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Christensen, Erik Christian

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By Erik Christensen

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Department of Economics, Politics and Public Administration

Aalborg University

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Feminist Arguments in Favor of Welfare and Basic Income in Denmark

Erik Christensen, Associate Professor

**Department of Economics, Politics and Public administration
Aalborg University**

**Fibigerstraede 1, DK-9220 Aalborg Ø, Denmark
e-mail: erikchri@socsci.auc.dk**

Feminist Arguments in Favor of Welfare and Basic Income in Denmark

I: Introduction

Women's research in Denmark generally agrees that the current Scandinavian welfare states are among the most "women friendly" societies, but that gender-related injustice still exists. "There are still fundamental contrasts between work life and family life, and women earn less than men at the same level. In addition, women rank lower than men in the job hierarchy, and they have less power and influence in society than men" (Borchorst 1998: 127).

Albeit the concept "women friendly" of the same women researchers later has been called problematic on account of the vagueness of the concept and the bias in relation to the Nordic countries, they have called for new equality and solidarity visions that include women as well as marginalized social groups in the welfare state (Borchorst and Siim 2002).

One vision for the development of the welfare society has been the proposal of a basic income (Christensen 1999 and 2000). But this vision has been overlooked by the Danish women researchers although the convincing arguments that large groups of women would benefit from a basic income scheme, which would: (1) lead to equal treatment of the genders on the labor market and in the social sphere; (2) express recognition of unpaid work; (3) guarantee income outside the labor market and thus strengthen family life; (4) give many people more incentive to work; (5) ensure economic independence within the family; and (6) might encourage a more equal division of labor in families (McKay & Vanevery 2000, McKay 2001).

Why have many feminists overlooked or refused basic income as a long-term, ideal solution to ongoing gender inequality and injustice?

With reference to the debate in Denmark, I will argue that:

(1) One reason for the modest feminist interest in basic income is that women's research and the women's movement have been locked into a Wollstonecraft's dilemma (Pateman 1989: 195-204, Christensen & Siim 2001: 19-20). The dilemma is named after Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), the pioneer of the British women's movement, and has been discussed in different versions in the women's movement ever since.

In modern society, the dilemma is often formulated as follows: If you follow the path of equality, the women's movement will tend to join the dominant, male wage work norm. If you follow the path of difference by prioritizing women's care work over wage work, you will continue to be marginalized in relation to the men on the labor market.

2. Wollstonecraft's equality/difference dilemma is not a real logical conceptual dilemma, but rather an impossible choice that resembles a "double bind" defined by the dominant, patriarchal power structure.

3. The modest interest in the basic income concept both in Danish and international women's research is a result of a greater focus on increasing women's participation on the labor market (commodification) than on securing economic independence in relation to the labor market (decommodification). In addition, attempts to accommodate care needs have been met with skepticism because they might retain women in the traditional gendered division of labor. Unconditional basic income was either seen as utopian or as dangerous in the short term because it might keep some women from entering the labor market.

4. The dilemma of adapting to the wage work norm and thus deprioritizing the care norm, or prioritize the care norm and risk marginalization in relation to wage work can be solved or softened theoretically by adding conceptual nuance to the equality and difference concepts like American philosopher Nancy Fraser (1994 and 1997) has done. Nancy Fraser proposes that a universal basic income or citizens' income will fulfill the wish for equality and difference, combine decommodification and commodification, and create a new type of economic independence that could be a basis for new dependence relations.

5. Despite the modest attention from women's researchers and the women's movement, some Danish feminists have developed theoretic understandings of the relation between wage work and care that open up for new arguments in favor of the basic income concept.

II: Towards a new breadwinner model – but which one?

Social science research basically agrees that the last 30 years has brought about a revolution in the societal, gendered division of labor. All welfare states have abandoned the old "male breadwinner model" with its clear division of labor between a male wage worker and a female care worker in the family. Many women have entered the labor market, and the family's role and functions in relation to children and the elderly have changed as new public and private care systems have expanded.

In all highly developed welfare states, reality has changed more or less radically in terms of the family and care system that previously existed in industrial welfare states. But just because a breadwinner model has been abandoned, we can still use it as an idealtype by which to measure different actual types. This is exactly what Ilona Ostner (1996) and Jane Lewis have done (Lewis & Ostner 1994): They created the concept of "the male breadwinner model" as a reaction to Gösta Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology of liberal, corporative and social democratic welfare states, which has decommodification as the key concept.

Ostner's and Lewis' gripe with Esping-Andersen's concepts is that women and thus the gendered division of labor disappear in his analysis because he focuses on state and market and ignores unpaid work. As a reaction, they constructed what they called a strong male breadwinner model.

Ostner's and Lewis' analytical model aims to define some qualitative and quantitative measures for the degree to which welfare states liberate women from family obligations, i.e., in what sense the welfare state individualizes women. They give individualization two dimensions: (1) Economic independence, i.e., women's opportunities to earn their own

money. (2) Independence from family obligations, i.e., society as care giver and women's real choice in terms of care work in the family.

