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AFTER THE FAMILY WAGE

Gender Equity and the Welfare State

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THE CURRENT CRISIS OF THE WELFARE STATE has many roots—global economic trends, massive movements of refugees and immigrants, popular hostility to taxes, the weakening of trade unions and labor parties, the rise of national and “racial”-ethnic antagonisms, the decline of solidaristic ideologies, and the collapse of state socialism. One absolutely crucial factor, however, is the crumbling of the old gender order. Existing welfare states are premised on assumptions about gender that are increasingly out of phase with many people’s lives and self-understandings. They therefore do not provide adequate social protections, especially for women and children.

The gender order that is now disappearing descends from the industrial era of capitalism and reflects the social world of its origin. It was centered on the ideal of the family wage. In this world, people were supposed to be organized into heterosexual, male-headed nuclear families, which lived principally from the man’s labor market earnings. The male head of the household would be paid a family wage, sufficient to support children and a wife and mother, who performed domestic labor without pay. Of course, countless lives never fit this pattern. Still, it provided the normative picture of a proper family.

The family-wage ideal was inscribed in the structure of most industrial-era welfare states.¹ That structure had three tiers, with social-insurance programs occupying the first rank. Designed to protect people from the vagaries of the

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labor market (and to protect the economy from shortages of demand), these programs replaced the breadwinner's wage in case of sickness, disability, unemployment, or old age. Many countries also featured a second tier of programs, providing direct support for full-time female homemaking and mothering. A third tier served the "residuum." Largely a holdover from traditional poor relief, these programs provided paltry, stigmatized, means-tested aid to needy people who had no claim to honorable support because they did not fit the family-wage scenario.²

Today, however, the family-wage assumption is no longer tenable—either empirically or normatively. We are currently experiencing the death throes of the old, industrial gender order with the transition to new, postindustrial phase of capitalism. The crisis of the welfare state is bound up with these epochal changes. It is rooted in part in the collapse of the world of the family wage, and of its central assumptions about labor markets and families.

In the labor markets of postindustrial capitalism, few jobs pay wages sufficient to support a family single-handedly; many, in fact, are temporary or part-time and do not carry standard benefits.³ Women's employment is increasingly common, moreover—although far less well-paid than men's.⁴ Postindustrial families, meanwhile, are less conventional and more diverse.⁵ Heterosexuals are marrying less and later, and divorcing more and sooner. And gays and lesbians are pioneering new kinds of domestic arrangements.⁶ Gender norms and family forms are highly contested, finally. Thanks in part to the feminist and gay and lesbian liberation movements, many people no longer prefer the male breadwinner/female homemaker model. As a result of these trends, growing numbers of women, both divorced and never married, are struggling to support themselves and their families without access to a male breadwinner's wage.⁷

In short, a new world of economic production and social reproduction is emerging—a world of less stable employment and more diverse families. Although no one can be certain about its ultimate shape, this much seems clear: the emerging world, no less than the world of the family wage, will require a welfare state that effectively insures people against uncertainties. If anything, the need for such protection is increased. It is clear, too, that the old forms of welfare state, built on assumptions of male-headed families and relatively stable jobs, are no longer suited to providing this protection. We need something new, a postindustrial welfare state suited to radically new conditions of employment and reproduction.

What then should a postindustrial welfare state look like? Conservatives have lately had a lot to say about "restructuring the welfare state," but their vision is counterhistorical and contradictory; they seek to reinstate the male breadwinner/female homemaker family for the middle class, while demand-

ing that poor single mothers work. Neoliberal proposals have recently emerged in the United States, but they too are inadequate in the current context. Punitive, androcentric, and obsessed with employment despite the absence of good jobs, they are unable to provide security in a postindustrial world.⁸

Both of these approaches ignore one crucial thing: a postindustrial welfare state, like its industrial predecessor, must support a gender order. But the only kind of gender order that can be acceptable today is one premised on gender equity.

Feminists, therefore, are in a good position to generate an emancipatory vision for the coming period. They, more than anyone, appreciate the importance of gender relations to the current crisis of the industrial welfare state and the centrality of gender equity to any satisfactory resolution. Feminists also appreciate the importance of care work for human well-being and the effects of its social organization on women's standing. They are attuned, finally, to potential conflicts of interest within families and to the inadequacy of androcentric definitions of work.

To date, however, feminists have tended to shy away from systematic reconstructive thinking about the welfare state. Nor have we yet developed a satisfactory account of gender equity that can inform an emancipatory vision. We need now to undertake such thinking. We should ask: What new, postindustrial gender order should replace the family wage? And what sort of welfare state can best support such a new gender order? What account of gender equity best captures our highest aspirations? And what vision of social welfare comes closest to embodying it?

Two different kinds of answers are presently conceivable, I think, both of which qualify as feminist. The first I call the universal breadwinner model. It is the vision implicit in the current political practice of most U.S. feminists and liberals. It aims to foster gender equity by promoting women's employment; the centerpiece of this model is state provision of employment-enabling services such as day care. The second possible answer I call the caregiver parity model. It is the vision implicit in the current political practice of most Western European feminists and social democrats. It aims to promote gender equity chiefly by supporting informal care work; the centerpiece of this model is state provision of caregiver allowances.

Which of these two approaches should command our loyalties in the coming period? Which expresses the most attractive vision of a postindustrial gender order? Which best embodies the ideal of gender equity?

In this article, I outline a framework for thinking systematically about these questions. I analyze highly idealized versions of universal breadwinner and caregiver parity in the manner of a thought experiment. I postulate,

contrary to fact, a world in which both of these models are feasible in that their economic and political preconditions are in place. Assuming very favorable conditions then, I assess the respective strengths and weaknesses of each.

The result is not a standard policy analysis. For neither universal breadwinner nor caregiver parity will in fact be realized in the near future, and my discussion is not directed primarily at policy-making elites. My intent, rather, is theoretical and political in a broader sense. I aim, first, to clarify some dilemmas surrounding "equality" and "difference" by reconsidering what is meant by gender equity. In so doing, I also aim to spur increased reflection on feminist strategies and goals by spelling out some assumptions that are implicit in current practice and subjecting them to critical scrutiny.

These aims converge in the overall logic of my argument. Starting from some widely held moral intuitions, I arrive by the end of the thought experiment at a surprising and controversial conclusion: with respect to social welfare, at least, the deconstruction of gender difference is a necessary condition for gender equity.

