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NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, University of Copenhagen

# Gendered Dimensions of Welfare in China and the Nordic Region

Feminist transformations, visions and  
recommendations

A Sino-Nordic Gender Studies Network Workshop

The Danish Cultural Center, Beijing

25 – 29 March 2019

Edited by Nicol Savinetti

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*\* The Sino-Nordic Gender Studies Network, established in 2002, is based at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies at the University of Copenhagen. Over the past 17 years the network has held three conferences and three PhD courses in China, and three conferences in the Nordic countries. This workshop marked a network anniversary as it was the tenth network activity since 2002.*



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[www.fordfoundation.org](http://www.fordfoundation.org)

[www.china.danishculture.com](http://www.china.danishculture.com)

[www.nias.ku.dk/fudan/sino-nordic-gender-studies-network](http://www.nias.ku.dk/fudan/sino-nordic-gender-studies-network)

[www.nias.ku.dk](http://www.nias.ku.dk)

[www.thinkchina.ku.dk](http://www.thinkchina.ku.dk)

# 1. Introduction

by Nicol Savinetti



Image by @nicolsavinetti

In May 2017, the People's Republic of China agreed to collaborate with the Nordic countries (Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway and Iceland) on a regional rather than bilateral basis. Both China and the Nordic countries view gender equality as a social justice issue and are politically committed to achieving gender equality both nationally and internationally. Given the Nordic countries' experience and systematic approach to addressing gender equality issues internationally, and China's emerging role as a world leader, there is a unique opportunity for gender studies scholars to promote cooperation and knowledge production around gender issues in a global context in relation to confronting new challenges. With a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, Beijing, the Sino-Nordic Gender Studies Network and NIAS – Nordic Institute of Asian Studies convened the workshop, **Exploring Gendered Dimensions of Welfare in China and the Nordic Region**, at the Danish Cultural Center in Beijing in March 2019.

Scholars from a wide range of disciplines point to the increasing importance of focusing on relations rather than separate nations-state entities to understand global connections. They emphasize the need to move away from a static, positivist, bounded view of places and cultures, towards a perspective that is defined in terms of relationships and connections. The workshop therefore focused on areas where China and the Nordic countries are interconnected as well as the separate contexts of China and the Nordic countries.

The aim of the workshop was to support and develop the commitment to gender equality and social justice in relation to the Sino-Nordic exchange, with a particular focus on one of the five areas of the 2017 Sino-Nordic collaboration agreement, namely *welfare solutions*. The workshop was designed to incorporate different forms of knowledge sharing and exchange and thus included traditional academic keynote speeches and presentations; focused 'workshopping' for three designated groups of academics across three days; documentary film screenings; art exhibitions and music. Some of the cultural elements of the workshop<sup>1</sup> documented how state supported practices such as shelters are the result of bottom-up social movement activity rather than being instituted by top-down welfare state policymaking, and they facilitated fruitful discussion between academics, artists, activists and other invited guests.

The arrangement of the core workshopping days drew on experiences gained through convening the nine Sino-Nordic Gender Studies Network events since 2002, most notably the challenge it has been for participants from the two different contexts of China and the Nordic countries to communicate across differences. To face this challenge, three groups made up of scholars from both regions formed the core

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<sup>1</sup> See Section 3, The Workshop Photo Diary, for more details about the cultural program.

of the workshop. Each group was led by a Nordic based gender studies scholar. These scholars work at universities based *in* the Nordic countries and their work is *on* China. With knowledge of both contexts their task was to enable the sharing and learning process across differences. Each group leader had defined the group's topic and had invited gender studies scholars based in China and the Nordic countries as well as feminist activists as group participants. The specific welfare topics addressed by the workshop were defined by the three group leaders:

- **Dr Lisa Eklund**, University of Lund, Sweden led the group **Parenting, Family Policies and Gender (In)equality** working together with Professor Anne Lise Ellingsæter from the University of Oslo, Assistant Professor Xuan Li from New York University Shanghai, Dr Lin Huilin from Beijing Normal University, Dr Kalle Berggren from Stockholm University.
- **Dr Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen** from University of Stavanger led the group **Feminist Activism** working together with Di Wang, Scholar in Residence at CLAGS: Center for LGBTQ Studies; Dr Olga Sasunkevich from University of Gothenburg; and Xiong Jing, Editor in Chief at *Feminist Voices*.
- **Dr Liu Xin** from University of Helsinki led the group **Welfare State and Feminist Transnational Knowledge Production** working together with Professor Katarina Leppänen from the University of Gothenburg; Professor Elina Oinas from University of Helsinki; Dr Yan Zhao from Nord University Norway; Dr Lily Yu from University of Nottingham Ningbo China; and Dr Trude Sundberg from University of Kent.

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

1. Facilitate the meeting of China and Nordic based gender studies scholars for academic sharing, learning and collaboration on gender perspectives relating to welfare issues.

*Points of inquiry*

*How, and to what effect are gender, care and equality connected to welfare and welfare solutions in policy, social movements and public debates in China and the Nordic countries today?*

*How can a gendered perspective help develop more robust welfare solutions that will be able to counteract or counterbalance global forces?*

*How may we apply feminist methodologies to study welfare solutions and structures of (in)equality in a transnational context involving China and the Nordic countries? And what does this entail in terms of knowledge production and knowledge exchange?*

2. Strengthen the understanding of China and Nordic-based gender studies scholars of each other's geopolitical contexts and research practices on gender and welfare as the basis for making joint recommendations and engaging in future collaboration.
3. Provide recommendations that qualify and expand knowledge on the relationship between gender and welfare solutions to administrators of the China-Nordic collaboration, namely the Nordic Council of Ministers and the PRC Foreign Ministry.
4. Identify areas where further study is recommended and participants may collaborate in order to develop further knowledge on Sino-Nordic welfare issues.

The workshop highlighted the importance of gender perspectives and feminist approaches in solutions to new societal and economic challenges facing the two regions.

This report continues with a presentation of the main results of the workshop, namely the recommendations for how to consider gender in welfare solutions, and for areas of future research collaboration. In the third section a photo diary of the entire workshop is given: from the opening reception, to the keynote speeches and the group workshops and recommendations, to the cultural program and the Theme Day events. The report concludes with some reflections on the entire workshop from a selection of participants.



## 2. Recommendations

### Parenting, family policy and gender

*by Lisa Eklund, Anne Lise Ellingsæter, Xuan Li, Lin Huilin, Kalle Berggren*

There are several steps governments can take to expand opportunities and facilitate choices that individuals can make to promote gender equality. In the field of family policy, foci lie in enabling individuals to reconcile work and family life, which requires that both paid and unpaid workers' rights and responsibilities are shared between partners regardless of gender. Below we list nine areas for future research. Thereafter, we make ten policy recommendations relevant to the theme of parenting, family policy and gender equality.