This concept is the basis for Ostner's and Lewis' classification of the European welfare states, which distinguishes between strong male breadwinner states (England and Germany), moderate male breadwinner states (France), and weak male breadwinner states (the Scandinavian countries).

The idealtypical male breadwinner model has a clear, gender-dualistic division of labor: The husband has fulltime wage work, the wife is fulltime homemaker and caregiver for children and elderly. In comparison, the weak male breadwinner model signifies a tendential disintegration of the strong male breadwinner idealtyp: Both husband and wife have wage work, which is possible because the state has assumed a significant share of child and elder care, which was previously handled by the women.

Danish gender researchers use different concepts to describe the Danish welfare state from a gender perspective. The Ostner/Lewis model describes it as a "weak male breadwinner model" because women, according to their indicators, still lag behind men in terms of economic independence measured by participation rate. Likewise, there is a weak dependency in the legislation. The principle of individuality has, to a large extent, been implemented in Danish social legislation, but not completely.

Birte Siim (2000) describes the Danish welfare model as a "dual breadwinner model" or an "adult worker model" to emphasize that a norm has developed according to which all adults, regardless of gender, are expected to have wage work and be self-supporting. In that sense, the modern Danish welfare state is widely regarded as gender neutral.

Two factors explain the progress in the Danish and the other Nordic welfare states: the rise in the female participation rate on the labor market and the expansion of public child and elder care facilities. These two factors are the preconditions for women's liberation from the homemaker role and private care work and their entry into wage work.

Despite the increased equality, there is still a long way to completely equal status and justice in the gendered division of labor. Unpaid house and care work is still not equally divided, and inequality in the labor market is significant both in terms of wage and assignments. The result is a high level of gender segregation, with a majority of women among the low paid and publicly employed. Moreover, more women than men are unemployed or on transfer income.

III: The Danish debate on leave schemes and equality between work and care

In 1994, Denmark introduced a new labor market policy with three leave schemes: child care leave, educational leave and sabbatical leave. At the time, unemployment was very high in Denmark (12 percent), and the main objective of the schemes was to reduce unemployment through job rotation and job sharing. Another objective was to enhance the qualifications of the work force and improve the balance between family and work life through better possibilities for paid care work (Jensen 2000).

In the Danish gender-political debate on the leave schemes, the arguments concerning the relationship between wage work and care stayed within the boundaries of an equality/difference dilemma similar to Wollstonecraft's classic formulation of women's choices.

The women's movement and the Equal Status Council (*Ligestillingsrådet*) supported the new leave schemes, although they did express criticism and concern about equality on the labor market. It was also remarkable that the leading women politicians on this occasion clearly rejected general pay for informal care work.

Two high-ranking women from the Socialist People's Party, Christine Antorini and Margit Kjeldgaard, thus expressed skepticism about the new parental leave in a newspaper article before the new labor market reform was implemented (*Information* 21.12.93). They were particularly worried by the fact that parental leave would become a right, because it would weaken women's position on the labor market. They thought that the prime target should be inequality on the labor market, and after that they would like to do something about the division of labor in families.

In that same period, Britta Foged, chairwoman of the Danish Women's Society, generally rejected pay for work and child care performed in the homes (*Information* 07.10.93). She explicitly said: "I am fundamentally opposed to paying people for staying at home," and she was supported by Anne Grete Holmsgård, chairwoman of The Equal Status Council, who said, on the same occasion: "I don't see the logic in receiving money for staying at home and taking care of one's children."

These unambiguous statements were made in connection with a rejection of a proposal from The Christian People's Party for a general subsidy to parents who take care of their own children. Interestingly, Foged called the proposal "statification of an area the state should not interfere in." And Anne Grete Holmsgård "felt bad about turning family work into productive work." She would like to "appreciate house work," which required a "change in attitude," but "I don't see why we have to put money on the table for that reason."

In 1994, the Equal Status Council published *The Equality Dilemma*, a discussion anthology (Carlsen & Larsen 1994). The main topic of the debate was dual income families with children in daycare institutions. The norm on the labor market often prioritizes work life than over family life, which goes against most women's prioritization and as a consequence, the labor market rejects women in particular. The objective was to "introduce new ideas and launch new discussions" about these issues. Was there a way to relieve the pressure on these groups and still further equality on the labor market?

The anthology's title and preface suggested a dual equality problematique: (1) creating balance (equality) between work and family life; (2) creating balance (equality) between the genders on the labor market. The Equal Status Council's activities mainly focus on the latter form of equality.

It remained unclear whether the call for innovative thinking and reassessment of old strategies was aimed at equality on the labor market or equality between family and work life. However, there was a clear sense that gender equality on the labor market was the primary goal.