My discussion proceeds in four parts. In the first section, I propose an analysis of gender equity that generates a set of evaluative standards. Then, in the second and third sections, I apply those standards to universal breadwinner and caregiver parity, respectively. I conclude, in the fourth section, that neither of those approaches, even in an idealized form, can deliver full gender equity. To have a shot at that, I contend, we must develop a new vision of a postindustrial welfare state, which effectively deconstructs gender difference as we know it.

I. GENDER EQUITY: A COMPLEX CONCEPTION

To evaluate alternative visions of a postindustrial welfare state, we need some normative criteria. Gender equity, I have said, is one indispensable standard. But of what precisely does it consist?

Feminists have so far associated gender equity with either equality or difference, where equality means treating women exactly like men, and where difference means treating women differently insofar as they differ from men. Theorists have debated the relative merits of these two approaches as if they represented two antithetical poles of an absolute dichotomy.⁹ These arguments have generally ended in stalemate. Proponents of difference have successfully shown that equality strategies typically presuppose "the male as norm," thereby disadvantaging women and imposing a distorted standard on

everyone. Egalitarians have argued just as cogently, however, that difference approaches typically rely on essentialist notions of femininity, thereby reinforcing existing stereotypes and confining women within existing gender divisions. Neither equality nor difference, then, is a workable conception of gender equity.

Feminists have responded to this stalemate in several different ways. Some have tried to resolve the dilemma by reconceiving one or another of its horns; they have reinterpreted difference or equality in what they consider a more defensible form. Others have concluded "a plague on both your houses" and sought some third, wholly other, normative principle. Still others have tried to embrace the dilemma as an enabling paradox, a resource to be treasured, not an impasse to be gotten around. Many feminists, finally, have retreated altogether from normative theorizing—into cultural positivism, piecemeal reformism, or postmodern antinomianism.

None of these responses is satisfactory. Normative theorizing remains an indispensable intellectual enterprise for feminism, indeed for all emancipatory social movements. We need a vision or picture of where we are trying to go, and a set of standards for evaluating various proposals as to how we might get there. The equality/difference theoretical impasse is real, moreover; it cannot be simply sidestepped or embraced. Nor is there any "wholly other" third term that can magically catapult us beyond it. What then should feminist theorists do?

I propose that we reconceptualize gender equity as a complex, not a simple, idea. This means breaking with the assumption that gender equity can be identified with any single value or norm, whether it be equality, difference, or something else. Instead we should treat it as a complex notion comprising a plurality of distinct normative principles. The plurality will include some notions associated with the equality side of the debate, as well as some associated with the difference side. It will also encompass still other normative ideas that neither side has accorded due weight.

Assume, for example, that gender equity requires not only equal respect for women and men, but also some more substantive kind of equality, such as equality of resources or equality of capabilities. Assume, in addition, that it requires not only parity of participation in socially valued activities, but also the decentering of androcentric measures of social value. In that case, each of four distinct norms must be respected for gender equity to be achieved. Failure to satisfy any one of them means failure to realize the full meaning of gender equity.

This kind of approach promises several advantages. Treating gender equity as a complex idea lets us spot possible tensions among its component norms. We can see, for example, that some efforts to equalize resources

between women and men can work at cross-purposes with some efforts to achieve parity of participation in socially valued activities, and we can look for ways to minimize such conflicts. No longer restricted to the two meganorms of equality and difference, moreover, we have more conceptual resources at our disposal. We can develop more fine-grained appraisals of alternative political strategies and goals.

In what follows, I assume that gender equity is complex in this way, and I propose an account of it that is designed for the specific purpose of evaluating alternative pictures of a postindustrial welfare state. This account might not be perfectly suited to handling issues other than welfare. For such issues, it might be best to devise a somewhat different package of component norms. Nevertheless, I believe that the general idea of treating gender equity as a complex conception is widely applicable. The analysis here may serve as a paradigm case demonstrating the usefulness of this approach.

For this particular thought experiment, in any case, I unpack the idea of gender equity as a compound of five distinct normative principles. Let me enumerate them one by one.

Antipoverty Principle

The first and most obvious objective of social-welfare provision is to prevent poverty. Preventing poverty is crucial to achieving gender equity now, after the family wage, given the high rates of poverty in solo-mother families and the vastly increased likelihood that U.S. women and children will live in such families.¹⁰ If it accomplishes nothing else, a welfare state should at least relieve suffering by meeting otherwise unmet basic needs. Arrangements, such as those in the United States, that leave women, children, and men in poverty, are unacceptable according to this criterion. Any postindustrial welfare state that prevented such poverty would constitute a major advance. So far, however, this does not say enough. The antipoverty principle might be satisfied in a variety of different ways, not all of which are acceptable. Some ways, such as the provision of targeted, isolating and stigmatized poor relief for solo-mother families, fail to respect several of the following normative principles, which are also essential to gender equity in social welfare.

Antiexploitation Principle

Antipoverty measures are important not only in themselves, but also as a means to another basic objective: preventing exploitation of vulnerable

people.¹¹ This principle, too, is central to achieving gender equity after the family wage. Needy women with no other way to feed themselves and their children, for example, are liable to exploitation—by abusive husbands, by sweatshop foremen, and by pimps. In guaranteeing relief of poverty then, welfare provision should also aim to mitigate exploitable dependency.¹² The availability of an alternative source of income enhances the bargaining position of subordinates in unequal relationships. The nonemployed wife who knows she can support herself and her children outside of her marriage has more leverage within it; her “voice” is enhanced as her possibilities of “exit” increase.¹³ The same holds for the low-paid nursing home attendant in relation to her boss.¹⁴ For welfare measures to have this effect, however, support must be provided as a matter of right. When receipt of aid is highly stigmatized or discretionary, the antiexploitation principle is not satisfied.¹⁵ At best, the claimant would trade exploitable dependence on a husband or a boss for exploitable dependence on a caseworker’s whim.¹⁶ The goal should be to prevent at least three kinds of exploitable dependencies: exploitable dependence on an individual family member, such as a husband or an adult child; exploitable dependence on employers and supervisors; and exploitable dependence on the personal whims of state officials. Rather than shuttle people back and forth among these exploitable dependencies, an adequate approach must prevent all three simultaneously.¹⁷ This principle rules out arrangements that channel a homemaker’s benefits through her husband. It is likewise incompatible with arrangements that provide essential goods, such as health insurance, only in forms linked conditionally to scarce employment. Any postindustrial welfare state that satisfied the antiexploitation principle would represent a major improvement over current U.S. arrangements. But even it might not be satisfactory. Some ways of satisfying this principle would fail to respect several of the following normative principles, which are also essential to gender equity in social welfare.