#### Recommendations for areas of future research

While there is already a plethora of research on welfare policy and practices in existence, especially in the Nordic countries, we propose that the following areas need continuous attention:

- Analyse where the boundaries of the welfare state are drawn. Who gets included and not? Who is "deserving"/"undeserving"?
- The continual scrutinisation of family policy and practices from the point of view of how they affect other forms of inequality. Which inequalities are reproduced and reconfigured through family policies, for example by race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, religion, age, disability etc.?
- Examine the gaps between policy and practice, also by region.
- That gender-based violence (GBV) persists continues to be a paradox in light of the improvements in gender equality in family-work reconciliation. How can the family policy field be broadened to also include GBV concerns? For example, how is family policy eligibility related to (if at all) violent parents? How far can and should parents' rights, as well as children's rights to their parents go in cases of GBV? How can GBV prevention and interventions be integrated in family policy services?
- Investigate interactions between different systems and policies, i.e. how changes in labour market policies might have implications for gender equality in the family, and how systems are changing and mutually affecting one another.
- Map female and male labour force participation by age, number and age of children, and by education, employment sector, rural/urban etc., and the link to family policy tool utilisation (for example paid parental leave, subsidised child care).
- Continue to collect data, both quantitative and qualitative, including structured observation, interviews and time-use data, to monitor trends and changes and the effects of different family policy tools.
- Explore the concept and distribution of time in relation to family policies, and its implications for the parent-worker-citizen nexus.
- Investigate the influence of globalization on national systems of welfare provision. What new challenges are posed through the increased flow of people, goods, capital and ideas? And how are they managed and reconciled?

## Policy recommendations

### *Individualize rights*

When family policies are gendered in terms of granting different rights or offering unequal benefits to different groups, they are also gendering; that is, they fortify gender structures and gender stereotypes that reproduce relationships that create gender inequality through the ways in which, for example, care and paid work is unevenly distributed among the sexes and heteronormativity is reinforced.

Families are becoming increasingly diverse, and heteronormative understandings of the family exclude and marginalise some individuals and families that consist of same-sex or non-binary individuals. Individualising rights would mean that what counts as a family becomes less rigid and redefines to whom family policy applies. For example, having the right to have children without being married is an important sexual and reproductive right, which also facilitates same-sex couples being able to have children. Single-parent families need to have the same rights and benefits as two-parent families, and children in single-parent families need to have the same rights as children in two-parent families.

### *Gender-neutralise parental leave and ensure that all parents have equal rights and responsibilities to care for their children*

When child care responsibilities are unevenly distributed, individuals' possibilities to enjoy rights and opportunities on the labour market are affected. The situation typically leads to the person with greater care responsibilities engaging in part-time work, and/or in low-paid and low-skilled work, or withdrawing from the labour market altogether for a shorter or longer period of time. It not only impacts salary levels and career opportunities in the near future but also impacts future benefits such as pensions, sick leave, and parental leave (for a higher parity child). Less engagement in the labour market and the lack of alternative sources of income also create intra-family dependencies, which can lead to vulnerabilities in times of abuse, violence or separation.

At the same time, offering care can also be seen as a right, and in the context of parenting, spending time and caring for one's child is crucial for forging healthy and deep parent-child bonds. Hence, if paid work responsibilities are unevenly distributed, one parent may lose out on the opportunity to care for the child. The imbalance described above is often gendered, with women taking more care responsibilities, and women often end up doing "double shifts" when combining work and family life. This has negative implications for the mental health of women, and also creates time poverty, which limits their possibilities to combine not only parenthood and working life but also be active citizens engaging in community life and civic organisations.

In cases where only women have access to maternity leave, and men do not have paternity leave, or only have very few days, the idea that women are the main caregivers is reinforced and contributes to unequal care responsibilities and opportunities among parents. Therefore it is important to give parents, regardless of gender, the right and responsibility to be on parental leave. In light of this it is also important to adopt the gender-neutral language of "parental leave", given that not all families consist of a mother and a father. The language of maternity leave and paternity leave reinforces heteronormativity.

### *Grant paid parental leave for parents, and earmark leave days for fathers.*

Just like for women, research shows that for men, paternity leave encourages father involvement, and helps strengthen the bond between the parent and the child. Being a caring father also has the potential to transform men's subjectivities and help improve gender equality in couples. Moreover, a child has the

right to both parents. It is therefore important to facilitate parental leave days being shared among parents as equally as possible. One way of ensuring that is to earmark parental leave days for fathers (when there is a father in the family) and limit the amount of days that can be transferred to the other parent. This is often referred to as the “daddy quota” and more and more countries are adopting this policy globally. Countries that have daddy quotas witness an increase in fathers’ care work. Research shows that fathers taking parental leave also impacts fathers’ care for older children, for example when the child is sick and needs to stay at home.

#### *Transfer responsibility for paying parental leave from the employer to the state*

Employees taking parental leave can be seen as negative for employers as the company incurs several costs; for instance, they may need to find a temporary employee and invest time and money in training the new staff member. This may result in employers resisting granting parental leave, and taking parental leave may be perceived as “disloyal” both by the employer and the employee, especially by fathers in contexts where child care is considered a women’s job.

Moreover, in situations where women are the ones who are expected to take the lion’s share of parental leave, women may be discriminated against in terms of getting and keeping jobs and advancing their careers. This coupled with the employer bearing parental leave costs may result in extra resistance to hire and invest in female employees, which in turn fuels discrimination against women in the labour market, and has implications for gender equality within the family.

#### *Universalize high-quality, affordable child care from young ages*

In order to ensure that parents can combine family life and work, affordable and easily accessible high-quality child care is important. Research shows that it is absolutely crucial to make sure that child care services are universally available in order for women to stay attached to the labour market.

It is also crucial to ensure that the duration of parental leave schemes are matched with the age stipulations for accessing child care services in order not to create a care gap, which often ends up being filled with unpaid care work. A typical dilemma for parents is that child care services are not available when paid parental leave ends, which makes it impossible to reconcile work and family life.

Moreover, research shows that attending high-quality daycare institutions is important from the point of view of social and economic inequality as it improves the learning and development opportunities for children who come from families with socioeconomic resources.

In order to ensure that child care services are available and affordable to all, they need to be subsidised. Research shows that when child care services are paid for in full by the individual or the family, women’s labour force participation tends to be negatively impacted, especially among women in low-income occupations.

#### *Investigate interactions between different systems and policies, to eliminate bottlenecks and contradictions that are in the way of gender equality*

The ways that family policies are implemented, and their outcomes, interact with other policy fields. It is quite possible that one policy goal contradicts another; the field of labour market policy, for instance, is important for gender equality. Equal pay for equal work, ending the devaluation of women-dominated occupations, equal opportunities for recruitment and promotion, regulation in working hours, and putting an end to sexual harassment and violence in the work place and in other institutions, are all important

measures to take to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities regardless of gender and sexuality, and that all individuals have the possibility to reconcile work and family life. In addition to the norms and expectations associated with motherhood, women's relatively lower position in the labour market and women being discriminated in the labour market may be decisive factors in explaining why it is women rather than men who use parental leave days and work part-time.

Attention must also have to be paid to ensuring that policies promoting gender equality do not have negative unintended consequences for the rights and opportunities of other groups, or reproduce inequalities along the lines of ethnicity, sexuality and class, for example.