A specific topic of discussion was whether the old strategies of creating more time for parents with full-time work were adequate: part-time, flexible hours, extended maternity leave. While they may have improved the balance between work and family life in the individual family, they also seemed to have led to new equality problems – unequal opportunities for women and men on the labor market. The old methods could, as the editor of the anthology said, “threaten the form of equality that preconditions women’s self-support through paid work outside the family” (ibid.: 10-11). This statement contained a latent criticism of the parental leave scheme that had just been introduced.

IV: Deconstructing some gender political dilemmas

The debate among researchers about the nature of the Danish welfare model and the political debate about the prioritization of wage work and care demonstrate the need for a theoretic deconstruction and reflection on various conceptual pairs that are used both in the scientific and the political debate.

Equality/difference

Carole Pateman has reformulated Wollstonecraft’s dilemma (Pateman 1989: 195-204) as follows:

“On the one hand, they (women) have demanded that the ideal of citizenship be extended to them, and the liberal-feminist agenda for a ‘gender-neutral’ social world is the logical conclusion of one form of this demand. On the other hand, women have also insisted, often simultaneously, as did Mary Wollstonecraft, that as women they have specific capacities, talents, needs and concerns, so that the expression of their citizenship will be differentiated from that of men. Their unpaid work providing welfare could be seen, as Wollstonecraft saw women’s tasks as mothers, as women’s work as citizens, just as their husbands’ paid work is central to men’s citizenship” (ibid.: 197).

According to Pateman, the patriarchal understanding of citizenship, which links citizenship to the public sphere (state and market) in contrast to the private sphere (family), makes the two demands incompatible. Either women become like men in order to become full citizens, or they continue their informal care work, which has no value for their citizenship. Getting out of this dilemma requires a paradigm shift, because the concepts of citizenship, work and welfare must all be redefined.

Ruth Lister (1995) shares this view, but she is more explicit than Pateman in stating that the equality/difference dilemma must be seen as a logical, a conceptual and a political misconception that needs to be deconstructed. She here leans on Joan W. Scott (1988), who performed a model deconstruction of this conceptual pair.

The problem with the equality/difference pair as it is presented in the dilemma conception is that the two elements are often perceived as binary opposites, and that there is often a latent ranking in the concepts.

When the relationship between wage work and care is discussed under an equality/difference optics, the equality concept is tied to wage work, and the difference concept to care, which by itself implies a ranking: The fact that wage work is male dominated, and care is dominated by women, gives the concepts a specific, gendered connotation.

In addition, difference is assumed to be an antithesis to equality, and equality is presented as an antithesis to care. However, these are false opposites that conceal the interrelation between the concepts. The antithesis to equality is inequality and not difference, and the antithesis to difference is uniformity or identity and not equality. Equality does not entail an elimination of difference, the creation of uniformity, and difference does not necessarily threaten equality. So it is possible to join equality and difference, or we can say that equality and difference feed on each other. The demand for equality only applies to certain conditions, and is often based on a desire to protect difference.

Presenting equality/difference as dichotomous choices makes it impossible for feminists to choose. If they accept equality, it looks as if they are forced to accept that difference is its antithesis. Conversely, if they choose difference, they admit that equality is unattainable. Either way, they are punished. It is like the double bind, and it is also an expression of a power situation.

Feminists cannot give up on “difference,” which is a creative analytical tool. Nor can they give up on equality, because it represents fundamental principles and values in the political system.

American gender researcher Kathleen Hall Jamieson (Jamieson 1995) has shown that double bind communication and rhetoric remain prevalent in the general ideological suppression of women. She defines it as follows:

“A double bind is a rhetorical construct that posits two and only two alternatives, one or both penalizing the person being offered them” (ibid.: 13-14). “The strategy defines something ‘fundamental’ to women as incompatible with something the woman seeks – be it education, the ballot, or access to the workplace” (ibid.: 14). Jamieson lists the typical ideological double bind arguments, one of which is the equality/difference dilemma (No. 3).

1. Women can exercise their wombs or their brains, but not both.
2. Women who speak out are immodest and will be shamed, while women who are silent will be ignored or dismissed.
3. Women are subordinate whether they claim to be different from men or the same.
4. Women who are considered feminine will be judged incompetent and women who are competent, unfeminine.

5. As men age, they gain wisdom and power, as women age, they wrinkle and become superfluous” (ibid.: 16).

A double bind creates disempowerment for those who are forced to choose. They are faced with a quandary, and the only way out is to reject the dominant ideological (discourse) definition of options and identity as suppressed and woman.

The situation on the modern labor market can, to a large extent, be seen as a double bind, where we, through the institutions and languages that develop, are placed in many double bind situations with illusory options.

If women cannot support themselves on the labor market, the only option is “family support” or “state support.” However, “state support” is negatively charged and perceived as a burden, and “family supported” is old-fashioned and also negatively charged.

How to resolve the double bind? Jamieson has different suggestions, all with the one thing in common that they reject the dualistic dilemma, and that they demand a new definition of the choices, or as she says: reframing, recovering, recasting and reclaiming. In this connection, we could also talk of a paradigm shift, which is characterized by a new perspective.