Equality Principles

A postindustrial welfare state could prevent women’s poverty and exploitation and yet still tolerate severe gender inequality. Such a welfare state is not satisfactory. A further dimension of gender equity in social provision is redistribution, reducing inequality between women and men. Equality, as we saw, has been criticized by some feminists. They have argued that it entails treating women exactly like men according to male-defined standards, and that this necessarily disadvantages women. That argument expresses a legitimate worry, which I will address under another rubric below. But it does not

undermine the ideal of equality per se. The worry pertains only to certain inadequate ways of conceiving equality, which I do not presuppose here. At least three distinct conceptions of equality escape the objection. These three are essential to gender equity in social welfare.

Income equality. One form of equality that is crucial to gender equity concerns the distribution of real per capita income. This kind of equality is highly pressing now, after the family wage, when U.S. women's earnings are less than 70% of men's, when much of women's labor is not compensated at all, and when many women suffer from "hidden poverty" due to unequal distribution within families.¹⁸ As I interpret it, the principle of income equality does not require absolute leveling, but it does rule out arrangements that reduce women's incomes after divorce by nearly half, whereas men's incomes nearly double.¹⁹ It likewise rules out unequal pay for equal work and the wholesale undervaluation of women's labor and skills. The income equality principle requires a substantial reduction in the vast discrepancy between men's and women's incomes. In so doing, it tends, as well, to help equalize the life-chances of children, because a majority of U.S. children are currently likely to live at some point in solo-mother families.²⁰

Leisure-time equality. A second kind of equality that is crucial to gender equity concerns the distribution of leisure time. This sort of equality is highly pressing now, after the family wage, when many women, but only a few men, do both paid work and unpaid primary care work, and when women suffer disproportionately from "time poverty."²¹ One recent British study found that 52% of women surveyed, compared to 21% of men, said they "felt tired most of the time."²² The leisure-time equality principle rules out welfare arrangements that would equalize incomes while requiring a double shift of work from women, but only a single shift from men. It likewise rules out arrangements that would require women, but not men, to do either the "work of claiming" or the time-consuming "patchwork" of piecing together income from several sources and of coordinating services from different agencies and associations.²³

Equality of respect. A third kind of equality that is crucial to gender equity pertains to status and respect. This kind of equality is especially pressing now, after the family wage, when postindustrial culture routinely represents women as sexual objects for the pleasure of male subjects. The principle of equal respect rules out social arrangements that objectify and denigrate women—even if those arrangements prevent poverty and exploitation, and even if, in addition, they equalize income and leisure time. It is incompatible

with welfare programs that trivialize women's activities and ignore women's contributions—hence with welfare reforms in the United States that assume AFDC claimants do not “work.” Equality of respect requires recognition of women's personhood and recognition of women's work.

A postindustrial welfare state should promote all three of these conceptions of equality. Such a state would constitute an enormous advance over present arrangements, but even it might not go far enough. Some ways of satisfying the equality principles would fail to respect the following principle, which is also essential to gender equity in social welfare.

Antimarginalization Principle

A welfare state could satisfy all the preceding principles and still function to marginalize women. By limiting support to generous mothers' pensions, for example, it could render women independent, well provided for, well rested, and respected, but enclaved in a separate domestic sphere, removed from the life of the larger society. Such a welfare state would be unacceptable. Social policy should promote women's full participation on a par with men in all areas of social life—in employment, in politics, in the associational life of civil society. The antimarginalization principle requires provision of the necessary conditions for women's participation, including day care, elder care, and provision for breast-feeding in public. It also requires the dismantling of masculinist work cultures and woman-hostile political environments. Any postindustrial welfare state that provided these things would represent a great improvement over current arrangements. Yet even it might leave something to be desired. Some ways of satisfying the antimarginalization principle would fail to respect the last principle, which is also essential to gender equity in social welfare.

Antiandrocentrism Principle

A welfare state that satisfied many of the foregoing principles could still entrench some obnoxious gender norms. It could assume the androcentric view that men's current life patterns represent the human norm and that women ought to assimilate to them. (This is the real issue behind the previously noted worry about equality.) Such a welfare state is unacceptable. Social policy should not require women to become like men, nor to fit into institutions designed for men, to enjoy comparable levels of well-being. Policy should aim instead to restructure androcentric institutions so as to welcome human beings who can give birth and who often care for relatives

and friends, treating them not as exceptions, but as ideal-typical participants. The antiandrocentrism principle requires decentering masculinist norms—in part by revaluing practices and traits that are currently undervalued because they are associated with women. It entails changing men as well as changing women.

Here then is an account of gender equity in social welfare. On this account, gender equity is a complex idea comprising five distinct normative principles, one of which—equality—is internally complex and encompasses three distinct subprinciples. Each of the principles is essential to gender equity. Thus no postindustrial welfare state can realize gender equity unless it satisfies them all.

How then do the principles interrelate? Some of the five tend usually to support one another; others could well work at cross-purposes. Everything, in fact, depends on context. Some institutional arrangements permit simultaneous satisfaction of several principles with a minimum of mutual interference; other arrangements, in contrast, set up zero-sum situations, in which attempts to satisfy one principle interfere with attempts to satisfy another. Promoting gender equity after the family wage, therefore, means attending to multiple aims that are potentially in conflict. The goal should be to find approaches that avoid trade-offs and maximize prospects for satisfying all—or at least most—of the five principles.

In the next sections, I use this approach to assess two alternative models of a postindustrial welfare state. First, however, I want to flag three sets of relevant issues. One concerns the social organization of care work. Precisely how this work is organized is crucial to human well-being in general and to the social standing of women in particular. In the era of the family wage, care work was treated as the private responsibility of individual women. Today, however, it can no longer be treated in that way. Some other way of organizing it is required, but a number of different scenarios are conceivable. In evaluating postindustrial welfare state models then, we must ask: how is responsibility for care work allocated between such institutions as the family, the market, civil society, and the state? And how is responsibility for this work assigned within such institutions: by gender? by class? by “race”-ethnicity? by age?

A second set of issues concerns differences among women. Gender is the principal focus of this article, to be sure, but it cannot be treated *en bloc*. The lives of women and men are cross-cut by several other salient social divisions, including class, race-ethnicity, sexuality, and age. Models of postindustrial welfare states, then, will not affect all women—nor all men—in the same way; they will generate different outcomes for differently situated people. For example, some policies will affect women who have children differently

from those who do not; some, likewise, will affect women who have access to a second income differently from those who do not; and some, finally, will affect women employed full-time differently from those employed part-time, and differently yet again from those who are not employed. For each model then, we must ask: which groups of women would be advantaged and which groups disadvantaged?