#### *Gender-neutralize retirement age*

One key example of how other policies and systems interact with the family policy field is retirement age. When women have a lower retirement age than men, it impacts their career opportunities and salary development. This not only negatively affects women at an individual level, but also contributes to senior positions being occupied mostly by men, which strengthens the masculinisation of senior management which has ramifications on androcentric working cultures. Moreover, shorter working lives and lower positions and salaries impact the size of the pension women receive upon retirement. Thus, women not only have lower salaries than men in working life, the inequalities continue after retirement.

It must be recognised that women's early retirement may not only be a reflection of the expectation that they should help mind grandchildren, but may also reinforce that expectation, and strengthen the notion that women are the main carers in families. Moreover, it must be recognised that women's earlier retirement is a precondition for the lack of universal child care. Hence, equalising the age of retirement by increasing women's age of retirement to men's age of retirement needs to be implemented in tandem with the universalisation of child care services.

#### *Gender-neutralise the age of marriage*

Another key example of how other policies and systems interact with the family policy field is the legal age of marriage. To have different ages for women and men when it comes to the minimum legal age of marriage constitutes discrimination based on both sex and age and is inconsistent with the notion of granting rights at the individual level.

When the legal age for marriage is set higher for men it also signals an expectation that marriages and partnerships are to be formed hypergamously, which means that women are expected to form unions with men who have higher social and economic status, which tends to follow with age. Hypergamous unions tend to impact power relations within the family, and may implicate how paid and unpaid work responsibilities are juggled within the family. For example, if a mother has a lower position in the labour market because she is younger and less educated than the father, financially it will make more sense for her to take the main part of the parental leave. Hypergamous norms also contribute to men with low socio-economic background having difficulties finding a partner, forming a family and becoming a parent.

#### *Consider family policy more broadly recognizing violence as a major issue of gender inequality*

Although family policies aim at enabling parents regardless of gender to reconcile work and family life and share paid and unpaid work, it must be recognised that not all family relationships are healthy and to the benefit of all family members. In addition, not all individuals are suitable care givers. Gender-based violence and intimate partner violence are global phenomena facing mostly women, but also men and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual and intersexed (LGBTI) individuals. Family policies must be

sensitive to supporting individuals who suffer from this kind of violence, for example through mandatory screening of pregnant women, by offer screening and counselling within other family support services, and by enabling individuals subject to violence to become free of these harmful relationships.

In order to protect individuals from violent partners, both legal and practical support is needed. Research shows that legal systems, including the police and prosecutors, need to be better equipped (for example through training and targeted service provision) to enable individuals to report violence, and collect and share evidence. Violence should also be considered in divorce and custody cases. Practical assistance is also needed via women's shelters. Institutional support for violent men has also proven useful in breaking the circle of violence, preventing the recurrence of violence, and facilitating the violent partner in leaving the home, rather than the partner who is the victim of the violence.

#### *Nationalize family policy eligibility and social rights, and link them to the place of destination for labour migrants*

Globally, labour migration is a common phenomenon, both within and across borders. Many if not most labour migrants are parents, and as such labour migration is closely linked to a "care deficit" in so called sending areas. This has major negative implications for families, not least for the children who may be left in the sending area because of the parents' lack of social rights in the place of destination and work. In cross-border labour migration settings, family reunification policies are crucial for the rights and wellbeing of families, including children. In domestic labour migration settings, nationalizing eligibility for benefits and access to services under family policy and social rights more broadly (parental leave, subsidised child care, school access, health services) is also of major importance for the rights, equal opportunities and wellbeing of families, including children.

## Feminist Activism

by Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, Di Wang, Olga Sasunkevich, Xiong Jing

### Theme 1: Rethinking Nordic “gender equality”

Gender equality is a pillar of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and of the Nordic Council of Minister’s policy discourse on welfare solutions amongst other pressing issues. We perceive there to be a need for a feminist approach to policy discourses on “gender equality” and “welfare solutions” and recognize that gender equality is not the same as feminist politics. The Nordic Council of Minister’s definition of the former is inadequate because it sees gender equality as a simplistic dichotomy between two sexes.

#### *Policy recommendations*

We recommend a conceptual understanding of gender that is based in intersectional feminist knowledge. This recognizes gender as an analytical tool and a social relation that pays attention to conditions of inequality, difference and oppression that are built on the ways that several factors interconnect – such as class, race, age, nationality, bodily impairment, sexual orientation, and gender identity. In feminist scholarship and activism this is called an intersectional perspective. We recognize that these intersecting dynamics co-produce relations of power inequalities that hierarchically organize and evaluate masculinities and femininities through the contested but controlling practices of individuals and their environments. This understanding of gender, albeit more complex, is better suited to adequately identify the challenges being faced on the ground by a diverse demography of people, and to help produce viable strategies in order to attain meaningful welfare solutions.

#### *Research recommendation*

It is of critical importance to engage with existing research that complicates and contests the dominant Nordic gender equality and welfare model. We support a politics of feminist citation practices that critically reflect on how, who and why we cite. We recommend that researchers remain critically aware of the histories of knowledge and power regimes that are inherent in citing and using existing literature. We encourage them to challenge the dominant picture in order to diversify knowledge and provide an avenue for more voices and experiences to come to matter, and produce different knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

### Theme 2: Why the Nordic Region and China?

This theme reflects on the following questions: Why do we need collaboration specifically between the Nordic Region and China? Does it make sense to group the Nordic countries into one region? What is gained and lost with these comparative priorities and groupings?

We start from the optimistic view that any collaboration has the potential to challenge long-held assumptions and stereotypes. The Nordic region’s exceptionalism in welfare and matters of equality and functioning democracy are examples of broadly assumed and accepted positive framing. This is contrasted with the negative mirror-image of the exceptionalism of authoritarian states (such as China) enshrined by undesirable values or norms. This image can increasingly be seen the other way round these days, for instance from official China or the Trumpist worldview. In this scenario, the naivety of the Nordic states (accepting refugees and other migrants) is contrasted against authoritarian states that practice good responsible governance that protects its citizens from foreign threats, for instance. From the

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<sup>2</sup> An example of a text that challenges the established Nordic gender equality paradigm is Martinsson, Lena et al. (eds.) (2016). *Challenging the myth of gender equality in Sweden*. Bristol: Policy Press

perspective of the contemporary global condition, it is urgent to respond to the threat of rising authoritarianism and decline of democracy. Are there ways of learning and collaborating in this regard, on a more general basis, and also between the Nordic countries and China specifically?

#### *Policy recommendation*

It is important to rethink and also enhance existing collaborations in order to challenge pervasive stereotypes of Others, including the aforementioned exceptionalisms, and to enhance the development of a framework for global norms that does not reproduce preexisting one-directional or dichotomist models, such as east/west, west/the rest, democratic/authoritarian, civilized, developed/uncivilized, underdeveloped etc.

