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From cooperation to criticism of economic globalization: An intersectional concept of gender justice

Zusammenfassung

Von der Kooperation zur Kritik an der wirtschaftlichen Globalisierung: Ein intersektionales Konzept von Geschlechtergerechtigkeit

In der Realität von Pflegehilfskräften überschneiden sich Geschlecht, Klasse, race/Ethnizität und Staatsbürgerschaft. Sie sind da, wo die Öffentliche Reformverwaltung (NPM) eingeführt wurde, mit Ausgrenzung, Kommodifizierung und der Verweigerung gewerkschaftlicher Rechte konfrontiert. Wie auch bei anderen weiblichen Angestellten in Pflegediensten, denen eine berufliche Anerkennung ihrer Qualifikationen verwehrt wird, findet ihre Ausgrenzung auf dem Arbeitsmarkt und in Kampagnen für Geschlechtergleichheit und Gender Mainstreaming (GM) statt. Anstatt die ausgrenzende Gleichheitsdefinition der internationalen Institutionen zu übernehmen, sollte kritisch hinterfragt werden, inwieweit die Globalisierung die Verschlechterung der Arbeitsbedingungen für weibliche Pflegekräfte legitimiert. FeministInnen sollten darauf bestehen, Gendergerechtigkeit durch ein anderes Verständnis von Gleichheit und GM zu fördern. Der Beitrag stellt ein intersektionales Modell von Geschlechtergerechtigkeit vor, das die negativen Auswirkungen der Globalisierung untersucht, und formuliert eine politische Ethik für die Behandlung von Frauen in schlecht bezahlter Pflegearbeit. Arbeitsqualität und Durchschnittseinkommen müssen als Grundlage für die Definition von Diskriminierung dienen. Neukonzeptionen von Gleichheit und GM, die auf den vorgeschlagenen Diskriminierungskriterien basieren, würden die Grundlage bereiten für feministischen Aktivismus gegen ausgrenzende NPM-Praktiken.

Schlüsselwörter
Geschlechtergerechtigkeit, Intersektionalität, Öffentliche Reformverwaltung, Geschlechtergleichheit, Gender Mainstreaming, Pflegehilfskräfte

Summary

Gender, class, race/ethnicity and citizenship intersect in the experience of nursing assistants and expose them to exclusion, commodification and denial of their unionization rights in every country that has embraced the new public management (NPM) reform. Resembling other women employed in caring services that are denied the benefit of skills recognition, their exclusion occurs both in the labour market and in campaigns targeting gender equality and gender mainstreaming. Rather than accepting the exclusionary definition of equality promoted by the institutions of economic globalization, the role of economic globalization in legitimizing the deterioration of employment quality for women employed in caring services should be challenged. In particular, feminists should insist on promoting gender justice by revisiting the concepts of equality and gender mainstreaming. This article presents an intersectional model of gender justice that reveals the deleterious effects of economic globalization and formulates a political ethics of care for women in badly-paid caring work. Job quality and average income in occupational fields must serve as the basis for defining discrimination. Revised notions of equality and gender mainstreaming, based on these proposed measures of discrimination, would provide the ground for feminist activism against NPM exclusionary practices.

Keywords
gender justice, intersectionality, new public management, gender- equality, gender mainstreaming, nursing assistants

Introduction

The gendered face of the rise in low-wage jobs, particularly in caring occupations (e. g. jobs offered to nursing assistants), is attracting growing research attention in the wealthy world (e. g. Grimshaw 2011). Policies that ensure gender justice in the form of quality employment for women employed as nursing assistants tend to be blocked by pressures to reduce governments' social and health service expenses. Thus, the case of nursing assistants is an emblematic one for any political ethics of care (Williams 2011). Disregarding the quality of employment of nursing assistants frees feminist resources for many crucial issues related to women that deserve attention and activism. At the same time, ignoring the quality of employment in this category invites governments and employers to systematically extend this form of low-wage employment to other areas of the caring occupations, such as child care and social work. It may also mean turning the cold shoulder on women from oppressed categories and thus ignoring the feminist commitment to intersectionality theory (Verloo and Walby 2012). Gender, class, race/ethnicity and citizenship intersect for nursing assistants, who can be characterized by their secondary education; in wealthy countries this educational attainment may indicate that their accumulation of resources and economic independence was blocked by complex inequalities. Economic globalization may offer the women's movement an opportunity to challenge inequality through gender mainstreaming and other policies targeting gender equality. But from the point of view of nursing assistants and the quality of their employment, economic globalization and its role in legitimizing the deterioration of employment quality should only elicit criticism. Rather than cooperating with the standard definitions of equality promoted by institutions of economic globalization such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU), feminists should insist on promoting gender justice by revisiting the concepts of equality and gender mainstreaming. This article presents an intersectional model of gender justice that is critical of economic globalization and formulates a political ethics of care (Williams 2001, 2011) for women in badly-paid care work. Until recently, intersectionality theory has not been analytically developed to incorporate the fragmentation, polarization and diversity of women's class positions embedded in employment arrangements (for an exception see Walby et al. 2012). The professionalization of work in the caring services tends to be defeated by deskilling and the preference for a cheaper workforce. Williams' (2001; 2011) political ethics of care maintains that the Othering of women that legitimizes deskilling enables exclusionary practices which need to be replaced by recognition and inclusion. Women's equal rights as well as women's equal opportunity, argues Williams, depend on policies related to the budgeting of social services and hence involve a trade-off between money and care. The restoration of budgets that finance appropriate numbers of caring positions, as well as the restoration of payment ladders and occupational professionalism in the caring services are forms of gender justice that are based on a shift of focus: Instead of comparing opportunities for men and women it embraces comparisons of levels of recognition of occupational