A third set of issues concerns desiderata for postindustrial welfare states other than gender equity. Gender equity, after all, is not the only goal of social welfare. Also important are nonequity goals, such as efficiency, community, and individual liberty. In addition, there remain other equity goals, such as racial-ethnic equity, generational equity, class equity, and equity among nations. All of these issues are necessarily backgrounded here. Some of them, however, such as racial-ethnic equity, could be handled via parallel thought experiments: one might define racial-ethnic equity as a complex idea, analogous to the way gender equity is treated here, and then use it, too, to assess competing visions of a postindustrial welfare state.²⁴

With these considerations in mind, let us now examine two strikingly different feminist visions of a postindustrial welfare state, and let us ask: which comes closest to achieving gender equity in the sense I have elaborated here?

II. UNIVERSAL BREADWINNER MODEL

In one vision of postindustrial society, the age of the family wage would give way to the age of the universal breadwinner. This is the vision implicit in the current political practice of most U.S. feminists and liberals. (It was also assumed in the former state-socialist countries!) It aims to achieve gender equity principally by promoting women's employment. The point is to enable women to support themselves and their families through their own wage earning. The breadwinner role is to be universalized, in sum, so that women too can be citizen-workers.

Universal breadwinner is a very ambitious postindustrial scenario, requiring major new programs and policies. One crucial element is a set of employment-enabling services, such as day care and elder care, aimed at freeing women from unpaid responsibilities so that they can take full-time employment on terms comparable to men.²⁵ Another essential element is a set of workplace reforms aimed at removing equal-opportunity obstacles, such as sex discrimination and sexual harassment. Reforming the workplace requires reforming the culture however—eliminating sexist stereotypes and

breaking the cultural association of breadwinning with masculinity. Also required are policies to help change socialization, so as first, to reorient women's aspirations toward employment and away from domesticity, and second, to reorient men's expectations toward acceptance of women's new role. None of this would work, however, without one additional ingredient: macroeconomic policies to create full-time, high paying, permanent jobs for women.²⁶ These would have to be true breadwinner jobs in the primary labor force, carrying full, first-class social-insurance entitlements. Social insurance, finally, is central to universal breadwinner. The aim here is to bring women up to parity with men in an institution that has traditionally disadvantaged them.

How would this model organize care work? The bulk of such work would be shifted from the family to the market and the state, where it would be performed by employees for pay.²⁷ Who then are these employees likely to be? In the United States today, paid institutional care work is poorly remunerated, largely feminized, and largely racialized,²⁸ but such arrangements are precluded in this model. If the model is to succeed in enabling all women to be breadwinners, it must upgrade the status and pay attached to care work employment, making it too into primary labor force work. Universal breadwinner, then, is necessarily committed to a policy of "comparable worth"; it must redress the widespread undervaluation of skills and jobs currently coded as feminine and/or "non-White," and it must remunerate such jobs with breadwinner-level pay.

Universal breadwinner would link many benefits to employment and distribute them through social insurance. In some cases, such as pensions, benefit levels would vary with earnings. In this respect, the model resembles the industrial era welfare state.²⁹ The difference is that many more women would be covered on the basis of their own employment records, and many more women's employment records would look considerably more like men's.

Not all adults can be employed, however. Some will be unable to work for medical reasons, including some not previously employed. Others will be unable to get jobs. Some, finally, will have care work responsibilities that they are unable or unwilling to shift elsewhere. Most of these last will be women. To provide for these people, universal breadwinner must include a residual tier of social welfare that provides need-based, means-tested wage replacements.³⁰

Universal breadwinner is far removed from present realities. It requires massive creation of primary labor force jobs—jobs sufficient to support a family single-handedly. That, of course, is wildly askew of current postindustrial trends, which generate jobs not for breadwinners, but for "disposable

workers."³¹ Let us assume for the sake of the thought experiment, however, that its conditions of possibility could be met, and let us consider whether the resulting postindustrial welfare state could claim title to gender equity.

Antipoverty

We can acknowledge straight off that universal breadwinner would do a good job of preventing poverty. A policy that created secure breadwinner-quality jobs for all employable women and men—while providing the services that would enable women to take such jobs—would keep most families out of poverty, and generous levels of residual support would keep the rest out of poverty through transfers. Failing that, however, several groups are especially vulnerable to poverty in this model: those who cannot work, those who cannot get secure, permanent, full-time, good-paying jobs—disproportionately women and/or people of color; and those with heavy, hard-to-shift, unpaid care work responsibilities—disproportionately women.

Antiexploitation

The model should also succeed in preventing exploitable dependency for most women. Women with secure breadwinner jobs are able to exit unsatisfactory relations with men, and those who do not have such jobs but know they can get them will also be less vulnerable to exploitation. Failing that, the residual system of income support provides back-up protection against exploitable dependency—assuming that it is generous, nondiscretionary, and honorable. Failing that, however, the groups mentioned above remain especially vulnerable to exploitation—by abusive men, by unfair or predatory employers, by capricious state officials.

Equality

Income equality. Universal breadwinner is only fair, however, at achieving income equality. Granted, secure breadwinner jobs for women—plus the services that would enable women to take them—would narrow the gender wage gap.³² Reduced inequality in earnings, moreover, translates into reduced inequality in social-insurance benefits, and the availability of exit options from marriage should encourage a more equitable distribution of resources within it. But the model is not otherwise egalitarian. It contains a basic social fault line dividing breadwinners from others, to the considerable disadvantage of the others—most of whom would be women. Apart from comparable

worth, moreover, it does not reduce pay inequality among breadwinner jobs. To be sure, the model reduces the weight of gender in assigning individuals to unequally compensated breadwinner jobs, but it thereby increases the weight of other variables, presumably class, education, race-ethnicity, and age. Women—and men—who are disadvantaged in relation to those variables will earn less than those who are not.