#### *Combined policy and research recommendation*

It is important to properly unpack and critically reflect on established concepts and buzzwords in both academia and policy discourse such as *democracy* and *human rights*. The process of setting new norms for gender equality and collaborative processes that are grounded in empirical evidence based on sound research, and being mindful of not reproducing reductive models help to do this. Critical reflection that recognizes the histories behind the contested concept is important in order to complicate concepts and pre-existing models that divide the world in a particular way - models based around the Cold War and World War II for instance. Further, we emphasize the importance of recognizing and being aware of concepts as *working* concepts as opposed to *static* universal truths, and herein to be aware of complex historical and political legacies.

### Theme 3: Conditions of knowledge production

Recognizing several complications herein, this theme addresses the politics of doing feminist research and social policy work at the current historical moment.

The funding of gender and feminist research is in stark decline all over the world, which puts considerable pressures on students and scholars with a commitment to such research and knowledge production. Part of the reason for this decline is the rising anti-gender politics in society at large and neo-conservatism in political governance. The neoliberal logic of capitalist marketization of higher education and research that rewards short-term projects that promise easily measurable output and success indicators also have an impact. Donor funding of social movements and social initiatives is also hard pressed, and the funding for many important smaller long-term grassroots initiatives are being cut, as are projects in particular regions that are considered difficult to operate in.

#### *Combined policy and research recommendations*

Principally, we acknowledge the responsibility of foreign donors, including nation-states and regional organizations, and academic funding bodies to reconsider existing research policies. It is important to take a bottom-up approach and center *activists* experience and contributions in finding solutions to the issues at hand, rather than simply implementing a top-down, or center-periphery perspective. As a consequence, we recommend that the Nordic Council of Ministers and other supra-national organizations rethink their approach to the wholesale export of mainstream models for equality and welfare to the rest of the world. In relation to this, we recommend that collaborative projects between researchers and activists are supported. It must be acknowledged furthermore that such collaborations require more time as co-produced research is a very different process.

Secondly, we recommend that foundations and other funding bodies prioritize the hiring of feminist scholars as advisors to educate them on issues of diversity and ethical grassroots engagement based on sound evidence-based knowledge.

Thirdly, we recommend a feminist approach to research methodology, one that values the power of the narrative of stories and encourages the proliferation of a diversity of stories, even if, or rather especially when they do not fit with preconceived models or theories.

Lastly, we recommend that translation is granted a more prominent position in transnational research and policy work because translation is a political issue. Translating innovative ideas into different languages and mediums in order to engage broader audiences involves recognizing texts and meaning-making as going beyond written text and spoken language, both of which are traditionally valued in academia and politics alike. In translation there must be greater recognition of the power of visual images and artwork to transmit and produce meaning and knowledge. To this end, we encourage platforms that allow for more diversity for knowledge dissemination (physical or digital) where people from different backgrounds (e.g. independent scholars, activists, artists etc.) can participate, and that foster equity-based dialogue among people from diverse backgrounds. If implemented, such recommendations will lead to the solutions that are found being, in part, developed by those who are most impacted by the issues at hand.

#### Theme 4: Feminist perspectives on sustainability

This theme reflects on the resources that are available to conduct research, policy-making, and activism. It recognizes that the way funding and other resources are currently organized take its toll on activists as well as academics. Short-term project-based work may work well for institutional funding cycles and annual report charts, but it is not a sustainable model in the long-term if meaningful change and in-depth knowledge is to be attained.

##### *Policy recommendation*

We encourage critical reflection on the professionalisation of activism and policy work and how success and output is measured in this regard. It is important to reconsider established indicators of success and the ways in which a growth perspective on activism and social movement practices makes it difficult to allow for alternative approaches to emerge along with other voices and experiences. Issues to do with the distribution of resources and funds, what measures are implemented to define success, desirable outcome, accountability as well as timeframes are areas that would benefit from a thorough feminist reconsideration. As such, we also encourage a more holistic view of activism and advocacy that recognizes less visible strategies of advocacy not only the more publicly visible and confrontational forms of it, and why such alternative strategies are necessary given political context. Concrete support for activists working in politically sensitive environments and on projects that are not initially framed as traditional long-term projects should be offered.

##### *Research recommendation*

As in Theme 3, we recommend a stronger focus on collaborations across the academic and activist divide, guided by feminist principles of collaborative research where project participants are granted status as project or research partners who co-produce output such as publications. Furthermore, qualitative methods and empirical data based on participatory research need a more prominent status in policy and research projects that tackle the significant challenges of today, such as those recognized in the UN



Sustainable Development Goals. Statistical big data cannot convey the complexities and nuances of lived experiences on the ground to a sufficient extent.

## Welfare State and Feminist Transnational Knowledge Production

*by Liu Xin, Katarina Leppänen, Elina Oinas, Yan Zhao, Lily Yu, Trude Sundberg*

This working group suggests that the question of welfare and gender equality in the Chinese and Nordic contexts must be approached intersectionally, from historical and feminist transnational perspectives. We argue that welfare solutions cannot be answered by simply applying a supposedly good welfare model, with set policies and practices, from one context to another. Neither can they be found by interpreting or diagnosing the problems and issues of welfare policies in a specific context through a conception of a welfare regime that is pre-supposed to be universal and coherent.

We propose that the differences, negotiations and transformations in the process of welfare policy making be brought to the fore, and be understood as a form of knowledge production. We also recommend expanding the concept of welfare by critically rethinking the building blocks of a welfare model, such as labor market participation, gender equality, health, sexual rights, reproduction, elderly care, the aging population and education. For example, instead of gender being reduced to a unit of measurement of the differences in welfare policies and practices within China, and between China and Nordic countries, we propose that it be understood as an imbricated process through which racialised, gendered, sexualized and classed relations of power are materialized and negotiated.

We argue that the question of welfare and gender equality cannot be understood as simply about redistribution; rather it is intertwined with concerns about subjectification, desire and identity. Such an approach necessitates interdisciplinary approaches to welfare research that couple quantitative with qualitative methods. We stress the importance of transnational collaborations on welfare and gender research and of fostering dialogue on pressing issues such as social and economic insecurity, climate change and environmental degradation under the umbrella of welfare and gender. We also consider transnational collaborations as useful for recognizing similarities and differences in welfare practices, and for producing sensitivities towards how concepts such as welfare, gender, rights, and equality are understood in specific contexts and how they cross borders.

### Recommendations for areas of future research

In this section, we provide recommendations for the following future areas of research:

- historical perspectives in transnational feminist knowledge production
- transnational feminist knowledge production as a process of critical translation
- the method and methodology of researching welfare
- the process of neoliberal welfare subject formation
- the rethinking of welfare as a cross-bordered practice through a transnational lens.

### *Translating transnational feminisms*

We first draw on group member Katarina Leppänen's study on the history of transnational women's movements through the lens of social welfare change. Not all, yet a considerable number of, transnational initiatives have historically focused not only on women but also on children's issues, poverty, trafficking and temperance among other areas. There is no necessary or given connection between these questions; rather, they must be understood as belonging to the same general political agenda of social issues. This is evident if we look at the work of women in the major international organizations that the women's movements connected to historically, namely, the League of Nations and the United Nations.

