36] Rank-order of countries by decreasing score.

[37] The USA and Greece were excluded, due to the shortage of available data (p.65).

These results provided two surprises among the countries: Australia and Israel, given the accepted wisdom regarding their systems (p.66).

The study of Bambra (2005a) drew upon Kasza's critique to "highlight the health care discrepancy" (p.31). She constructed a health care decommodification index based on 1998 data and using the same countries and methodology as Esping-Andersen.[38]
Three measures asserting the financing, provision and coverage of the private sector were selected: " i) Private health expenditure as a percentage of GDP; ii) Private hospital beds as a percentage of total bed stock; and iii) The percentage of the population covered by the health care system" (p.34). Table 13 shows the results.

Table 13 - Health care decommodification typology

Group 1 Low score	Group 2 Middle score	Group 3 High score
Australia *USA*	Austria Belgium *France* *Germany* Ireland *Italy* *Japan* Netherlands *Switzerland*	Canada *Denmark* Finland New Zealand *Norway* *Sweden* UK

Source: Bambra (2005a: 36, Table2); italics added.

As Bambra asserted, these results simultaneously allow both the validation and the contestation of Esping-Andersen's classification: on one hand, ten countries (identified in italics in the above table), appear in the same regime-type; on the other hand, the classification of the other countries differs from that of the "three worlds", most widely in the cases of Canada, Ireland and New Zealand. Consequently, three conclusions are possible (Bambra, 2005a:37): i) the necessary existence of a fourth regime, to be called radical, which would consist of Canada, New Zealand and the UK; ii) the confirmation of a Scandinavian regime, characterised by high decommodification in different areas of welfare provision; iii) the verification of Kasza's (2002) critique, since the positioning of the three countries referred to varies according to the public social policy considered.

In another study, Bambra (2005b) explored the critique of Esping-Andersen's analytical focus arguing that "[it] ignores the fact that welfare states are also about the delivery of services (...) and that, far from being internally consistent, countries vary in terms of the relative emphasis that they place upon cash benefits and/or welfare states services"(p.196). Bambra tested the robustness of the ´three worlds`, comparing the decommodification levels of the main cash benefits (pensions, sickness and unemployment) with the main area of welfare state service delivery: health care.[39] She used the 18 OECD countries and data

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[38] Health care decommodification refers to the extent to which an individual's access to health care is dependent upon their market position and the extent to which a country's provision of health is independent of the market (Bambra 2005a:33).
[39] When extended to cover health care services, decommodification refers to the extent an individual's access to health care is dependent upon their market position and the extent to which a country's provision of health is independent from the market (Bambra, 2005b).

for 1997-9. The cash benefits and the health care services decommodification indexes were based on the indicators used by Esping-Andersen (1990) and Bambra (2005a), respectively. The results showed that the inclusion of health care to the comparative analysis leads to five clusters (p.208-9):

- *Social-democratic*: Finland, Norway and Sweden (high scores in both indices);
- *Conservative sub-group*: Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland (scores more highly on cash benefits index);
- *Liberal sub-group*: Ireland, New Zealand and the UK (scores more highly on health service index); [40]
- *Liberal*: Australia, Japan and the USA (low scores for both index);
- *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France and Italy (very close to the average score for both indices).

According to Bambra, the most rigorous classification of the two new clusters, either as specific regimes or simply as variants, would require more extensive analysis including other programmes, for example, education or social services (p.210-1).

Finally, Ferreira and Figueiredo (2005) attempted to establish the differences among existing regimes in the European Union, prior to and following its enlargement in 2004, based on a very wide conceptual approach: welfare mix, stratification effects and welfare outcomes. A hierarchical cluster analysis was applied to 36 indicators representing five different welfare domains, using data related to 2001-3.[41] The results diverge according to the group of countries analysed[42]. Hence, when the analysis is restricted to the EU-15, only two clusters are identified.

- *Mediterranean cluster*: Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain;
- *Non-Mediterranean cluster*: the rest of the EU-15.

This finding, which is curious in that it presents no differentiation among eleven countries, is considered to be sufficiently robust, since: "it prevails for different procedures and for partial analysis for most of the domains" (p.24-5). However, when the analysis embraces the EU-25, three clusters are identified:

- *1st cluster*: Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain;
- *2nd cluster*: Irlanda, Estónia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia;
- *3rd cluster*: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the UK and also the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia.

In addition to the specific cluster for the Southern European countries, the new Member-States are found to be distributed between either of the two remaining groups. This result, which was considered to be somewhat surprising by Ferreira and Figueiredo (p.24-5), diverged from the conclusions of MacMenamim (2003) and Soede et al. (2004). Given the

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[40] According to Bambra (2005b:209), the liberal sub-group confirmed the claim of Castles and Mitchell (1993).
[41] The five welfare domains and the indicators can be seen in Ferreira and Figueiredo (2005: 8, Table 2).
[42] The shortage of available data explains the exclusion of Luxembourg, Cyprus and Malta.

use of the same technique by the former and very similar time horizons by both, the cause of the divergence is most likely to be the different approaches to the concept of the welfare state.