Leisure-time equality. The model is poor, moreover, with respect to equality of leisure time, although it improves on current arrangements. It assumes that all of women's current domestic and care work responsibilities can be shifted to the market and/or the state. But that assumption is patently unrealistic. Some things, such as childbearing, attending to family emergencies, and much parenting work, cannot be shifted—short of universal surrogacy and other presumably undesirable arrangements. Other things, such as cooking and (some) housekeeping, could be shifted—provided we were prepared to accept collective living arrangements or high levels of commodification. Even those tasks that are shifted, finally, do not disappear without a trace, but give rise to burdensome new tasks of coordination. Women's chances for equal leisure, then, depend on whether men can be induced to do their fair share of this work. On this, the model does not inspire confidence. Not only does it offer no disincentives to free riding, but in valorizing paid work, it implicitly denigrates unpaid work, thereby fueling the motivation to shirk.³³ Women without partners would, in any case, be on their own. And those in lower-income households would be less able to purchase replacement services. Employed women would have a second shift on this model then, albeit a less burdensome one than some have now; and there would be many more women employed full-time. Universal breadwinner, in sum, is not likely to deliver equal leisure. Anyone who does not free ride in this possible postindustrial world is likely to be harried and tired.

Equality of respect. The model is only fair, moreover, at delivering equality of respect. Because it holds men and women to the single standard of the citizen-worker, its only chance of eliminating the gender respect gap is to admit women to that status on the same terms as men. This, however, is unlikely to occur. A more likely outcome is that women would retain more connection to reproduction and domesticity than men, thus appearing as breadwinners manqué. In addition, the model is likely to generate another kind of respect gap. By putting a high premium on breadwinner status, it invites disrespect for others. Participants in the means-tested residual system will be liable to stigmatization, and most of these will be women. Any

employment-centered model, even a feminist one, has a hard time constructing an honorable status for those it defines as nonworkers.

Antimarginalization

This model is also only fair at combating women's marginalization. Granted, it promotes women's participation in employment, but its definition of participation is narrow. Expecting full-time employment of all who are able, the model may actually impede participation in politics and civil society. Certainly it does nothing to promote women's participation in those arenas. It fights women's marginalization, then, in a one-sided, "workerist" way.

Antiandrocentrism

Finally, the model performs poorly in overcoming androcentrism. It valorizes men's traditional sphere—employment—and simply tries to help women fit in. Traditionally, female care work, in contrast, is treated instrumentally; it is what must be sloughed off to become a breadwinner. It is not itself accorded social value. The ideal typical citizen here is the breadwinner, now nominally gender neutral. But the content of the status is implicitly masculine; it is the male half of the old breadwinner/homemaker couple, now universalized and required of everyone. The female half of the couple has simply disappeared. None of her distinctive virtues and capacities has been preserved for women, let alone universalized to men. The model is androcentric.

We can summarize the merits of universal breadwinner in Figure 1. Not surprisingly, universal breadwinner delivers the best outcomes to women whose lives most closely resemble the male half of the old family-wage ideal couple. It is especially good to childless women and to women without other major domestic responsibilities that cannot easily be shifted to social services. But for those women, as well as for others, it falls short of full gender equity.

III. CAREGIVER PARITY MODEL

In a second vision of postindustrial society, the era of the family wage would give way to the era of caregiver parity. This is the picture implicit in the political practice of most Western European feminists and social democrats. It aims to promote gender equity principally by supporting informal

<i>Universal Breadwinner</i>	
Antipoverty	Good
Antiexploitation	Good
Income equality	Fair
Leisure-time equality	Poor
Equality of respect	Fair
Antimarginalization	Fair
Antiandrocentrism	Poor

Figure 1.

care work. The point is to enable women with significant domestic responsibilities to support themselves and their families, either through care work alone or through care work plus part-time employment. (Women without significant domestic responsibilities would presumably support themselves through employment.) The aim is not to make women's lives the same as men's, but rather to "make difference costless."³⁴ Thus childbearing, childrearing, and informal domestic labor are to be elevated to parity with formal paid labor. The caregiver role is to be put on a par with the breadwinner role—so that women and men can enjoy equivalent levels of dignity and well-being.

Caregiver parity is also extremely ambitious. On this model, many (although not all) women will follow the current U.S. female practice of alternating spells of full-time employment, spells of full-time care work, and spells that combine part-time care work with part-time employment. The aim is to make such a life pattern costless. To this end, several major new programs are necessary. One is a program of caregiver allowances to compensate childbearing, childraising, housework, and other forms of socially necessary domestic labor; the allowances must be sufficiently generous at the full-time rate to support a family—hence equivalent to a breadwinner wage.³⁵ Also required is a program of workplace reforms. These must facilitate the possibility of combining supported care work with part-time employment and of transitioning between different life states. The key here is flexibility. One obvious necessity is a generous program of mandated pregnancy and family leave so that caregivers can exit and enter employment without losing security or seniority. Another is a program of retraining and job search for those not returning to old jobs. Also essential is mandated flextime so that caregivers can shift their hours to accommodate their care work responsibilities, including shifts between full- and part-time employment. Finally, in the wake of all this flexibility, there must be programs to ensure continuity of all

the basic social-welfare benefits, including health, unemployment, disability, and retirement insurance.

This model organizes care work very differently from universal breadwinner. Whereas that approach shifted care work to the market and the state, this one keeps the bulk of such work in the household and supports it with public funds.³⁶ Caregiver parity's social-insurance system also differs sharply. To assure continuous coverage for people alternating between care work and employment, benefits attached to both must be integrated in a single desert-based system. In this system, part-time jobs and supported care work must be covered on the same basis as full-time jobs. Thus a woman finishing a spell of supported care work would be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits on the same basis as a recently laid off employee in the event she could not find a suitable job, and a supported care worker who became disabled would receive disability payments on the same basis as a disabled employee. Years of supported care work would count on a par with years of employment toward eligibility for retirement pensions. Benefit levels would be fixed in ways that treat care work and employment equivalently.

Caregiver parity also requires another, residual tier of social welfare. Some adults will be unable to do either care work or waged work, including some without prior work records of either type. Most of these people will probably be men. To provide for them, the model must offer means-tested wage and allowance replacements.³⁷ Caregiver parity's residual tier should be smaller than universal breadwinner's, however; nearly all adults should be covered in the integrated breadwinner-caregiver system of social insurance.

Caregiver parity, too, is far removed from current U.S. arrangements. It requires large outlays of public funds to pay caregiver allowances, hence major structural tax reform and a sea change in political culture. Let us assume for the sake of the thought experiment, however, that its conditions of possibility could be met. And let us consider whether the resulting postindustrial welfare state could claim title to gender equity.

Antipoverty

Caregiver parity would do a good job of preventing poverty—including for those women and children who are currently most vulnerable. Sufficiently generous allowances would keep solo-mother families out of poverty during spells of full-time care work, and a combination of allowances and wages would do the same during spells of part-time supported care work and part-time employment. (Wages from full-time employment must also be sufficient to support a family with dignity.) Because each of these options

would carry the basic social-insurance package, moreover, women with feminine work patterns would have considerable security. Adults with neither care work nor employment records would be most vulnerable to poverty in this model; most of these would be men. Children, in contrast, would be well protected.