skill in payment and rewards. After a presentation of intersectionality theory, I discuss an empirically grounded criticism of new public management (NPM), highlighting its Taylorism and cost-cutting in the caring services (Theobald 2012). I examine data concerning the in-employment poverty of nursing assistants in the wealthy world and relate this to feminist discussions of gender mainstreaming and gender equality. Finally, by linking intersectionality to a political ethics of care I conceptualize gender justice based on alternative meanings of gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

Intersectionality theory and gender justice

The notion of a political ethics of care (Williams 2011) provides the basic framework for my intersectional model for gender justice. The main question Williams raises is "what are the material and practical outcomes of actions on people's [read[1]: nursing assistants'] lives; how do we ensure that people [read: nursing assistants] may give and receive care?" This question calls for a model of gender justice based on the realization of the interdependence between quality employment in the caring services and the quality of caring in these services. Moreover, it requires recognition of the processes of economic globalization that have undermined quality employment in public sectors (Rubery 2013) and caring services around the world (Kroos and Gottschall 2012). In broader terms, this sheds light on the complexity of power mediated through class, ethnicity, gender and citizenship and in particular on women who are trapped in paths of in-employment poverty (Peña-Casas and Ghailani 2011). However, which notion of gender justice can best clarify the complexity of power mediated through the intersectionality of diverse oppressions?

The point of departure for an intersectional notion of gender justice is the last item on Verloo's (2006: 224) list of strategic components of the ongoing struggle to incorporate differential or intersectional inequalities into policy-making: "These hegemonic [power] struggles [between inequalities] need to be addressed and anticipated by careful balancing of resources and institutionalization, and by organizing public arenas or institutions for them." In other words, specific standpoints anchored in specific institutions are the key to rejecting the standardization of professional white women's experiences (Collins 2000) and creating policies that are sensitive to a broader range of experiences. In the context of racialization (Bonacich et al. 2008), i.e. the treatment of those living in the wealthy world in ways established by exploitative transnational corporations in developing countries, an intersectional model of gender justice rejects the dichotomy between labour market participation and unemployment. When paid caring jobs are part-time, fixed-term and force women to work for nothing (Baines 2004), labour market participation is more akin to slavery than to empowerment. In the lives of racialized women, un/employment is when "bad jobs" encourage employees to exit the labour market even if they have to quickly re-enter at any income (Reid 2002). In light of feminist analyses of social citizenship as dependent on the access to labour market participation and

1 Both this and the next 'read' request were added by me (O. B.).

labour market rewards (Rubery 2013) one guideline for selecting a public arena or institution that embeds a standpoint that would facilitate an intersectional notion of gender justice must be the association between precarious employment and precarious lives (Wallace et al. 2009). This idea connects intersectionality to women's dependency on the opportunity structures provided by the welfare state as employer and the level of labour market rewards that social services allow for their employees (Acker 2006). Increasingly more feminist scholars have noted the dualization process that has transformed these opportunity structures by introducing non-standard jobs into social services. Kroos and Gottschall (2012) have recently shown that between 1990 and 2007, the German public sector increased part-time jobs and fixed-term jobs in the social services by 16.4% and 0.4%, respectively, in health services, by 21% and 2.7%, respectively, in social care services, and by 23.9% and 6.4%, respectively, in child care services. Based on an intersectional notion of gender justice, organizational inequality regimes such as these are conceptualized as a type of resource that often block access to quality jobs and protective employment arrangements. Organizational inequality interacts with specific positionalities and relationships to belonging circles (Healy 2009). At the same time, intersectionality theorists are no longer willing to homogenize the ways political projects or claims affect people who are differentially located within the same belonging (Anthias 2008). Some even argue that given the fragmentation of employment arrangements, class should be prioritized over other dimensions within the interlocking relations of oppressive axes: Class-based structures and policies are seen as responsible for how women "find, retain or lose their jobs as wage-labourers and members of particular occupations" (Sayer 2005: 87). Collins (2000) argued that an unbalanced focus on identity has turned scholarly attention away from the political economy and the ways in which neo-liberal policies shape women's opportunity structures. To explain the dominant tendency to pay little attention to the ontology of class/gender inequality, Walby and her colleagues (2012: 232) refer to the fact that "class is not a justicable inequality under EU legislation" and to the fact that the attempt to include "socio-economic" grounds in the UK Equality Act 2010 failed. Nevertheless, these authors insist that scholarship must attend to class-based inequality, and primarily employment issues, as keys to intersectionality.