3.2. What emerges from the comparison of the various studies?

The comparative analysis of the thirteen studies has been conducted at the level of the respective results obtained, i.e., the number of models identified and the placement of the countries in each cluster (see Table 14 below). The conclusions are grouped according to the critiques of the ´three worlds`, taking into account the differences presented by the thirteen studies, at both conceptual and methodological levels. With regard to the number and composition of the clusters, four conclusions can be drawn:

a) Excluding the hybrid cases, most notably Holland (by a wide consensus), and the non-defined cases, all of the studies confirm the existence of at least three regimes, notwithstanding that the designations vary; in total, six types are identified (the "three worlds" of Esping-Andersen, together with *Radical, Southern* and *Eastern European*);

b) The existence of a specific regime for the four countries of Southern Europe is supported in three studies (Saint Arnaud and Bernard, 2003; Soede et al., 2004; Ferreira and Figueiredo, 2005), while its classification in the conservative regime is confirmed by Powell and Barrientos (2004). The classification of Italy, which is the most frequently studied Latin country, in the conservative/continental regime is supported in a further six studies;

c) The classification of Eastern European countries is somewhat inconclusive. Soede et al. (2004) and MacMenamim (2003) find a justification for a specific regime, the latter author proposing it as one of six or more regimes, whereas Ferreira and Figueiredo's (2005) solution is to place the countries in one of the two "Old Europe" clusters.

d) The USA, Germany and Sweden can be identified respectively as prototypes of the liberal, conservative and social-democratic regimes.

Turning now to the critique aimed at Esping-Andersen's analytical option. In this respect, what conclusions can be drawn from the empirical studies? Once again, the results are inconclusive: Gal (2004) and Bambra (2005a) validate partially the ´three worlds`, whilst Bambra (2005b) and Kautto (2005) obtain clearly different groupings. Furthermore, the latter two studies confirm the internal inconsistency of the welfare states as argued by Kasza (2002).

Lastly, and in relation to the validation of Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology which was the objective of the majority of the studies, one can agree with Arts and Gelissen (2002) who affirm that Esping-Andersen's typology "neither passes the empirical tests with flying colours, not dismally fails them"(p.153). However, it should be stressed that none of the three other typologies are fully confirmed.

Table 14 – Empirical studies: number of clusters and cluster assignment

Author (s)	No. of clusters	Cluster assignment
Ragin (1994)	3+1	1. *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, Switzerland, USA 2. *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Italy 3. *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Norway, Sweden 4. *Undefined*: Germany, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, UK
Kangas (1994)	4	1. *Liberal:* Canada, USA 2. *Conservative:* Austria, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands 3. *Social-democratic:* Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden 4. *Radical:* Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, UK
Obinger and Wagschal (1998)	5	1. *Liberal*: Canada, Japan, Switzerland, USA 2. *Conservative*: Austria, France, Italy 3. *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Norway, Sweden 4. *Hybrid European*: Belgium, Germany, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, the UK 5. *Radical*: Australia, New Zealand
Wildboer Schut et al (2001)	3+1	1. *Liberal*: Canada, Australia, UK, USA 2. *Conservative*: Belgium, France, Germany 3. *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Norway, Sweden 4. *Hybrid*: the Netherlands
Kautto (2002)	2 *or* 3	1. *A ´service` group*: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, UK 2. *A ´transfer` group*: Austria, Belgium, Italy, the Netherlands 3. *A ´mix` group*: Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain
Saint Arnaud and Bernard (2003)	4	1. *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, Ireland, Island, New Zealand, UK, USA 2. *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands 3. *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden 4. *Southern*: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain
MacMenamim (2003)	3 to 6, or more	1. *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, Switzerland, USA 2. *Continental*: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK 3. *Late developer*s: Check Republic, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Spain
Soede et al (2004)	5 +1	1. *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, Ireland, UK, USA 2. *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg 3. *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Finland, Sweden 4. *Mediterranean*: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain 5. *Eastern European*: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia 6. *Hybrid*: the Netherlands, Norway
Powell and Barrientos (2004)	3	1. *Liberal*: Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, Switzerland, UK, USA 2. *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Spain, Portugal 3. *Social-democratic*: Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden
Gal (2004)	3	1. *Low score*: Spain, the UK 2. *Middle-to-high score*: Australia, Germany, France, Israel 3. *High score*: Denmark, Sweden

Table 14: *Continued*

Author (s)	No of clusters	Cluster assignment
Bambra (2005a)	3	1. *Low score*: Australia, USA 2. *Middle score*: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland 3. *High score*: Canada, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, the UK
Bambra (2005b)	5	1. *Liberal*: Australia, Japan, USA 2. *Liberal subgroup*: Ireland, New Zealand 3. *Conservative*: Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Italy 4. *Conservative subgroup*: Germany, the Netherlands, the UK 5. *Social-democratic*: Finland, Norway, Sweden
Ferreira and Figueiredo (2005)	2 *or* 3	1. *'Old Europe` group*: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UK, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia 2. *'New Europe` group*: Ireland Estonia, , Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia 3. *Mediterranean group*: Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain

Source: Elaborated by the author.