Antiexploitation

Caregiver parity should also succeed in preventing exploitation for most women, including those who are most vulnerable today. By providing income directly to nonemployed wives, it reduces their economic dependence on husbands. It also provides economic security to single women with children, reducing their liability to exploitation by employers. Insofar as caregiver allowances are desert based and nondiscretionary, finally, recipients are not subject to caseworkers' whims. Once again, it is adults with neither care work nor employment records who are most vulnerable to exploitation in this model, and the majority of them would be men.

Income equality. Caregiver parity performs quite poorly, however, with respect to income equality. Although the system of allowances plus wages provides the equivalent of a basic minimum breadwinner wage, it also institutes a "mommy track" in employment—a market in flexible, noncontinuous full- and/or part-time jobs. Most of these jobs will pay considerably less even at the full-time rate than comparable breadwinner-track jobs. Two-partner families will have an economic incentive to keep one partner on the breadwinner track rather than to share spells of care work between them; given current labor markets, making the breadwinner the man will be most advantageous for heterosexual couples. Given current culture and socialization, moreover, men are generally unlikely to choose the mommy track in the same proportions as women. So the two employment tracks will carry traditional gender associations. Those associations are likely in turn to produce discrimination against women in the breadwinner track. Caregiver parity may make difference cost less then, but it will not make difference costless.

Leisure-time equality. Caregiver parity does somewhat better, however, with respect to equality of leisure time. It makes it possible for all women to avoid the double shift if they choose, by opting for full- or part-time supported care work at various stages in their lives. (Currently, this choice is available only to a small percentage of privileged U.S. women.) We just saw, however,

that this choice is not truly costless. Some women with families will not want to forego the benefits of breadwinner-track employment and will try to combine it with care work. Those not partnered with someone on the caregiver track will be significantly disadvantaged with respect to leisure time, and probably in their employment as well. Men, in contrast, will largely be insulated from this dilemma. On leisure time, then, the model is only fair.

Equality of respect. Caregiver parity is also only fair at promoting equality of respect. Unlike universal breadwinner, it offers two different routes to that end. Theoretically, citizen-workers and citizen-caregivers are statuses of equivalent dignity. But are they really on a par with one another? Caregiving is certainly treated more respectfully in this model than in current U.S. society, but it remains associated with femininity. Breadwinning likewise remains associated with masculinity. Given those traditional gender associations, plus the economic differential between the two lifestyles, caregiving is unlikely to attain true parity with breadwinning. In general, it is hard to imagine how "separate but equal" gender roles could provide genuine equality of respect today.

Antimarginalization

Caregiver parity performs poorly, moreover, in preventing women's marginalization. By supporting women's informal care work, it reinforces the view of such work as women's work and consolidates the gender division of domestic labor. By consolidating dual labor markets for breadwinners and caregivers, moreover, the model marginalizes women within the employment sector. By reinforcing the association of caregiving with femininity, finally, it may also impede women's participation in other spheres of life, such as politics and civil society.

Antiandrocentrism

Yet caregiver parity is better than universal breadwinner at combating androcentrism. It treats caregiving as intrinsically valuable, not as a mere obstacle to employment, thus challenging the view that only men's traditional activities are fully human. It also accommodates feminine life patterns, thereby rejecting the demand that women assimilate to masculine patterns. But the model still leaves something to be desired. Caregiver parity stops short of affirming the universal value of activities and life patterns associated with women. It does not value caregiving enough to demand that men do it

too; it does not ask men to change. Thus caregiver parity represents only one-half of a full-scale challenge to androcentrism. Here, too, its performance is only fair.

Caregiver parity's strengths and weaknesses are summarized in Figure 2. In general, caregiver parity performs best for women with significant care work responsibilities. But for those women, as well as for others, it fails to deliver full gender equity.

IV. CONCLUSION: GENDER EQUITY IN A POSTINDUSTRIAL WELFARE STATE REQUIRES DECONSTRUCTING GENDER

Both universal breadwinner and caregiver parity are highly utopian visions of a postindustrial welfare state. Either one of them would represent a major improvement over current U.S. arrangements. Yet neither is likely to be realized soon. Both models assume background preconditions that are strikingly absent today. Both presuppose major political-economic restructuring, including significant public control over corporations, the capacity to direct investment to create high-quality permanent jobs, and the ability to tax profits and wealth at rates sufficient to fund expanded high-quality social programs. Both models also assume broad popular support for a postindustrial welfare state that is committed to gender equity.

If both models are utopian in this sense, neither is utopian enough. Neither universal breadwinner nor caregiver parity can actually make good on its promise of gender equity—even under very favorable conditions. Although both are good at preventing women's poverty and exploitation, both are only fair at redressing inequality of respect: Universal breadwinner holds women to the same standard as men while constructing arrangements that prevent them from meeting it fully; caregiver parity, in contrast, sets up a double standard to accommodate gender difference while institutionalizing policies that fail to assure equivalent respect for feminine activities and life patterns. When we turn to the remaining components of gender equity, moreover, the two models' strengths and weaknesses diverge. Whereas universal breadwinner is better at preventing women's marginalization and at reducing income inequality between men and women, caregiver parity is better at redressing inequality of leisure time and at combating androcentrism. Neither model, however, promotes women's full participation on a par with men in politics and civil society. And neither values female-associated practices enough to ask men to do them, too; neither asks men to change. (The relative merits of universal breadwinner and caregiver parity are summarized in Figure 3.)

<i>Caregiver Parity</i>	
Antipoverty	Good
Antiexploitation	Good
Income equality	Poor
Leisure-time equality	Fair
Equality of respect	Fair
Antimarginalization	Poor
Antiandrocentrism	Fair

Figure 2.

Neither model, in sum, provides everything that feminists want. Even in a highly idealized form, neither delivers full gender equity.

If these were the only possibilities, we would face a very difficult set of trade-offs. Suppose, however, we reject this Hobson's choice and try to develop a third alternative. The trick is to envision a postindustrial welfare state that combines the best of universal breadwinner with the best of caregiver parity, while jettisoning the worst features of each. What third alternative is possible?

So far, we have examined—and found wanting—two initially plausible approaches: one aiming to make women more like men are now, and the other leaving men and women pretty much unchanged, while aiming to make women's difference costless. A third possibility is to induce men to become more like most women are now—that is, people who do primary care work.