To undertake a focus on class/gender we need to ask when the intersections of race/ethnicity/nationality/citizenship/disability/age/sexuality result in poor levels of occupational training and credentials, and how service and caring jobs lead to in-employment poverty. Because a degree in social work, nursing or teaching is a traditional mobility target for young women from minorities (Ntiri 2001), the de-professionalization of employees holding an academic degree who work in contracted-out services affects minority women to a disproportional extent. Bernhardt and Dresser (2002) found that privatization worsens job quality for female employees from racial and ethnic minorities. This primarily occurs through de-unionization, which allows for-profit employers to reduce pay and benefits associated with education and work experience. Zeytinoglu and Muteshi (2000) argued that reducing pay for service work is closely linked to the historically legitimate labour market exploitation of coloured women. Substantiating Collins' notion of the

"closing doors policy" (2005), they showed that the new employment arrangements use colour lines to polarize those entitled to protection and those exposed to exclusionary practices. They suggested that polarization is generated along intersectional lines by separating women whose skills are recognized as suitable for management positions within the social services and women whose skills are not recognized as such. For Bonacich et al. (2008), the refusal to recognize women's experience and skills takes the form of racialization, where women with lower levels of formal training are demeaned in a way similar to employees in developed countries who work for transnational corporations (TNCs). Confirming these analyses, recent accounts of women's in-employment poverty (Peña-Casas and Ghailani 2011) point to the ways in which women's jobs, particularly those in traditionally feminine service occupations, are more liable to risk, especially precarious employment, which is characterized as "short term, limited duration or high risk of termination; lack of control over working conditions, the work space and wages, lack of protection in employment, and low incomes at or near defined poverty lines" (Vosko et al. 2009: 7). Grimshaw and Rubery (2007) reported that these characteristics are typical of publicly procured services, thus linking gender segregation and exposure to overqualification and precarious employment. Hence, current employment in jobs that offer either too few hours or are far too demanding, that extract women's unpaid work (Baines 2004), as well as the "pin money" earned by women in service and caring occupations (Perrons 2007) suggest that for women employed in caring services, quality employment and skill recognition are major concerns. Without them gender justice cannot be said to encompass a political ethics of care. Of particular importance are the invisible processes through which racialization takes place in the sense of connecting gender/class/ethnic/racial/national belonging within the framework of trans-locational positionality (Anthias 2008) with social policy and its reflection on social protection. Acker (2006) and Choo and Ferree (2010) argued for a connection between macro-level policy-based processes and interactions and practices to better understand intersecting inequalities. This type of connection requires an intersectional model of gender justice to attend to the ways in which the economic dependency of women who belong to racialized categories exposes them more quickly to the political process that erodes protection and to the fact that men and women from non-racialized categories can be exposed to the same processes. Despite the scholarly consensus concerning the ways in which the intersectional shaping of women's precarious lives is enhanced by precarious employment in the context of social services, neo-liberal reforms of the state as employer remain neglected as an issue for gender justice. The next section presents these reforms.

The post-World War II history of marginalizing caring services

The need to focus on class/race/ethnicity/nationality/disability/age/sexuality oppressions has elicited the theoretical concern (Choo and Ferree 2010) that inequality analysis might be reduced to the individual level, leaving the oppression of categories yet

again neglected. However, if we adopt a definition of gender justice that remains sensitive to intersectional oppressions while focusing on economic globalization and its systematic enlargement of class and other differences between women, we may avoid a retreat to the individual level. Dorothy Smith (2006) showed how focusing on the institutional context can help prevent analysis from remaining too tied to the individual level. In Smith's opinion, we need to shift our attention from women's positions and identities to a more institutional perspective that is concerned with the social evaluation of caring work in terms of care-related knowledge and care-related skills. Similarly, Acker (2006) pointed to the invisible mechanisms that channel women perceived as the "Other" into precarious labour market positions (Wallace et al. 2009). The Othering of women in the labour market (Davies 1996) is likely to be manifested in the specific employment arrangements characterizing paid caring services. Othering of women enabled the economic competition introduced by globalization and NPM into tendering and public-private partnerships to become an exclusionary mechanism that is disentitling increasingly more women from reaping the benefits of professionalization struggles (Abbott and Wallace 1990). With the entry of non-public employers into these areas, the quality of employment has deteriorated even in countries where collective agreements are still in force (Rubery 2013). How was this entry intensified?