4. Conclusions

The comparative analysis of the various welfare states and the attempt to identify an ideal typology in the context of their differences and similarities has aroused great interest among academics and researchers around the world during the past fifteen years.

The point of departure was the celebrated work, *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism,* published by Esping-Andersen (1990). Many were critical of Esping-Andersen's approach to the welfare state in terms of the specific social programmes, in addition to his conceptualisation in terms of aggregated social expenditure. In reply, Esping-Andersen developed his analysis of the welfare state from a political economy perspective and based on the concept of the welfare regime. Abiding by the criteria of decommodification and social stratification, three types of regime were identified: liberal, conservative and social-democratic*,* each of which were differentiated by the historical and political evolutions experienced in the various industrialised countries. The empirical test conducted by Esping-Andersen, based on the combined decommodification index, confirmed his theoretical typology. An evaluation based on the indices of each of the social programmes or on the establishment of different dividing points would have produced a different outcome as we have seen. Contrary to Esping-Andersen's suggestion, the clusters obtained from a social stratification index basis would fail to confirm the ´three worlds`. Nevertheless, it is curious that these aspects have been overlooked in the extensive literature that followed Esping-Andersen's work.

From among the critiques of the ´three worlds`, we have highlighted three in this paper: on the basis of the abundant research generated (the classification of various countries and the analytical option) and on the basis of their more radical nature (questioning the very concept of the welfare regime). On this matter, we are reminded of Esping-Andersen's

(1999) argument on the irrelevance of certain critiques, due to some conceptual confusion, in addition to his new classification.

Of the various typologies that aimed to determine the number of ideal types of welfare state – at least four – as well as the grouping of each country, we have examined and compared those of Ferrera (1996), Bonoli (1997) and Korpi and Palme (1998). Whilst the large number of alternative classifications has increased the possibilities for conducting empirical tests, it has not yielded a satisfactory clarification, which can be exemplified by the fact that certain studies have merely attributed new names to already existing regimes.

The attempt to identify the ideal typology has brought about an even more abundant production of empirical studies, characterised by diverse conceptual and methodological options. This diversity was strikingly apparent in the set of thirteen empirical studies that were examined in the present paper, requiring great caution in comparing the results obtained. It should be borne in mind that many of the studies seeking to test the validity of the ´three worlds` were embarked upon only after the implementation of reforms in the welfare states, in particular in the social security systems.

A concise survey of the studies permitted us to draw several conclusions on the number of regimes and the placement of countries: i) all of the studies confirm the existence of at least three regimes; in total, six different types are identified (the three regimes of Esping-Andersen, and additionally, the *Radical, Southern* and *Eastern European*); ii) the existence of a specific regime for the Mediterranean countries is proposed in three studies (Saint Arnaud and Bernard, 2003; Soede et al., 2004; Ferreira and Figueiredo, 2005), while its classification in the conservative regime is supported by Powell and Barrientos (2004); (iii) the classification of the eastern European countries, which were not examined by Esping-Andersen, is somewhat inconclusive: Soede et al. (2004) and MacMenamim (2003) argue for a specific regime, whereas Ferreira and Figueiredo (2005) propose the distribution of the countries between two clusters of the EU-15; iv) the USA, Germany and Sweden can be identified as prototypes of the liberal, conservative and social-democratic regimes respectively.

Those studies which took as their motivation the critique of Esping-Andersen's (1990) analytical focus display diverging results: Gal (2004) and Bambra (2005a) partially validate the ´three worlds`; Bambra (2005b) and Kautto (2005) obtain different groupings. In the case of the latter study, the internal inconsistency suggested by Kasza (2002) is apparently confirmed.

Finally, in relation to the validation of the ´three worlds`, which was the purpose of the majority of the studies, it is possible to agree with Arts and Gelissen's (2002) affirmation that the theory of regimes "neither passes the empirical tests with flying colours, not dismally fails them"(p.153).

In general terms, we are able to conclude that if, on one hand, the classification of Esping-Andersen is simultaneously confirmed and contested, on the other hand, none of the other typologies presented has succeeded in improving on its evaluation. However, rather than the construction of new theoretical typologies, it would be of greater value to conduct an

empirical evaluation, preferably across a long time horizon, in order to enable the analysis of the potential effects of the reforms carried out, particularly in Europe, on the classification of the welfare states.

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