Consider the effects of this one change on the models we have just examined. If men were to do their fair share of care work, universal breadwinner would come much closer to equalizing leisure time and eliminating androcentrism, whereas caregiver parity would do a much better job of equalizing income and reducing women's marginalization. Both models, in addition, would tend to promote equality of respect. If men were to become more like women are now, in sum, both models would begin to approach gender equity.

The key to achieving gender equity in a postindustrial welfare state, then, is to make women's current life patterns the norm. Women today often combine breadwinning and caregiving, albeit with great difficulty and strain. A postindustrial welfare state must ensure that men do the same, while redesigning institutions so as to eliminate the difficulty and strain. Such a welfare state would promote gender equity by dismantling the gendered opposition between breadwinning and caregiving. It would integrate activities that are currently separated from one another, eliminate their gender coding, and encourage men to perform them too.

	<i>Universal Breadwinner</i>	<i>Caregiver Parity</i>
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

Figure 3.

This, however, is tantamount to a wholesale restructuring of the institution of gender. The construction of breadwinning and caregiving as separate roles, coded masculine and feminine respectively, is a principal undergirding of the current gender order. To dismantle those roles and their cultural coding is in effect to overturn that order. It means subverting the existing gender division of labor and reducing the salience of gender as a structural principle of social organization.³⁸ At the limit, it suggests deconstructing gender.³⁹

President Clinton has proclaimed that his goal is to end welfare as we know it. The present thought experiment has led us to a different goal: to end gender as we know it. Only by embracing the aim of deconstructing gender can we mitigate potential conflicts among our five component principles of gender equity, thereby minimizing the necessity of trade-offs. Rejecting that aim, in contrast, makes such conflicts, and hence trade-offs, more likely. Achieving gender equity in a postindustrial welfare state, then, requires deconstructing gender.

A thought experiment, I noted at the outset, is not a policy analysis. But it can nevertheless have political implications. By clarifying that gender equity requires deconstructing gender, the reasoning here suggests a strategy of radical reform. This means building movements whose demands for equity cannot be satisfied within the present gender order. It means organizing for reforms that "advance toward a radical transformation of society."⁴⁰

Crucial to such a strategy is a third—deconstructive—vision of a postindustrial welfare state. What then might such a welfare state look like? Unlike caregiver parity, its employment sector would not be divided into two different tracks; all jobs would assume workers who are caregivers, too; all would have a shorter work week than full-time jobs have now; and all would have employment-enabling services. Unlike universal breadwinner, however, employees would not be assumed to shift all care work to social services. Some informal care work would be publicly supported and integrated on a par with paid work in a single social-insurance system. Some would be

performed in households by relatives and friends, but such households would not necessarily be heterosexual nuclear families. Other supported care work would be located outside of households altogether—in civil society. In state-funded but locally organized institutions, childless adults, older people, and others without kin-based responsibilities would join parents and others in democratic, self-managed care work activities. This approach would not only deconstruct the opposition between breadwinning and caregiving; it would also deconstruct the associated opposition between bureaucratized public institutional settings and intimate private domestic settings. Treating civil society as a site for care work offers a wide range of new possibilities for promoting equal participation in social life, now no longer restricted to formal employment.

Much more work needs to be done to develop this third—deconstructive—vision of a postindustrial welfare state. A key is to develop policies that discourage free riding. Contra conservatives, the real free riders in the current system are not poor solo mothers who shirk employment. Instead, they are men of all classes who shirk care work and domestic labor, and especially corporations who free ride on the labor of working people, both underpaid and unpaid.

A good statement of the deconstructive vision comes from the Swedish Ministry of Labor: “To make it possible for both men and women to combine parenthood and gainful employment, a new view of the male role and a radical change in the organization of working life are required.”⁴¹ The trick is to imagine a social world in which citizens’ lives integrate wage earning, caregiving, community activism, political participation, and involvement in the associational life of civil society—while also leaving time for some fun. This world is not likely to come into being in the immediate future. But it is the only imaginable postindustrial world that promises true gender equity, and unless we are guided by this vision now, we will never get any closer to achieving it.

NOTES

1. See Abramowitz (1988), Fraser (1987), Gordon (1988), and Land (1978). An exception is France, which from early on had high numbers of female workers (Jenson 1990).

2. This account of the tripartite structure of the welfare state represents a modification of my earlier (1987) view. Heretofore, I followed Nelson (1984, 1990) in positing a two-tier structure of ideal-typically “masculine” social insurance programs and ideal-typically “feminine” family support programs. Although that view was a relatively accurate picture of the U.S. social-welfare system, I now consider it analytically misleading. The United States is unusual in that the second and third tiers are conflated. The main program of means-tested poor relief—Aid to Families

with Dependent Children (AFDC)—is also the main program that supports women's child raising. Analytically, these are best understood as two distinct tiers of social welfare. When social insurance is added, we get a three-tier welfare state.

3. See Harvey (1989), Lash and Urry (1987), and Reich (1991).

4. Smith (1984).

5. Stacey (1987).

6. Weston (1991).

7. Ellwood (1988).

8. Fraser (1993).

9. Bartlett and Kennedy (1991).

10. Ellwood (1988).

11. Goodin (1988).

12. Not all dependencies are exploitable. Goodin (1988, 175-6) specifies the following four conditions that must be met if a dependency is to be exploitable: (1) the relationship must be asymmetrical; (2) the subordinate party must need the resource that the superordinate supplies; (3) the subordinate must depend on some particular superordinate for the supply of needed resources; and (4) the superordinate must enjoy discretionary control over the resources that the subordinate needs from him or her.

13. See Hirschman (1970), Okin (1989), and Hobson (1990).

14. Piven and Cloward (1971), Esping-Andersen (1990).

15. Goodin (1988).

16. Sparer (1970).

17. See Orloff (1993). The antiexploitation objective should not be confused with current U.S. attacks on welfare dependency, which are highly ideological. These attacks define dependency exclusively as receipt of public assistance. They ignore the ways in which such receipt can promote claimants' independence by preventing exploitable dependence on husbands and employers (Fraser and Gordon 1994).