Since the 1944 Bretton Woods conclave of US and UK finance ministers that laid the groundwork for the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, institutions of economic globalization, particularly the OECD and EU, have operated by taking very small steps to defeat unionization (Thatcher 2007) and reduce public expenses for caring services. The fact that a set of quasi-market steering instruments (e.g. zero-based budgeting, performance-related pay and/or accounting) allegedly aimed at improving the cost-efficiency of public service provisions known as the new public management (NPM) was introduced into public administrations around the world has been key to this process. Using a rhetoric of efficiency, cost saving, best value and "merit civil servants", NPM practices have permeated, to various degrees, the administration and budgeting of many countries in Europe as a result of the systematic efforts of the OECD's Public Governance and Territorial Development directorate. More specifically, between 1973 and 1979, during the Tokyo Round of the GATT negotiations, the Government Procurement Code[2] was articulated, following guidelines

2 A *GATT Code* negotiated during the *Tokyo Round* prohibiting signatories from discriminating against or among the products of other signatories in certain types of government procurement covered by the Code, i.e. purchases valued at more than 150,000 *special drawing rights, or SDRs* (Sec. 11) by specified government *entities* listed in the Agreement. Exceptions include contracts for most services, construction, procurement related to national security and purchases by political subdivisions. The Code seeks to increase *transparency* in signatories' regulations and practices regarding government procurement and to ensure that they do not discriminate against foreign suppliers or products. It contains detailed rules on the way in which *tenders should be invited and awarded* (my emphasis, O. B.). Signatories include Austria, Canada, the European Community, Finland, Hong Kong, Israel, Japan, Norway, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. www.itcdonline.com/introduction/glossary1_ghij.html accessed on September 2012.

that were initially prepared[3] by a unit within the OECD's public management directorate, at that time called the TECO (Technical Cooperation Committee). In 1994, when the World Trade Organization (WTO) emerged from the GATT in Marrakesh, a procurement agreement set the guidelines for the 1979 code that included an agreement on purchases by sub-central government entities and other public enterprises and the services and construction services sectors. Twenty-seven countries signed the GPA (Government Procurement Agreement).[4] The historical process of intensified interest in reforming public administration was articulated by Cui (2005) as follows:

> "From 1971, TECO began to work in the field of international public administration, to build networks and partnerships, and to provide some information about public administration. During the whole 1980's TECO worked on both technical assistance and public management research. In 1990, TECO was officially changed to PUMA [public management; O. B.] and started to work on international public management formally" (7–8).

In article 5 of its 2004/18 directive on the coordination of procedures for the award of public works contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts, the EU states the clear association between the directive and the GPA engineered by the OECD: "Member States shall apply in their relations conditions as favourable as those which they grant to economic operators of third countries in implementation of the Agreement on Government Procurement" (129).

From an intersectional gender justice perspective, the most important feature of the process is how NPM as well as the PUMA guidelines have been internationally adopted and gradually applied to fragments of the social services, particularly long-term care (Theobald 2012) and welfare services (Opens 2010). Governments' efforts to reduce their social services expenses have had a direct effect on the role of the state as the largest employer of women. The major shift in this regard has been the introduction of non-unionized jobs into traditionally feminine areas of the labour market. The implications of this modification on women's experiences have been recently dealt with in a study of in-work poverty. Peña-Casas and Ghailani (2011) showed that individualizing in-work experiences by differentiating women's income from the income of other household members enables a thorough analysis of the conditions under which these women are caught up in economic dependency. By using the individualizing method these authors traced the ramifications of the new forms of employment, and particularly the increase in part-time jobs and mini-jobs. Despite all the evidence of its failure to save on costs while attempting to increase the quality of services (Hefetz and Warner 2004), the current power position of the NPM doctrine remains strong in that unionization and political

3 The role of the OECD is clearly stated by the WTO, www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/gproc_e/overview_e.htm accessed on September 2012.

4 The 27 countries that had already signed the GPA in 1994 during the Uruguay Round were: Canada, the European Union (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands (including Aruba), Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom), Hong Kong China, Israel, Japan, Norway, South Korea, Liechtenstein, Singapore, Switzerland and the United States. www.osec.doc.gov/ogc/occic/gpa.htm accessed on September 2012.