Commodification/decommodification

Another conceptual pair that has given rise to different interpretations and misunderstandings is commodification/decommodification.

Claus Offe (Offe 1996: x) explains that decommodification, the antithesis of commodification, is a neologism that was created in 1974 in a discussion with Gösta Esping-Andersen. Both have used it since, and it is especially known from Esping-Andersen’s welfare regime typology.

As mentioned, Ostner and Lewis reacted to Esping-Andersen’s conception of decommodification. Esping-Andersen saw it as defining liberation from the market, and the labor movement’s goal in contrast to the employers. It was therefore also seen as an objective for the welfare state and as a special trait of the social democratic welfare state.

He defines it as follows: “Decommodification occurs when a service is rendered as a matter of right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market” (1990: 21-22). He later emphasizes that the concept implies a choice and consequently that, “Decommodifying welfare states are, in practice, of very recent date. A minimal definition must entail that citizens can freely, and without potential loss of job, income, or general welfare, opt out of work, when they themselves consider it necessary” (ibid.: 23).

In this definition it is synonymous with what we understand by basic income or citizens’ wage, and he does, in fact, mention a guaranteed citizens’ wage as an example of ideal decommodification (ibid.: 47).

Opposite decommodification, which is positive, Esping-Andersen places commodification as a negative. He refers to Marx and says it leads to alienation (ibid.: 35), and that it weakens the

individual worker (ibid.: 36). Decommodification is therefore indispensable in collective labor actions (ibid.: 37).

Ostner and Lewis point out that “decommodification” and “independence from the market” are gendered concepts. Due to the gendered inequality in the division of paid/unpaid work, “decommodification” and “independence from the market” are not necessarily positive for women, among other things because decommodification will increase the burden as far as unpaid work. Ostner says directly that, “feminist scholarship insists that commodification is prior decommodification. In order to be granted exit options from the labour market and respective wage replacement or subsidies, one has first to be fully commodified” (Ostner 1996: 3).

This shows that decommodification can be perceived in different ways. In 1990, Esping-Andersen saw it as an objective of liberation, while Ostner and Lewis saw it as an expression of dependence. Ostner and Lewis talk about individualization (in terms of economy and norms), understood as freedom from family obligations, as a goal for woman friendliness. Consequently, commodification is seen as liberation.

Whereas Esping-Andersen and Ostner/Lewis are one-sided in their use of the concepts, Claus Offe highlights their dialectic character. He sees decommodification as a fundamental trend in welfare state capitalism that works simultaneously with a contrary commodification process. Capitalism and the welfare state seem to contradict each other, but at the same time one cannot exist without the other (Offe 1984: 153). In Offe’s interpretation, the state form implies a structural tendency to create commodification, and at the same time the commodification process also requires non-commodified forms. The labor movement has also been marked by this dual role; it has strengthened the labor force by working for economic growth and full employment, and through its demands for reduced work hours, it has supported decommodification. The labor movement has, in other words, attempted to create dual freedom: both freedom *to* wage work and freedom *from* wage work.

This is in contrast to Esping-Andersen, who only focuses on the labor movement’s decommodification goals, freedom from the market, and Ostner/Lewis, who are especially keen to highlight freedom from wage work.

V: Nancy Fraser’s redefinition of and solution to the gender political dilemmas in the welfare state

The American philosopher Nancy Fraser wants to be more than just analytical and deconstructive in relation to the welfare state. While most feminist researchers refuse to be normative or political, and prefer to give their research a purely scientific look, her goal is to outline an emancipatory vision for a new social and gender order. She says:

“We should ask: What new, postindustrial order should replace the family wage? And what sort of welfare state can best support a new gender order? What account of gender equity best captures our highest aspiration? And what vision of social welfare comes closest to embodying it?” (Fraser 1994:593).

To answer these questions, she constructs a normative idealtype for gender equity and attempts to measure two political, feminist vision strategies in relation to this ideal.

Two idealtypes: “The universal breadwinner model” and “The caregiver parity model”

One model is largely based on many European and American feminists’ preference, namely the universal breadwinner model, which implies a universalization of wage work. The goal is to increase women’s participation in wage work along with a marketization and statification of child and elder care.

The other model is mainly based on the implicit praxis and visions of some European feminists, namely the caregiver parity model. The dual breadwinner model is more common in Europe than in the USA, and it is therefore a priority to ensure that care giving has the same status as wage work. The caregiver parity model thus attempts to equal care giving with wage work through publicly supported care giving in the form of maternity, parental and other forms of leave schemes and through more flexible wage work conditions for women.

Fraser’s definition of gender equity is interesting because it shows how she perceives the dualisms of the industrial society (e.g., commodification/decommodification and dependence/independence) and approaches the two general norms of equality and difference.

She breaks the dualism and double bind situation in the gender political dilemmas through a redefinition process that can be seen as a form of dialectic synthesis or paradigm shift. In practical terms, her method is to dissolve the two mega-norms of equality/difference and replace them with a more complex concept with five value dimensions that contain different forms of equality as well as economic, political and social/cultural dimensions.