In the League of Nations (1919–1941) women’s work on two transnational social questions – trafficking in women and women having independent nationality – highlights these issues clearly and in a manner that can be useful when considering welfare reforms today. On the question of trafficking in women, the women’s group in the League initiated a world-wide survey that was to map the causes and prevalence of trafficking. The material produced was unique in its *inclusion of voices* of different actors in trafficking, and in that the perspectives covered social and economic driving forces, and explanations for individual choices. The survey thus broke with a top-down Western European perspective in the way the knowledge was produced, namely by laying the transnational and multi-level perspectives as the foundations.

Regarding married women’s nationality, the women’s movement utilized the political space offered by the League in order to bypass their national governments. At a time when states were not guaranteeing women independent nationality, the League was an international actor that provided an arena for discussions, and for seeking support in international law. In this case, the complexities of the *transnational family unit* became evident as husbands and wives had different nationalities and sometimes also a domicile in a third country. The state’s inability to accommodate both freedom and the protection of citizens became obvious, and women’s organizations first pressured the international organization (the League of Nations), and then their national governments to sign the League’s recommendation.

Transnational women’s organizations work on welfare issues globally today, thus it is fruitful to look at gains that have been made and concerns that have been expressed, historically. One major concern has been that the concept of “women and welfare” often fails to recognize women’s issues as fundamentally political. Instead, they understand women’s interests as only tied to the familial and social sphere. This non-distinction may further hide that not all welfare solutions are implemented in the interest of gender equality.

Transnational work has never been smooth. The problems that welfare policies intend to remedy and the kinds of actions that are proposed can never encompass the interests of all. The more diverse the partners, the more complicated the co-operation will be. For the women involved in transnational work, it was always clear that there was economic, social and political inequality between women of different nationalities, races and classes. Acknowledgement of this fact did not and still does not eliminate the problem. The continuous re-visiting of the effect of intersectionality is required in order to stay on top of the agenda.

Future areas of research should thus address questions such as: How did previous transnational movements deal with such burning topics? What conflicts can we predict and are there general lessons to be learned? We recommend that more research be conducted on the multiplicity of local, national and transnational interests and needs, and on welfare reforms that fail to recognize the potential of families as transnational spaces. Moreover, we suggest that it is important to investigate which welfare documents have been translated, how they have been used, and what impact they have had. We recommend translating women-friendly welfare documents to use as references.

#### *Transnational feminist knowledge production is a process of critical translation*

For this recommendation, we draw on group member Lily Yu’s work on the translation of feminist theories in the Chinese context. Translation and the reception of Western feminism in China are subject to various local constraints that encompass social, cultural, political and historical factors. The constraints imply interaction, adaptation, and transformation. We may take the term feminism as an example.

The term came to China in the early twentieth century and has had different Chinese translations during the different waves of Chinese feminism, reflecting the different needs and demands of the time. In the first wave (1900s-1949), feminism was translated as “女权主义 *nüquan zhuyi*” (women’s rights-ism). This women’s movement was led by Chinese male intellectuals who sought equal rights for women in the areas of education and opportunity of employment, freedom of marriage and divorce, and political participation.

In the second wave (1949-1970s), Chinese feminism was government-led, with state policies facilitating the mobilization of rural and urban women in the public sphere and framing them as important *builders* of society. Gender relations were integrated with the Marxist-Leninist-Maoist view of gender equality. The two terms used to describe Chinese feminism during this period were “socialist feminism” (社会主义女权主义 *shehui zhuyi nüquan zhuyi*) (Chen 2003, p. 278) and “state feminism” (国家女权主义 *guojia nüquan zhuyi*) (Wang and Zhang 2010, p. 40). The perception of women as *constructing* socialism laid the foundation for some degree of gender equality (Wang 1999, pp. 27, 34). However, women’s liberation made by the socialist state which promoted the idea of doing whatever men can do in serving the state was problematic; this type of equality between men and women deprived women of their difference and androgynised them.

The third wave (1980s-1990s) was led by female academics, and was characterised by an enthusiastic return to the “female essence” and a concern for achieving harmony between women and men. The opening-up policy in the 1980s and the Fourth United Nations Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 allowed Western feminist scholars to visit China and Chinese women scholars to travel to Western countries for exchange scholarships. Western feminist ideas thus travelled in various ways to China. With the proliferation of feminism in China, the previous translation of feminism as “women’s rights-ism” became unsatisfactory, as it implied the stereotype of a “man-hating he-woman hungry for power” and is usually related to “more Western-oriented, politically-based oppositional feminism” (Xu 2009, p. 203). In the mid-1990s, the new translation of feminism as “女性主义 *nüxing zhuyi*” (womanism) came into being to “describe the orientation of the Chinese women’s movement” and to “distinguish Chinese from western feminism” (ibid.).

Feminist activists of the younger generations who focus on gender equality and sexual misconduct lead the current fourth wave, which began at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. With China’s shift from state-socialism to market-socialism in the 1990s, Chinese women became more vulnerable, and were more frequently turned into sex objects, and exploited and discriminated against in employment contexts (Min 2005, pp. 275-6). Therefore, although “女性主义 *nüxing zhuyi*” (womanism) is said to refer to “new cultural strategies and attitudes towards women in the twenty-first century” and signify a “smiley or friendly/complimentary Chinese-styled feminism” (Schaffer and Song 2007, p. 20), the previous translation “女权主义 *nüquan zhuyi*” (women’s rights-ism) is still in use.

We suggest that translating issues of welfare between the Chinese and Nordic context should be understood as a process through which the welfare politics, practices and challenges, specific to both the Chinese and Nordic contexts, are challenged and reconsidered. This approach departs from traditional translation studies that mainly concern language issues. Instead, the focus is on the relations of power in which translation processes are embedded, and on the differences that are articulated in translation as reterritorialisation. In doing so, we stress the crucial differences in and strategies for translating and rethinking the question of welfare.

### *Rethink welfare as cross-bordered practice using a transnational lens*

With this recommendation, we draw on group member Yan Zhao's discussion on the issue of elder care and the role of family in the contemporary Chinese welfare regime and recommend rethinking welfare as a cross-bordered practice.

A series of ongoing social processes such as migration, digitalization, individualization and marketization have driven us to rethink welfare. By way of example, in China, family-based care practices are arranged through an intergenerational contract, namely grandparenting for childcare and filial piety for elderly care. With migration among family members becoming commonplace, this intergenerational care contract is destabilized, and we may ask to what extent families can bear such a heavy responsibility for care, and how sustainable this family-based welfare regime can be in a globalized market economy that has human mobility as one of its premises.

Family relations now exist across greater distances than before for a greater number of people because of increased human mobility. Welfare needs not only for care and but also for caregiving now also have a new spatial dimension; for instance, when an empty-nest elder is in need of care from his/her adult child who has migrated and settled down in another city/country, the adult child needs to travel for a long time and distance in order to provide the care. Therefore, we must cross different national/territorial borders or any other types of borders that demarcate access to welfare to rethink welfare. In this context, discussions around "transnational subject", "transnational space", "cross-bordered practice" from transnational feminist scholarships and particularly feminist studies on international migration are relevant to the reconceptualization of welfare. Levitt et al's (2017) concept of "resource environment" helps to map and analyse individuals' access to social protection and welfare in a transnational space created by global migrations.