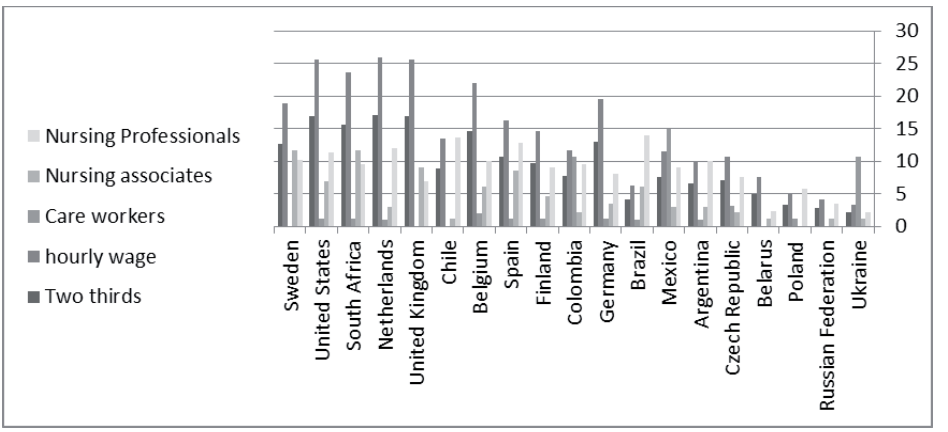
actions rarely succeed in areas where there is likely to be the greatest concentration of the working poor. Between 1990 and 2007, NPM-informed policies managed to reduce the share of public jobs in health services and social care services. In France the share decreased by 5.6% and 4.5%, respectively; in Germany the share decreased by 22.7% and 22%, respectively (Kroos and Gottschall 2012). In this way, governments are able to flatten pay scales and encourage women's unpaid work, as well as leave those dependent on these jobs with significantly less protection of their rights. The power position of the NPM to support the process of deprofessionalization and deskilling has taken the shape of an institutional refusal to bear the full costs of social services based on recognizing the skill, the experience and professional knowledge involved in women's work. The case of nursing assistants below anchors this argument in empirical data.

The case of nursing assistants

The logic of NPM described in the above introduced the criterion of efficiency – as competition and cost reduction – into human resource management in the social services. Contracted-out services, privatized ones, those in mixed ownership (public-private partnerships) or those operating through various types of mixed welfare became dominated by the question of cost. If a recognized skill becomes expensive, deskilling in the sense of not recognizing the skill required for a job is an obvious solution. In the field of nursing, because of the relatively high level of unionization and the powerful bargaining position of nurses' unions, NPM-informed budgeting generated pressures towards deskilling. This led to the creation of the category of nursing assistant in several countries. Based on a comparative study of low-wage employment, Appelbaum and Schmitt (2009) argued that women hold most of the low-wage jobs. They considered nursing assistants in hospitals to be a good example of how occupational segregation remains intense primarily for women with little or no post-secondary education. Women at this level of education increase the supply of workers available to take low-paying part-time or temporary jobs. Part-time jobs do not have to be low-wage jobs, as the French case in the study shows, but in many countries opting for a part-time job as a way to combine domestic unpaid care with a paid job is often exploited. This type of job is badly paid, without necessarily breaching legal requirements. Caring work such as that done by nursing assistants illustrates the notion of racialization referred to in the above as it can be said to be exposed to the low wages that would be acceptable for migrant workers. At the same time, employing foreign workers would mean limiting the caring aspects of the work since poor command of the host-country language would imply a decrease in the quality of the work. Even if good will is enough to maintain attentiveness and responsibility, limited language skills hamper competence and responsiveness (Tronto 1993). Further, caring jobs cannot be transferred to export processing zones. Treating women employed as nursing assistants or in other caring occupations as easily replaceable by migrant workers ignores the critical role of language in caring occupations. It is also based on the oppressive construction of Other-

ing that legitimizes the option of poverty for the Other woman who is presumably grateful for the opportunity to make any kind of money even in jobs of bad quality (Collins 2000). Typical accounts of the expansion of health care needs do not usually assume that nursing assistants should be among those profiting from the increased demand. Rather, efficient management of hospitals tends to be identified with reduced costs in the sense of fewer nurses and lowest costs for nursing assistants. Social policy and budgeting are the main causes: Applebaum and Schmitt (2009) pointed out that in the six countries they examined hospitals are exposed to flat rate reimbursement formulas. In the United States, assistant nurses are trained to toilet and bathe patients, monitor temperature and blood pressure, draw blood, apply sterile dressing and prepare patients for intravenous procedures. Applebaum and Schmitt argued that hospitals tend to rely on immigrant women to fill these jobs. The ethics of care is flaunted by the fact that the skills required to perform these tasks remain unrecognized and under-valued. This is also true for the issue of familiarity: Although a stable relationship between those at the giving and those at the receiving ends of care is crucial, high staff turnover rates are deliberately maintained by the wages associated with these jobs (Applebaum/Schmitt 2009: 1915). These exploitative practices were adopted by EU Member States at a very slow pace: In 2006, when low-wage jobs awaited 38% of the nursing assistants in the United States, other countries left fewer of them so exposed; the figures for the UK (21%), Germany (9%), the Netherlands, France and Denmark (0–5%) testify to this (1915). Figure 1 shows that the income level of nursing assistants or associate nurses (light grey lines) remain below the low-wage line (darkest grey lines) in almost all countries. From the point of view of NPM-oriented administrators, the income gap between associate (light grey lines) and registered (lighter grey lines) nurses, which is quite high in many countries, provides an incentive to systematically increase their share in health services in both formal and informal ways.

Figure 1: Comparing the mean hourly income of health care employees*



* Standardized mean hourly wage for three health care occupations retrieved from Tijdens and de Vries (2011) and mean hourly wage for health care occupations retrieved from Tijdens et al. (2013).