1. Anti-poverty principle: Fulfillment of basic needs. 2. Anti-exploitation principle: Prevent exploiting dependence of family, market and state. 3. Equality principle: Obtain a certain equality in terms of: (a) income; (b) leisure time; (c) respect. 4. Anti-marginalization principle: Equal participation in different social spheres. 5. Anti-androcentrism principle: Change traditional gender norms.

Fraser points out that the five principles may contradict each other, and reminds us that there are other important goals in society, for instance “efficiency, community and individual liberty.”

However, she does grade the two political strategic models based on their fulfillment of the ideals (the equality dimension is measured on the three dimensions). She concludes that both models are inadequate, both score high on two dimensions, fair on three dimensions, and poorly on two dimensions.

Fraser’s two idealtypes for a post-industrial welfare state

	Universal breadwinner	Caregiver parity
Antipoverty	Good	Good
Antiexploitation	Good	Good
Income equality	Fair	Poor
Leisure-time equality	Poor	Fair
Equality of respect	Fair	Fair
Antimarginalization	Fair	Poor
Antiandrocentrism	Poor	Fair

Nancy Fraser 1994: 612.

The breadwinner model is considered good in terms of preventing poverty and exploitation, fair when it comes to income equality, equality of respect and equal participation, but poor in terms of leisure time equality and changing traditional gender norms. In comparison, the caregiver model is also considered good in terms of preventing poverty and exploitation, fair in terms of leisure time activity, equality of respect and changing traditional gender norms, but poor in terms of ensuring income equality and equal participation.

The breadwinner model primarily aims to stimulate women to adapt to male norms and specifically emphasizes market equality. The caregiver model prioritizes care in the family, but has no real goal to change the gender role pattern.

A utopian idea: “The universal caregiver model” with “A universal basic income scheme”

Fraser suggests that to overcome the contradictions between these two models, we combine the best from the two models and discard the rest.

This model is based on extended social citizenship and contains “a universal basic income scheme” (ibid.: 615). It represents a deconstruction of the opposition in the gender roles in both the universal breadwinner model and the caregiver parity model, and thus also deconstructs the opposition between a bureaucratic, public institutional model and a private family model.

In a later version of the article in *Political Theory* (1994), which appears in the book *Justice Interruptus* (Fraser 1997), she names this model the “universal caregiver model.” The purpose is to not only balance the relationship between wage work and care, but precisely to dissolve the opposition between what she calls the “workerism” of the universal breadwinner model and the “domestic privatism” of the caregiver parity model. The universal caregiver model puts much more emphasis on civil society and stimulates men to emulate women.

The key is that you cannot change a dualism without deliberately changing both elements. Fraser calls her third strategy a deconstructive strategy for many of the dualisms in the industrial society. This implies a deconstruction of gender as we know it.

Fraser does not say much about the specific design of a basic income. She admits that it will probably be expensive, “and hence hard to sustain at a high level of quality and generosity.” Some social scientists worry about free riding, which Fraser rejects as a typical male concern:

“The free-rider worry, incidentally, is typically defined androcentrically as a worry about shirking paid employment. Little attention is paid, in contrast, to a far more widespread problem, namely, men’s free riding on women’s unpaid domestic labor” (Fraser 1994: 615). Basic income would be a good way to stop this widespread free rider problem.

It is noteworthy that her reference to the basic income (in the 1994 article) has “disappeared” in the 1997 version of the article.

Elsewhere, Fraser talks about basic income as “a fully social wage” (Fraser 1993), and about developing Marshall’s idea about social citizenship based on genuine rights so that “benefits must be granted in forms that maintain people’s status as full members of society entitled to ‘equal respect’” (ibid.: 21).

On the other side, we find the neo-conservatives with an “antisocial wage”, and the neoliberals with a “quasi-social wage.” Both are based on a heightened obligation to work in return for social benefits (“workfare”).

The vision of a universal caregiver model with a basic income is “highly utopian,” as Fraser says. But when she sees it as “a thought experiment,” it is because the universal breadwinner and the caregiver parity models are not utopian enough. With reference to André Gorz, Fraser sees the basic income model as implying radical social change.

The Danish women researchers Birte Siim and Anette Borchorst (2002) have discussed Nancy Frasers three visions of gender equality. But they overlook Frasers coupling of “the universal caregiver model” with the idea of a universal basic income (in the 1994 article). Fraser don’t discuss how the Nordic welfare states fits into her idealtypes models, but Siim and Borchorst says that every of the Nordic countries combine elements and characteristics from Frasers three models, and that all the countries have “supported a universal caregiver model, albeit with some distinct differences in the character of women’s mobilization and institutionalization of gender equality” (Ibid: 96).

VI: Overtures to a feminist basic income discussion in Denmark

From 1992-1995, the basic income debate raged in Denmark, but remarkably the idea received support neither from prominent women politicians (as a political discourse), nor from gender researchers (as a scientific paradigm) (Christensen 1990 and 2000). This despite the fact that an opinion poll from that period showed that the idea was widely supported by women, the middle-aged and unskilled workers (Goul Andersen 1995).