China is certainly not alone in facing the challenge of elderly care. While a new elderly care model in China is about relieving the family, a new model in the Nordic countries is about relieving the state in order to make the welfare state more sustainable. The re-distribution of care and welfare between the state, family, market and civil society in both contexts opens room for dialog and mutual learning.

We therefore propose the rethinking of welfare as a cross-bordered practice in both research and policy making. This re-conception is not only relevant to China where many elders and young children are left behind; it is also relevant for the Nordic region given that migrant populations in all of the Nordic countries are growing. China also has a growing international migrant population. More attention needs to be given to what their welfare needs are, and to what their access to welfare is like in a transnational space. As such, rethinking welfare as a cross-bordered practice concerns welfare beyond the issue of care.

### *Consider the process of the (neoliberal and welfare) subject formation*

Drawing on group member Elina Oinas's work (2017) on the subjectification process that occurs in welfare states in the Nordic countries, we suggest that it is crucial to understand gender equality in the welfare state in terms of the process of subject formation. We also recommend subjecting welfare state policy making to the critique of transnational feminism in which global inclusion is advocated, and which asks for new ways to discuss welfare beyond national boundaries.

For individuals, welfare systems mean not only concrete services but also sets of ideas. They enable and limit the horizon of the possible, the desired and the expected. They tell stories about one's relationship

to a bigger collective and to oneself. A welfare regime is a normative context that subjectifies its citizens in specific ways. Welfare regimes operate with ideals for justice, but what justice means differs from place to place and time to time, and between groups and interests. Welfare systems are made of constant battles over fairness, where lines are drawn regarding limits to individual freedom, entitlement to social support, and the responsibility to contribute. Negotiations, conflicts and struggles over definitions of justice are the core elements of welfare systems. Thereby welfare is never an apolitical, neutral or technical concept.

Welfare systems guide people to figure out what is possible, and what is expected of them. Welfare systems enable certain hopes and desires – technologies of self – while foreclosing on others. They include actual material opportunities and practices, like availability of security, education, work and health care. Welfare systems are never very stable, they are in a constant flux, and the drivers of change are often transnational influence, social movements and economic transformations. The transnational women's movement has been a key transformative force everywhere in the world, by both enforcing practical systemic changes and by nurturing new horizons for dreams.

Dismantling the ideal of the Nordic women-friendly welfare state – that in reality perhaps was never quite there but was a powerful idea (Hernes 1989, Anttonen et al. 2012) – means creating private arrangements for domestic care work and a divide between paid and unpaid women domestic workers. Silvia Federici (2016, p.16) asks whether the issue of domestic work not counting as real labor could unite rather than separate women, but so far this is not the case. There is an uncomfortable silence around migrant domestic labor within the welfare state today.

Transnational feminist welfare research views the subject as relational, as becoming, as dependent and as needy, in positive ways. In feminist theorizing, the gendered welfare-seeking subject is critically reflexive about processes of subjectification, yet not yearning for empowerment or liberation *from* social bonds or collective embeddedness. Embeddedness includes both formal and intimate relationships coming together, the formal often indicating the citizen-state relationship. Feminist scholarship emphasizes collective, yet not deterministic or necessarily state-oriented, ways of thinking about the subject. While different cultures, historical contexts and places give rise to very different ways of claiming that their specific way of managing self-social relations is unique, there is a tendency to resist the idea of an entirely individualistic, fully independent modern self. While the idea of a market-oriented, instrumentalized subject who has faith in neo-liberal individualism and a performance-oriented welfare ideology where rights and wellbeing are conditional to individual success is currently gaining ground everywhere in the globalizing world, feminist social science convincingly shows that such a limited view on society, care and the subject is far from credible, feasible or desirable, anywhere.

Critical theorizing of welfare solutions should include new feminist utopias of global inclusion and global citizenship with universal access to support and services. A discussion about how to detach welfare systems from nation state based underpinnings as well as kinship systems alone is overdue in a transnational, globalizing and increasingly unequal world, where the urgency of climate justice crisis enhances the need for new ecologically sustainable and societally fair welfare solutions.

#### *Reconsidering the method and methodology of researching welfare*

The question of gender in welfare regimes is often analyzed using quantitative methods. Drawing on group member Trude Sundberg's work, we propose that researchers critically rethink the predominate quantitative approach in studies of welfare policies.

Traditional welfare research has been dominated by Western research, for example Esping-Andersen's (1990) classic text *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, both in its theoretical and methodological approaches. This has meant that welfare is analyzed predominantly using concepts growing out of a particular set of societies with specific historical development, and thus a particular language is used when talking about welfare. The concept of a welfare state, the specific focus on welfare in response to a western type of industrialization, solutions built around the economic framework of western societies, as well as assumptions made in terms of the function and relationships between state, the market and the individual are the main approaches that have produced a large amount of "important" knowledge in welfare research.

We suggest that research that unpacks and challenges some of the traditional ways of approaching welfare research be undertaken in order to better understand the diverse range of factors and relations involved in welfare. Future research should seek to better understand welfare as a concept itself and how its definition and content varies in different societies. The overarching goal is to produce new methods and research that set out to challenge, to change and to adapt our methodological approaches so that they include critical angles that capture the complexities of the concept of welfare.

We propose:

1. Focusing on how racialised, gendered, sexualized and classed relations of power are materialized and negotiated not only at a country level but also within countries and across regional borders.
2. Developing research designs that build not only on traditional qualitative methods, but also draw on feminist and decolonising approaches that account for power structures and intersections which weigh on respondents and the researcher in their approaches and answers. Approaches like community-driven research allow us to capture the meanings and importance of issues from the point of view of local practice and experience. An example for why this is so crucial is in Sundberg's forthcoming study of welfare attitudes in Singapore and Beijing where it is argued that studies interested in understanding welfare attitudes in these geographical areas need to account for family values and roles.
3. Using interdisciplinary methodologies, drawing on not only social research, historical research and linguistics but also on approaches from physical sciences to understand the full complexity of welfare and its relation to the environment as well as the social, economic and political time and place.
4. Greater focus on approaches that couple qualitative and quantitative methods and take a bottom up approach that allows a thorough exploration of the meaning given to concepts in a given place and time not limited by country borders. The latter is crucial, as we need to capture within country variations as well as regional phenomena that transgress borders.
5. Diversifying the combinations of qualitative (ethnographies, community projects and training, group research beyond focus groups) and quantitative (use of experimental designs that use new media and technology, avoidance of oversampling of vulnerable populations, use of community defined/driven question) methods.