Gender equality and mainstreaming as gender justice

Feminist scholars have stressed that women's employment has in recent years been "marked by patterns of exclusion and segregation" (Perrons 2007). At the same time, within state feminism and agencies active in negotiating with state representatives, labour market participation continues to be seen as a solution that bails women out and grants them a modicum of autonomy and independence. The belief in the labour market as a path to feminist liberalization is so powerful that in several countries (Canada, Australia, the UK, Israel) women's non-profit organizations have endorsed projects supporting women's labour market participation. As long as the labour market is identified with income, social security, power, independence and self-fulfilment, the focus on the quality of jobs in the caring services is silenced and forgotten. Moreover, even though feminist scholars have extensively criticized the public discourse that forces mothers to replace welfare poverty with in-employment poverty, women engaged in state feminism have not introduced a feminist critique of welfare policies into public discourses. Mink's (1999) argument on the feminist neglect of welfare and those living in poverty still seems to apply. Women from ethnic-racial-working class intersections pay a disproportional price for austerity measures because they depend more on welfare budgeting and public sector jobs. Nevertheless, issues of class, unionization and struggles for working conditions, as well as issues related to minorities and intersectionality do not tend to recruit feminists as much as the issue of sexual violence. Moreover, feminists, like others in late modernity, have been exposed to individualism and its ramifications. Depoliticalization has been particularly destructive when it comes to women's willingness to participate in traditional forms of activism. The combination of feminism and individualism suggests that many members of women's organizations see the main role of their organizations in terms of providing support for individual women struggling with specific circumstances. Illouz (2008) perceives this feminist tendency as so powerful that it contributes to the current hegemonic power position of therapeutic discourse. From an "individual rights" perspective, feminist legal aid activities promote a similar line in that they identify feminism with support for individuals facing gender-based discrimination. A political ethics of care focused on women who are doing paid caring work without being properly rewarded for it cannot afford an individualistic rights perspective. Their exclusion, Othering and in-employment poverty takes place within legal modes of action and policies. As suggested above, NPM-informed employment practices are based on meanings of gender equality that treat exclusion and Othering as morally neutral and simply as a cost-saving measure. To significantly improve the quality of jobs in the caring services, hegemonic meanings of discrimination, equality and gender mainstreaming must be abandoned.

Public discourses of equality

There is a long-standing claim that feminists can negotiate woman-friendly policies with state representatives and achieve outcomes that coincide with feminist goals and feminist actions around the world. Mazur and McBride (2007) defined this "state feminism" as "the actions by women's policy agencies to include women's movement demands and actors into the state to produce feminist outcomes in either policy processes or societal impact or both" (254). Squires (2007) challenged this definition by raising the possibility that not all the components of the women's movement are equally represented in this type of state feminism. Likewise, it is possible that the goals that are promoted in an ongoing negotiation are those that state representatives can accept because they are less expensive and require fewer modifications. Walby (2005) made this point in her presentation of the five dilemmas that are typical of gender mainstreaming forms of feminist action. She framed the dilemma as opposing an expert approach where gender mainstreaming provides policy decision-makers with a professional tool kit versus an access-focused democratic approach in which oppressed women can voice their concerns regarding a policy that is relevant to their access to resources. She raised the question of the effective promotion of feminist goals for both, namely, is it better to promote them from the expert approach that may sound rational and convincing to administrators or from the access approach that may seem less convincing and more complex to administrators? Walby's point is that de-radicalization occurs when feminists who are eager to present outcomes sacrifice the latter in favour of the former. Extending the analysis of feminists' de-radicalization and de-politicalization, Kantola (2010) noted that state feminism "benefits only small female elites and focuses on issues that are compatible with dominant state policies and ideologies rather than more radical feminist demands" (354). Feminists tend to marginalize the processes of internationalization (Thatcher 2007), Europeanization and neo-liberalization, despite their huge impact on budgeting that has given rise to the NPM as a major policy tool prioritizing decreased public expenses over the promotion of quality caring jobs. This can be seen in the recent critique by Bettio and her colleagues (2013), in which they argue that typical definitions of equality promoted by the EU neglect the feminist division between paid and unpaid work. They explain that part-time, flexible and marginal jobs are taken by women because of their domestic obligations, but do not consider the possibility that caring occupations have been under attack by the NPM efficiency discourse promoted by the EU. Similarly, international feminist accounts of the surge in precarious employment (Vosko et al. 2009) or the rise in women's in-employment poverty (Peña-Casas and Ghailani 2011) hardly ever target organizations of economic globalization as playing a role in creating these issues. Criticism of Europeanization policies and legal transformations reducing country-based protection of the local caring female labour force thus tends to remain outside the framework of women's issues. The role of the EU in promoting meanings of equality that exclude the concerns of women in low-quality employment can be analyzed through the three meanings that are attributed to its action (Bettio et al.