In general, it appears that a large part of the women’s movement is locked into a rigid wage work and equality paradigm. On the one hand, the idea that women should be paid for taking care of their own children was clearly rejected, which conforms to the dominant tradition in Danish social law. On the other hand, there was no rejection of the new parental leave scheme that was introduced on January 1, 1994.

There was a clear understanding among feminist scholars that the equality principle on the labor market functioned on the men’s (the strong) terms and did not lead to equality between

work and care. At the same time, there was growing concern that the new leave schemes could hurt equality on the labor market.

Many in the women's movement were caught in the classic bind or double bind situations and lacked a new frame of understanding that could undo the powerlessness. As described by Nancy Fraser, they faced a dilemma of a breadwinner model and a care model, and were unable to find a new understanding that transcended both models. As a consequence, many prioritized and chose the breadwinner model.

However, some feminist scholars rebelled against the breadwinner paradigm in the Equal Status Council's anthology (Carlsen & Larsen 1994). The basic imbalance between work and family life was discussed in two theoretic articles by cultural sociologist, Lis Højgaard, and legal expert, Hanne Petersen, who attempted to determine the nature of this opposition in connection with the issue of gender equality on the labor market.

Prioritizing and recognizing reproductive work: A cultural revolution?

Højgaard describes how recent patriarchate theories explain the unequal division of work between the genders. They emphasize the correlation between labor market, family and state and call it a "patriarchal capitalism," in which the men mainly work in production (the economy), while the women still mainly work in reproduction (outside the economy). Capitalism is the basic structure and dynamic of society, it is exercised in patriarchal forms, and production is superior to reproduction (ibid.: 21).

The perspective in this analytical method is a prioritization and a recognition of the reproductive work in the family. Based on this view, Højgaard concludes that, until reproductive work is ascribed the same social value as productive work, and power and remuneration reflect this, both class inequality and gender inequality will persist.

However, the gendered productive/reproductive division of labor has undergone some changes in modern society, and there is no longer the same unequivocal correlation between women's oppression in the family, on the labor market and in the state. Inequality in house and care work still exists, but according to Højgaard, that alone does not explain inequality in the labor market and inequality in politics. Greater equality on the labor market has thus both strengthened the political role and put focus on equality issues in care work.

Other women theorists find a fundamental explanation of the unequal gendered division of labor in the modern welfare state's mode of functioning, which secures patriarchal relations through its family, labor market and welfare policies. Højgaard is here close to American political scientist, Carole Pateman's idea that citizenship must be based on wage work as well as the unpaid care work performed by women.

According to this perspective, women can only achieve "full citizenship" if the separation of care work and wage work is abolished, and new definitions of independence, work and welfare are constructed. A democratic citizenship must encompass both the content and the value of women's contributions, and it must be defined so that citizens are both autonomous and mutually dependent (ibid.: 25). The exact meaning of this statement is not explained.

Højgaard hopes for a “cultural revolution” to resolve the conflict between work and family life, i.e., that men participate equally in house work and childcare and fight for this right on the labor market. This could be the kick-off for a change in the prioritization of productive and reproductive work. She describes a push process: The leave schemes gave women a position in the family from which they “can push the men to make a change on the labor market, from where the men – freed from the heavy breadwinner burden – can win rights in the family (ibid.: 28).

Beyond status work and wage work?

Legal expert, Hanne Petersen, uses different concepts to describe the basic conflict. She applies a historic perspective on the relationship between the status-conditioned obligation that regulates care work in the family and the contract law that regulates wage work. “Status determined life” (family life) is characterized by inequality and difference and is based on values like care and balance in mutual dependency. This goes against the “contract-determined” life’s (the labor market’s) demand for equality, uniformity and standardization, and is based on values like freedom, independence and growth (ibid.: 45). Historically, wage work has always had women’s care work (status work in the family) as precondition and companion. Wage work and care work have never been equal or balanced.

Hanne Petersen is more direct and provocative in her analysis of how to get on with equality. She thinks that, due to the labor market fixation, modern equality policy privileges a few women without really benefiting the many women. She therefore asks whether we haven’t reached the point where we need – particularly from the women’s point of view – to examine and assess the necessity and the importance of all the work that is being performed in a society, regardless of who does it, and regardless of the legal form in which it is being carried out. Or in other words: How much care do we need in a society (and for who and what), and how much production and other material and immaterial goods do we need? (ibid.: 51).

Such a point of view requires both a battle against the idea that wage work is a means of liberation for women (and perhaps a battle against the liberation and equality ideal itself) and a battle against the idea that care work is a private matter, which the families – i.e., the women – have to handle in cooperation with a low paid and low esteemed public sector.