## Policy Recommendations

Based on our research recommendations, we highlight the following suggestions for transnational policy-making practices:

1. Be sensitive to how and why issues of welfare, gender equality and rights are raised and understood in different contexts. Consider every place as diverse, multi-layered and changing. Complexities arise when social and economic inequalities are recognized as intersectional.
2. Consider the differences between welfare models as transformative – they offer processes of reflection, negotiation and collaboration.
3. Engage in the critical translation of experience from other places and the responses to similar issues in those places instead of resorting to stereotypical claims about cultural differences as explanations. Claims of tradition serve current political interest and concomitantly mask critical differences, conflicts and inequalities in the issues at stake.
4. Take into consideration multiple voices from individuals and institutions. Transnational and regional policy making should be considered as a collaborative and inclusive process of knowledge production.
5. Take an intersectional approach to understanding gender issues and consider welfare not simply as solutions to certain societal and economic problems, but as producing social change, such as new formations of gendered, classed, racialised, sexualized, generational, familial, communal, and regional relations.



### 3. The Workshop Photo Diary

by Nicol Savinetti

#### The Bus Tour



Image by Kasper Ørntoft Thor

In her welcome speech and in introducing the workshop, Senior Researcher and leader of the workshop project, Cecilia Milwertz appropriately made use of the metaphor of a “Bus Tour”. Borrowing from Center for Vild Analyse (2012), Cecilia explained that a bus can be an everyday phenomenon – a core expression of waiting, of the routine of taking the same bus every day, of repetition. A bus can be a place where nothing happens while we are in the waiting position of being transported from one place to another. However, the buses themselves are not necessarily places of passive waiting. Center for Vild Analyse (2012) mention the example of Rosa Parks who in 1955 refused to move from the seat she had taken in the “whites only” section of a bus. They note that the idea that anyone can sit anywhere on a bus expressed the universalist ambition of the civil rights movement in an exemplary manner. The seats on the bus were suddenly imbued with new meaning.

Similarly in the 1970s, the Redstockings feminist activist group in Copenhagen got on a bus and refused to pay the full ticket price. Their argument was that since women were not getting the same pay as men, then the cost of bus tickets should also be lower for women. In 2012 feminist activists in Beijing sang the song *My Short Skirt* from the play *The Vagina Monologues* on the Beijing Metro to demonstrate that what women wear does not in any way legitimize violence.

The point: things can happen on busses – change can begin on a bus. Sometimes though, such action is also obstructed as in 2015 when feminist activists planned an event on buses in three cities in China to make the issue of sexual harassment on public transportation visible. While the 1970s activists in Copenhagen were carried off the buses by rather friendly policemen, the 2015 activists were imprisoned and subjected to harsh interrogation for over one month in China.



Cecilia invited the audience and participants to bring whatever personal, political, academic and other forms of baggage that they travel with into creative interaction. As a source of inspiration, the workshop participants received a blue bag (pictured left) to bring on the Bus Tour. The bags are designed by feminist activist Xiao Meili and adorned with the text “This is what a feminist looks like”.

RIGHT image by Huo Donghao, Danish Cultural Center, LEFT image by @nicolsavinetti

## Opening Reception



After workshop participants and guests had registered, Camilla Mordhorst, Secretary General of Danish Cultural Institute warmly welcomed the guests and introduced the Center.

Her speech was followed by that of Helle Meinertz, Deputy Head of Mission of Royal Danish Embassy.

Cecilia Milwertz, the main organizer of the workshop from the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies at University of Copenhagen, then welcomed guests and shared more about the background to and the program for the workshop.

Lastly, Ms. Niu Caixia, Special Assistant to Country Director & Communication Officer at Ford Foundation Beijing Office gave a statement on behalf of the Ford Foundation Beijing.



Images by @nicolsavinetti  
TOP Left to right: Cecilia Milwertz, Camilla Mordhorst, Eric Messerschmidt, Helle Meinertz. BOTTOM: Ms. Niu Caixia

## Cultural Program



During the course of the workshop there were three film screenings. The first *We Are Here*, is a documentary film on the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) movement in China.

The film screening was followed by a dialogue between the Editor in Chief of the Chinese magazine *Feminist Voices* and Xin Ying, Director of the LGBT Center, Beijing and audience Q&A.

Image by Cecilia Milwertz



Source: [The Danish Film Institute homepage](#)

The second two films, focused on the women's movement in Denmark. *Vejen er Lang* (entitled *The Red Thread* in English) traces the origins of the Redstockings movement in Denmark during the 1970s and 80s, while *Grevindens Døtre* (entitled *The Countess and her Daughters* in English) documents the struggle to establish the first shelter for battered women in Denmark during the 1980s. Both films were presented by the films' director, Mette Knudsen, who was an active member of the Redstockings in Copenhagen.



Images by @nicolsavinetti

In 2019, the Danish Cultural Center is working with the theme **Women Hold Up Half the Sky**, the proclamation famously made by Mao Zedong in reference to the resource that women constitute. The double poster exhibition **Iron Women and Red Stockings**, organised in collaboration with the Hafnia Foundation and Kvindehuset, is a representation of the Danish and Chinese women's liberation campaigns and propaganda posters from the 1940s to the 1970s.



Images by @nicolsavinetti

As the quote below from the Danish Cultural Center homepage<sup>3</sup> indicates, the exhibition provided the ideal settings in which to execute the workshop:

*“Iron Women and Red Stockings” prompts us to recall the propaganda poster as an art form, and not least a means for proactive gender politics, welfare and socially founded growth ... The exposition of the Chinese and Danish propaganda works reminds us of the interplay between progress, welfare, human worth and a proactive gender policy.*

The art exhibition about the Danish Redstockings Movement together with the screening of the documentary films on the history of the women’s movement in Denmark and on the feminist activism that led to the establishment in the 1980s of the first shelter for battered women in Denmark reminded workshop participants of an important aspect of how welfare policies may come into being. Both the exhibition and the films on Denmark as well as a documentary film on the LGBTQ movement in China pointed to the importance of feminist activism in enabling societal change.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.danishculture.com/iron-women-red-stockings-plakater-propaganda-og-koenspolitik/>

## Keynote Speeches



Images by Kasper Ørntoft Thor

The keynote speeches were delivered by experts from the Nordic region and China to start the day on the Tuesday and Wednesday morning of the workshop. The following presentations were given, and each was followed by discussions with the workshop participants and guests:

- Professor Anneli Anttonen, University of Tampere, Finland: **A Critical Reflection on Gender in the Nordic Welfare States** (*top left image*)
- Professor Bu Wei, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, China: **Gender Mainstreaming in Child Welfare – A Pilot Study** (*bottom left image*)
- Professor Peter Abrahamson, University of Copenhagen, Denmark: **Comparing Nordic and East Asian Welfare Regimes** (*top right image*)
- Professor Wang Xiyang, Beijing Normal University, China: **How the Newly Issued Anti-Domestic Violence Law is Relevant to Abused Women** (*bottom right image*)

## Group Workshops



Images by Cecilia Milwertz and @nicolsavinetti

TOP LEFT: Liu Xin, Katarina Leppänen, Elina Oinas, Yan Zhao, Lily Yu; TOP MIDDLE: Elisabeth Engelbretsen; TOP RIGHT: Lisa Eklund, Anne Lise Ellingsæter, Xuan Li, Lin Huilin, Kalle Berggren; BOTTOM LEFT: Liu Xin; BOTTOM MIDDLE: Elisabeth Lund Engbretsen, Di Wang, Olga Sasunkevich, Xiong Jing and other participants; BOTTOM RIGHT: Lisa Eklund

Work began on the three themes that guided the workshop in the months leading up to the gathering in Beijing. In Beijing on Tuesday and Wednesday of the workshop, the groups engaged in intense dialogue in both individual and joint sessions in order to come up with a set of recommendations for how actors can consider the concept of gender when thinking about and arriving at welfare solutions, and for areas that academics should consider for future research collaboration in the field of gender and welfare. The debates and discussions were rich and lively, with agreement, disagreement, passion and emotion that resulted in the formulation of the recommendations presented earlier in this report.