2013): equal pay for equal work (allegedly "to ensure fair competition"), positive action and gender mainstreaming. Efficiency, the dominant component of the NPM doctrine, has become more powerful in EU policies, and the European Employment Strategy (EES) has embraced women's participation in the labour market as its goal ("to broaden the tax base of European welfare states"; Bettio et al. 2013: 2). As explained in the above, state feminism has not challenged these meanings, but has rather cooperated with them. In fact, Kantola (2010), who analyzed women's policy agencies in twelve countries, found that when a broader political, institutional and ideational context is taken into account, much of the visible feminist work takes the form of cooperating with the institutional language. The productivity and competitiveness preferences of the EU's gender equality rhetoric have not been confronted. Feminists who cooperated with the economic argument for gender equality, namely applauding the economic benefits of using women's human capital, could not introduce the issue of segregation and the poor state of caring services at workplaces. This is primarily because in traditionally feminine occupations women's contribution does not occur through rare human capital but rather through the hard work embedded in attentiveness, responsibility, competence and responsiveness (Tronto, 1993). Lazar's (2005) notions of discursive ambivalence and deradicalization help conceptualize state feminists' reactions to the EU and OECD. More specifically, she shows how a dominant discourse has emerged using forms of speech that appropriate specific categories taken from feminist radical discourse. In the process of appropriation, categories that originally had radical meanings are incorporated, but their radical meanings are silenced and marginalized. For example, Ràdoi (2012) summarizes the literature on three notions of gender equality embraced by the EU. The first approach focuses on adjustment. In feminist scholarship, adjustment concentrates on revealing how existing masculine norms serve as an exclusionary mechanism. Adjustment was embraced by the EU but the radical meaning of questioning the existing masculine norm disappeared. The second approach focuses on the differential evaluation of men's and women's contribution in a segregated society. Such a differentiation was embraced by the EU but was eviscerated of the radical meaning of evaluating paid and unpaid care. Finally, the third approach is that of transforming gender relations. A language of transformation was embraced by the EU but the notion of non-hierarchical and reciprocal distribution of resources was discarded. Likewise, the gender mainstreaming framework used by the EU is based on comparisons between women and men. The comparative approach has been problematic in reinforcing the patriarchal stereotyping of women as a monolithic category that ignores class differences among women (e. g. Verloo 2006). Thus, when state feminism explores the idea of gender mainstreaming, it follows accepted patterns of expectations regarding how a specific policy might differentially treat men and women. This emerging discourse seemed to embrace the feminist hope for women's financial independence as a result of professional development and occupational fulfilment. However, it severed the notion of "women's equal rights" from its original radical meaning concerning the equal rights of women in both paid and unpaid caring services. For example, in analyzing the gender mainstreaming policies in

EU Member States, Rees (2010: 564) listed policy tools related to the principles of gender mainstreaming: gender monitoring, disaggregated statistics, equality indicators, budgeting, impact assessment, proofing, women's studies and visioning. This list demonstrates how the alleged commitment to women's rights has turned into a dichotomy between labour market participation and unemployment by ignoring issues of quality of employment, skill evaluation and related level of income. Gender budgeting, which facilitates the demand for more and better caring services for women as consumers who benefit from such services and primarily health services (Payne 2009), is hardly ever used to facilitate the demand for quality jobs in the caring services. The fact that women who provide badly paid caring services are affected by budgets is generally still neglected. Despite this neglect, Rees (2010) argued for the transformative potential of this framework. Thus, EU policies that are basically exclusionary from the point of view of women employed in the caring services (whose employment is unable to secure their economic independence) continue to benefit from feminist cooperation. Equal opportunities for women are glorified while in practical terms women's workplaces are under severe attack from the NPM and the efficiency discourse promoted by the EU. Thus, Lazar's notion of deradicalization can shed light on the ways in which the category of "women" has been dissociated from the category of "care". Whereas numerous equality-oriented policies have looked into the discrimination between men and women, the more radical component of the gender hierarchy, the social organization of caring services as job providers has received less attention in social policy discussions. As a result women's rights are now legally more valued, but under-evaluation (Grimshaw/Rubery 2007) still characterizes the societal treatment of caring work, caring knowledge and caring skills. Below I present a political ethics of care that associates intersectionality with a focus on caring services at workplaces.

An intersectional concept of gender justice

The fact that economic globalization has been detrimental to women in developing countries and has enslaved them is relatively well known. The concept of racialization proposed by Edna Bonacich et al. (2008) leads to the scholarly question of the relevance of this enslavement for an analysis of social policies for employed women in wealthy countries. Earlier I argued that nursing assistants are a good illustration of the issues involved. The processes of exclusion, commodification and denial of their right to unionized protection expose them to a particularly harsh intersectionality of oppressions. From these women's standpoint, the evaluation of a model of gender justice should be able to confine the processes of exclusion and denial of rights. Nursing assistants typically represent a range of immigration statuses and thus embody a case that is highly similar to women in developing countries. Nevertheless, it is important to take their standpoint into account since neglecting it could legitimize the permeation of similar practices into the employment arrangements of social categories that are currently better protected.