She then poses a couple of new questions: 1. Whether the contract as a form of regulation, including labor market regulation through bargaining, should be subjected to a rationality of care, balance or sustainability? 2. How can the courts reduce the polarization between family life and wage work life? She does not offer an answer to these questions, and not one word about basic income!

Towards a new understanding of basic income?

Once you have a good and concise problem formulation, you have halfway solved your problem, you know a part of the answer. This is true for Lis Højgaard and Hanne Petersen. They both outline the problem formulation horizon on which basic income emerges as the natural, logical answer.

In Højgaard's case, a new universal right to a basic income will create "full citizenship." Reproductive work will become visible and receive the same social value as productive work. Citizenship will have two legs to stand on, and the "new definitions of independence, work and welfare," which she calls for, will emerge.

Basic income is also the obvious answer to Hanne Petersen's proposal for a fundamental reassessment of wage work as the (only) means to liberation. It will create the institutional balance between work and family life by redefining the work and breadwinner concept.

Money and care support – work duty and care duty

Danish feminist scholars have also developed a broader theoretic conceptual apparatus, in which the basic income concept appears as a logical solution, if the goal is equality and justice in the gendered division of labor.

Kirsten Ketscher, a Danish legal expert, has constructed a conceptual apparatus to analyze the wage work related provider situation. She describes how rules in the labor market and social system systematically focus on wage work and discriminate care work (Ketscher 1990, 2001).

Ketscher distinguishes between money support and care support, and links it to a distinction between the different social spheres (state, market, family).

She defines support as procuring the means that are necessary for the individual person's maintenance and continuation of life (Ketscher 1990: 33), and each person needs both care support and money support.

Care support is the work that must be performed in connection with cooking, cleaning, washing, shopping, etc. In other words, everything we normally think of as house wife duties (ibid: 40). Money support is the activity that aims to procure the necessary funds.

Money support has three major sources: Wages (from the market), support through marriage (from the family), and social benefits (from the state). Likewise with care support: 1. Family support. 2. Public support. 3. Market support. In money support, the labour market is the central source, and in care support, the family is the major source, but public support is gaining ground in both. However, it is important to keep in mind that men and women combine these support systems in different ways.

Earlier, men were in charge of money support via the labor market, while the women handled care support in the home. In the modern welfare state, money support has become significant for both genders, although many women are supported financially by men for a while. Conversely, many men receive a lot of care support from women.

Money support is linked with a legal availability and work duty in relation to both market and state, whereas care support is linked to a legal care duty in relation to children, and for married couples in relation to each other. But where money support requires personal presence, care support can be handled by a substitute (public child care institutions).

Self-support is the leading principle in § 75 of the Danish Constitution and § 6 of the Social Assistance Act, and when it is not possible, a right to state support goes into effect. For married couples, this self-support duty is supplemented by the mutual obligation to support each other, cf. § 6 of the Social Assistance Act, and for parents, the obligation to provide for children under 18, cf. § 13 of the Child Act and § 6 of the Social Assistance Act.

However, with women's increasing participation in wage work, the problem of double work has arisen: they still have the main responsibility for care support *and* contribute to money support. According to Ketscher, this means that they have been forced to choose between two legal obligations: the obligation in the work contract (work duty) and the obligation to care for their children. The difference between the two obligations is that the work duty, in contrast to the care duty, requires personal presence. And the obligation to fulfill the wage contract and the obligation to provide for the family are not equal. In numerous cases, the current rules show that "the work duty" comes before "the support duty."

Justice in the support triangle: Basic income as an option

So how can the modern welfare state resolve the conflict between the work and the care duty and, based on the support triangle, distribute time, money and care between the genders fairly?

Ketscher does not bring basic income into her analytical model, but Norwegian feminist legal expert, Tove Stang Dahl does. She is Ketscher's paradigmatic model, and has designed the model (Dahl 1985 I: 85-93, Dahl 1987). Dahl distinguishes between reciprocal justice and distributive justice. Reciprocal justice has to do with reciprocity and balance between parties, with a reciprocal right and duty as the central element. Distributive justice concerns distribution of values based on an entity, a distributor (e.g., the state), where the recipients are made as equal as possible.

Dahl does not think that reciprocal justice is enough to strengthen the women's position in the market, but that we also have to establish distributive justice in terms of money above the state. She suggests dissolving the relationship between social assistance and wage work to ensure women direct access to money, and discusses three paths: 1. Care wage. 2. Abolishing qualification requirements for access to unemployment benefits and social assistance. 3. Guaranteed minimum income for all adult citizens.

She does not see any of these proposals as utopian, but rather as central to the women's movement's active participation in a discussion. Perhaps basic income will turn out to be the uniting idea (Dahl 1985 II: 246).

The basic income perspective thus emerges as a logical possibility of the support triangle paradigm. A basic income would make money support and care support equal and partially remove the opposition between the two. By partially decoupling (as far as basic income is concerned) the work duty in relation to the labor market, the new element in money support (basic income) would be available to all types of care. Basic income would therefore constitute recognition of care work, which Ketscher is asking for, and ascribe it a value in itself.