18. Lister (1990), Sen (1990).

19. Weitzman (1985).

20. Ellwood (1988, 45).

21. Hochschild (1989), Schor (1991).

22. Bradshaw and Holmes (1989, as cited by Lister, 1990).

23. Balbo (1987).

24. A fourth set of issues is also extremely important, but I do not have space to consider it here. It concerns the bases of entitlement to provision. Every welfare state assigns its benefits according to a specific mix of distributive principles, which defines its basic moral quality. That mix, in each case, needs to be scrutinized. Usually it contains varying proportions of three basic principles of entitlement: need, desert, and citizenship. Need-based provision is the most redistributive, but it risks isolating and stigmatizing the needy; it has been the basis of traditional poor relief and of modern public assistance, the least honorable forms of provision. The most honorable, in contrast, is entitlement based on desert, but it tends to be antiegalitarian and exclusionary. Here one receives benefits according to one's contributions, usually tax payments, work, and service—where tax payments means wage deductions paid into a special fund, work means primary labor force employment, and service means the military, all interpretations of those terms that disadvantage women. Desert has been the primary basis of earnings-linked social insurance in the industrial welfare state. (Actually, there is a heavy ideological component in the usual view that public assistance is need-based, whereas social insurance is desert-based. Benefit levels in social insurance do not strictly reflect contributions. Moreover, all government programs are financed by contributions, in the form of taxation. Public assistance programs are

financed from general revenues, both federal and state. Welfare recipients, like others, contribute to these funds, for example, through payment of sales taxes [Fraser and Gordon 1992].) The third principle, citizenship, allocates provision on the basis of membership in society. It is honorable, egalitarian, and universalist, but also expensive and hence hard to sustain at high levels of quality and generosity; some theorists worry, too, that it encourages free riding. (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. A welcome exception is a recent unpublished paper by Peter Taylor-Gooby [1993].) Citizenship-based entitlements are typically found in social-democratic countries, where they may include single-payer universal health insurance systems, universal family or child allowances, and universal flat-rate old-age pensions; they are virtually unknown in the United States—except for public education. In examining models of postindustrial welfare states then, one must look closely at the construction of entitlement. It makes considerable difference to women's and children's well-being, for example, whether day care places are distributed as citizenship entitlements or as desert-based entitlements (i.e., whether or not they are conditional on prior employment). It likewise matters, to take another example, whether care work is supported on the basis of need, in the form of a means-tested benefit for the poor, or whether it is supported on the basis of desert, as return for work or service, now interpreted nonandrocentrically, or whether, finally, it is supported on the basis of citizenship under a universal basic income scheme.

25. On what basis would these benefits be distributed? In theory, employment-enabling services could be distributed according to need, desert, or citizenship, but citizenship accords best with the spirit of the model. Means-tested day care targeted for the poor cannot help but signify a failure to achieve genuine breadwinner status, and desert-based day care sets up a catch-22: one must already be employed in order to get what is needed for employment. Citizenship-based entitlement is best then, but it must make services available to all. This rules out Swedish-type arrangements, which fail to guarantee sufficient day care places and are plagued by long queues (Hobson 1993).

26. That, incidentally, would be to break decisively with U.S. policy, which typically assumes that job creation is for men; Bill Clinton's much-touted industrial and infrastructural investment policies are no exception in this regard (Fraser 1993).

27. This could be done in several different ways. Government could itself provide day care, and so on, in the form of public goods, or it could fund marketized provision through a system of vouchers. Alternatively, employers could be mandated to provide employment-enabling services for their employees, either through vouchers or in-house arrangements. The state option means higher taxes, of course, but it may be preferable nevertheless. Mandating employer responsibility creates a disincentive to hire workers with dependents, to the likely disadvantage of women.

28. Glenn (1992).

29. It too conditions entitlement on desert and defines contribution in traditional androcentric terms as employment and wage deductions.

30. Exactly what else must be provided inside the residual system will depend on the balance of entitlements outside of it. If health insurance is provided universally as a citizen benefit, for example, then there need be no means-tested health system for the nonemployed. If, however, mainstream health insurance is linked to employment, then a residual health care system will be necessary. The same holds for unemployment, retirement, and disability insurance. In general, the more that is provided on the basis of citizenship, instead of on the basis of desert, the less has to be provided on the basis of need. One could even say that desert-based entitlements create the necessity of need-based provision; thus social insurance creates the need for means-tested public assistance.

31. Kilborn (1993).

32. Exactly how much depends on the government's success in eliminating discrimination and in implementing comparable worth.

33. Universal breadwinner apparently relies on persuasion to induce men to do their fair share of unpaid work. The chances of that working would be improved if the model succeeded in promoting cultural change and in enhancing women's voice within marriage. But it is doubtful that this would suffice.

34. Littleton (1991).

35. On what principle(s) would these benefits be distributed? Caregiver allowances could in theory be distributed on the basis of need, as a means-tested benefit for the poor—as they have always been in the United States. But that would contravene the spirit of caregiver parity. One cannot consistently claim that the caregiver life is equivalent in dignity to the breadwinner life, while supporting it only as a last-resort stopgap against poverty. (This contradiction has always bedeviled mothers' pensions—and later Aid to Dependent Children—in the United States. Although these programs were intended by some advocates to exalt motherhood, they sent a contradictory message by virtue of being means tested and morals tested.) Means-tested allowances, moreover, would impede easy transitions between employment and care work. Because the aim is to make caregiving as deserving as breadwinning, caregiver allowances must be based on desert. Treated as compensation for socially necessary service or work, they alter the standard androcentric meanings of those terms.

36. Susan Okin (1989) has proposed an alternative way to fund care work. In her scheme the funds would come from what are now considered to be the earnings of the caregiver's partner. A man with a nonemployed wife, for example, would receive a paycheck for one-half of his salary; his employer would cut a second check in the same amount payable directly to the wife. Intriguing as this idea is, one may wonder whether it is really the best way to promote wives' independence from husbands, because it ties her income so directly to his. In addition, Okin's proposal does not provide any care work support for women without employed partners. Caregiver parity, in contrast, provides public support for all who perform informal care work. Who then are its beneficiaries likely to be? With the exception of pregnancy leave, all of the model's benefits are open to everyone; so men as well as women can opt for a "feminine" life. Women, however, are considerably more likely to do so. Although the model aims to make such a life costless, it includes no positive incentives for men to change. Some men, of course, may simply prefer such a life and will choose it when offered the chance; most will not, however, given current socialization and culture. We will see, moreover, that caregiver parity contains some hidden disincentives to male caregiving.

37. In this respect, it resembles the universal breadwinner model: whatever additional essential goods are normally offered on the basis of desert must be offered here too on the basis of need.

38. Okin (1989).

39. J. Williams (1991).

40. Gorz (1967, 6).

41. As quoted in Lister (1990, 463).

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