So far I have criticized two trends. The first is the incremental deskilling that is permeating health services and turning them into effective engines generating in-employment poverty for nursing assistants around the world. I argued that the NPM doctrine of efficiency and cost savings promoted by the OECD and the EU among other organizations of economic globalization has played a crucial role in this process. The second is that feminist support for the OECD and EU has promoted deradicalized notions of gender equality and gender mainstreaming. I have tried to show that from the point of view of nursing assistants these policies are primarily exclusionary measures conducive to increasing class inequalities among women. Here I formulate an alternative political ethics of care that requires feminist struggles for gender justice to become more critical of organizations of economic globalization. Given that quality employment and job security are essential for universal de-commodification and particularly for human dignity after retirement, I redefine gender equality and gender mainstreaming based on the notion of job quality in the caring services. Job quality based on the political ethics of care draws on a comparative approach that focuses on the notion of discrimination. In feminine areas of the labour market, particularly those at the bottom of income ladders, there is full gender equality and no discrimination: Employers are eager for a cheap labour force and usually disregard gender identity issues. Thus, discrimination needs to be re-conceptualized. Instead of a comparison between women and men or between diverse racial/ethnic origins, citizenship status and different sexual identities, discrimination should be based on a comparison with average income in the field. Above I showed that around the world nursing assistants' earnings are less than two thirds of the average hourly incomes in the area of health services. By demanding that discrimination be calculated against average income in a field, feminists will be able to challenge the hegemonic meaning of gender equality as well as that of efficiency. Such an alternative concept of discrimination challenges the meaning promoted by NPM-informed administrators for whom cost savings can be achieved through women's impoverishment. This new type of discrimination thus upends the notion of equality as well: An equal society is one where cost savings are pursued through reduced managerial benefits rather than through in-employment poverty.

The advantage to women employed in low-wage jobs in caring services of harnessing the notion of job quality is that it is an established notion with five dimensions: socio-economic security (i.e. decent wages and secure transitions), skills and training opportunities, working conditions (accidents, work intensity, long working hours, health risks), the ability to combine work and family life, the promotion of gender equality, and collective interest representations. Through these five components, job quality becomes a way to challenge gender mainstreaming. The challenge lies in the political demand that improving job quality should adjust all caring service employees to the average level accepted in their fields. In this way job quality would become a yardstick for gender mainstreaming policies. This would allow feminists to argue forcefully that the right to give care and receive care must be incorporated into evaluations of efficiency used by NPM-informed administrators. Floya Anthias (2008) argued for the need to examine

the processes through which ethno-racial trans-locational positionalities converge with dependency generated in the labour market to shape multiple vulnerabilities. Anthias claimed that this vulnerability depends on the structure of opportunities and on the paths by which women accumulate various resources for their protection. These arguments reinforce the trend within intersectionality theorizing that demand that the analysis of social policy and political activism for its reforms is elaborated upon before intersectional belonging can be said to be understood. Rather than assuming the specific vulnerabilities of intersectional belonging, the model of intersectional gender justice suggested here should help enlist support from all levels of active feminism today to assist women who are active in the new unions (Healy et al. 2006). These women are attempting to undermine NPM-informed employment arrangements, but without vast mobilization their efforts remain so weak that governments can ignore them and continue the "institutionalization of insecurity" (Brodie 2007: 93). A gender justice model based on intersectionality requires both the mapping of these local struggles as well as engaging in trans-local activism of the type described by Desai (2002). The most important issue is the mapping of the dialectic power relations between local institutions and those transnational institutions that exert pressure to further reduce the quality of employment arrangements, particularly for those employed in paid caring services. The powerful resistance of local unions and the struggle of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to improve the quality of employment must become a vital component of any notion of gender justice. These struggles, particularly those led by the new unions, will lay the groundwork for the future social forces that can negotiate significant changes in social policies that favour the restoration of the public sector as women's primary employer. This requires the politicizing of feminist activism and the negating of all forms of cooperation with institutional frameworks of equality and mainstreaming. The advantage of politicizing and activism lies in the continuous development of a feminist language in which radical meanings do not become marginalized. By presenting the deleterious consequences of NPM involvement in the social organization of care and its orientation towards eliciting increasingly more women's unpaid work, I have tried to promote a notion of gender justice that allows feminists to continue their negotiation with state feminism. Unfortunately, it also requires that expert women and representatives involved in such negotiations refuse to cooperate with the dominant rhetoric, which silences the burdens shouldered by women when an efficiency policy enlarges their caring penalty. This, as Walby (2005) showed, may cause them to lose the voice achieved by feminist organizations. Nevertheless, the feminist organizations that have taken part in the trans-local activism described by Desai (2002) have proven that an alternative approach is needed and should be championed.

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