Although there are signs that the women's movement and feminist scholars are changing their view on the normative function of wage work, the idea of a basic income has always seemed remote and provocative to many feminists. They prefer to think within a division of labor strategy rather than an alternative basic income strategy.

VII: Conclusion

My initial claim was that women and gender research has almost ignored the basic income concept. This is only partially true.

Some Danish feminists seem to be breaking with the wage work and labor market fixation in the gender political debate and seem to acknowledge the systematic discrimination of care work in favor of wage work in the current social and labor market system.

The Norwegian-Danish support triangle paradigm developed by Dahl and Ketscher is fruitful in a basic income perspective, because it demonstrates that the only way to justice is to secure women economic independence by giving them a right to money.

Dahl/Ketscher are in line with Ostner/Lewis in their description of how women's work/support has changed from being mainly determined by the marriage contract (the family) to being determined by the work contract (the market). The result is liberation from one type of dependence, but the creation of a new type of dependence, namely dependence on wage work and on the state (transfer income and the ensuing clientification), a situation they share with the men. Women and men now also share the mission of liberating themselves from wage work. The right to independence of family, state and market is not for women only, but for all citizens, and it can be secured through basic income.

Also the international feminist debate is showing some interest in this perspective. Carole Pateman (1989: 202-203), who has described the modern welfare situation of women as a Wollstonecraft's dilemma, is also one of the few to point out that the way out of this double bind is to redefine the situation, make a paradigm shift with a basic income as a possible element. Recently, Alisa McKay (with Jo Vanevery 2000 and 2001) has argued that a basic income scheme might be an important tool in furthering a gender neutral social citizenship in what is called a "postfamilial" society.

Other prominent feminist scholars are more skeptical: Ruth Lister (1995) briefly mentions basic income as a possible solution to the gender political dilemmas, but expresses concern that it could also strengthen or maintain the traditional gendered division of labor, unless it is combined with other reforms. Jane Lewis (2001) expresses sympathy for the idea. However, she finds that a "participation income" is more realistic than a pure basic income scheme.

Ingrid Robeyns (2000) has analysed the short and long time pro and contra arguments for a basic income in relation to women. Her conclusion is, that a basic income will have different effects for women according to their position on the labor market and in the wage hierarchy. Women with the weakest connection will have the greatest benefit, and the highwaged women on the labor market will have least benefits; the effects for the middle groups will be ambivalent determined by the priorities of values.

Nancy Fraser's model normative deconstruction and reconstruction analysis of different welfare strategies opens the possibility that the basic income concept should climb on the gender political agenda in the future, although Fraser's basic income perspective has been overlooked by the Danish women researchers.

When Nancy Fraser succeeds in theoretically escaping Wollstonecraft's dilemma it is because she, unlike many other feminists, is explicitly normative in her theory formation. Whereas Ostner/Lewis' typology of welfare state regimes mainly has a descriptive-analytical objective, but is normatively based on a historic rejection of the male breadwinner model, Fraser looks ahead with a positive normative goal.

She methodically demonstrates how to perform a deconstructive ideology analysis, i.e., historicize and contextualize various concepts (dependence, exploitation, marginalization, equality and citizenship) by recognizing the gendered aspects.

Generally, she examines how to cancel and/or unite/balance oppositions and dualisms through a more positive assessment of female roles and concepts and a reassessment of male roles and concepts. She is also interested in finding concepts and strategies for joining the oppositions between the old class interest in a redistribution of resources (creating equality) and the new social movements' demand for recognition of their identities (recognition of difference).

Fraser's analysis is helpful as far as developing the political-strategic level of the basic income concept. She sees that changes in social institutions happen through a political battle between different political discourses, where social movements together with experts and scientists can influence the political discourses. Political discourses are created in the public sphere through battles and debates among social movements, experts and state institutions. She therefore finds it important to influence the women's movement's political discourse on the future of the welfare state.

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Summary

The extensive social science research on women and welfare rarely offers feminist and women political arguments in favor of guaranteed basic income or citizens wage. One reason for the modest feminist interest in basic income is that women's research and the women's movement have been locked into a Wollstonecraft's dilemma. The dilemma of adapting to the wage work norm and thus deprioritizing the care norm, or prioritize the care norm and risk marginalization in relation to wage work can be solved or softened theoretically by adding conceptual nuance to the equality and difference concepts like American philosopher Nancy Fraser has done. Nancy Fraser proposes that a universal basic income or citizens' wage will fulfill the wish for equality and difference, combine decommodification and commodification, and create a new type of economic independence that could be a basis for new dependence relations. Nancy Fraser's analysis of different welfare strategies opens the possibility that the basic income concept should climb on the gender political agenda in the future.

Some Danish feminists seem to be breaking with the wage work and labor market fixation in the gender political debate and seem to acknowledge the systematic discrimination of care work in favor of wage work in the current social and labor market system. They have developed theoretic understandings of the relation between wage work and care that open up for new arguments in favor of the basic income concept.