## Group Recommendations, Feedback and Roundtable



On Thursday 28 March the three groups presented their recommendations to a panel of experts who gave feedback on the recommendations.

The session was followed by a dialogue and actions round-table: *Transnational solidarities in feminist and queer spaces*, moderated by Olga Sasunkevich, Xiong Jing, Di Wang.

*Images by Kasper Ørntoft Thor and Cecilia Milwertz*

## The Theme Day



Images by Kasper Ørntoft Thor. TOP LEFT *Vagina Monologues* performance by BCome Group; TOP RIGHT: *Love and Exploitation: entangled narratives of marriage and sex work* presentation by Professor Ding Naifei; BOTTOM LEFT: Moderator, Hung Huang; BOTTOM RIGHT: *The Wildest Band*

On the Friday, the Theme Day entitled *Gender, Sexuality, Violence, and Power* was open to the general public. It consisted of one documentary film on the founding of the first women's shelter in Denmark; two presentations on offline and online movements against sexual harassment in China, India and the world, as quests toward 21st justice; a presentation on feminist sexual politics in the US and Taiwan, and a presentation on sex workers and sex work research and methodology in China; one theatre performance and one musical performance.<sup>4</sup> The dual languages of the theme day and its range of topics were expertly moderated by Chinese media celebrity Hung Huang, with acute questions and comments from the host and the audience during the sessions.

The Danish Cultural Center arranged the live-streaming of the Theme Day. The morning session can be viewed via this link: <https://artexpress.artron.net/liveShare/1937>; and the afternoon session via this link: <https://artexpress.artron.net/liveShare/1938>.

<sup>4</sup> See the Appendix for full Workshop and Theme Day program.



## 4. Reflections on the Workshop

Dr Liu Xin, University of Helsinki:

*I was quite worried about how to bring together the different expertise and interests of my group participants, and how the questions raised by my group might resonate with or connect to the recommendations of the other groups. But the format of the workshop really afforded space and time for intense discussions.*

Dr Olga Sasunkevich, University of Gothenburg:

*Since neither China nor Nordic countries are direct areas of my expertise, I could not foresee how much I could gain [from] the participation in the workshop. Yet, I found all discussions very productive and stimulating for my own research on transnational feminist and LGBTQ solidarities.*

Guo Ruixiang, Independent Consultant, Formerly at UN Women:

*The content was very informative with knowledge and practices shared in area of social welfare and feminist advocacy initiatives. I enjoyed the entire process and all the sections throughout 4 days, especially the intensive day on Thursday, March 28, working together with the three thematic groups. Thank you very much for the wonderful opportunity and all efforts for the success of the workshop!*

Dr Yan Zhao, Nord University, Norway:

*It was my great pleasure to be part of this workshop, or to use Cecilia's metaphor, this wonderful collective intellectual trip! The form of the workshop is quite special in that its framework was rather big and the participants were given much room and freedom to set up their own agendas. To be honest, I was a little bit uncertain on how this would work. However, this has worked amazingly well and I never enjoyed a workshop [as much] as this one.*

Professor Ding Naifei, National Central University, Taiwan:

*I (...) vividly remember the third day's recommendations and responses to these, as well as the theme day presentations. I especially note presentations on the work of ongoing BFSW (barefoot social workers) in increasing Chinese rural-city cleavage and left-behind peoples young and old as unable to leave communities amidst compressed development process. Whereas a widening gap between ideals and practices in the legal framework of some welfare states in Europe and Asia are partially signaled through movements of peoples connected to earlier histories of uneven racialized economic and political expansion. The Chinese rural-city spatial divide come to connect with temporally aggregated developmental area divisions in post- and de-colonial times. That it was possible for workshop and paper presentations and film showings and discussions to hold these explorations apart and together toward an entwined understanding, is in no small part due to the workshop's organizational groundwork, preparations, and focus of schedule and on the part of its participants.*

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## Appendix

# Workshop and Theme Day Program

### Monday 25 March

Registration 17:00 – 17:30

Welcome reception 17:30 – 19:30

Light refreshments, speeches, introduction to the exhibition *Women Hold Up Half the Sky*

### Tuesday 26 March

10:00 – 10:15 Registration

10:15 – 10:30 Welcome

10:30 – 12:00 **Opening Session with Keynote Speeches**

Chair: Cecilia Milwertz

***Gender Mainstreaming in Child Welfare***

Professor Bu Wei, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

***Comparing Nordic and East Asian Welfare Regimes***

Associate Professor Peter Abrahamson, University of Copenhagen

12:00 – 12:30 **Workshop practicalities**

12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch**

13:30 – 15:30 **Individual group session 1**

15:30 – 16:00 **Break**

16:00 – 17:00 **Individual group session 2**

17:00 – 18:00 **Joint group session 1**

18:00 – 19:30 **Dinner**

20:00 – 22:15 **Documentary film**

Chair: Xiong Jing

***We Are Here*** on the LGBT movement in China in Chinese with subtitles in English

Introduction and discussion with Xin Ying (LGBT Center, Beijing)

### Wednesday 27 March

10:00 – 11:30 **Keynote Speeches**

Chair: Nicol Foulkes Savinetti, the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies

***Critical Reflection on Gender in the Nordic Welfare States***

Professor Anneli Anttonen, University of Tampere

***How the newly issued anti-domestic violence law is relevant to abused women***

Professor Wang Xiying, Beijing Normal University

11:30 – 12:30 **Individual group session 3**

12:30 – 13:30 **Lunch**

13:30 – 15:30 **Joint group session 2**

15:30 – 16:00 **Break**

16:00 – 17:00 **Individual group session 4**

17:00 – 18:00 **Meeting – Sino-Nordic Gender Studies Network 2020 conference**

All workshop participants are welcome to attend

18:00 – 19:30 **Dinner**

20:00 – 22:15 **Documentary film**

Chair: Dušica Ristivojević

*The Long Road* on feminist activism in Denmark in Danish with Chinese subtitles

Introduction and discussion with Mette Knudsen (the film Director)

## Thursday 28 March

### Recommendations: Considering Gender in Future Welfare Solutions

Chairs: Dušica Ristivojević and Xiong Jing

Commentators: Anneli Anttonen, Guo Ruixiang, Li Yingtao, Peter Abrahamson

10:00 – 10:15 **Welcome**

10:15 – 11:30 **Group 1: Parenting, family policies and gender (in)equality**

Lisa Eklund, Kalle Berggren, Li Xuan, Anne Lise Ellingsæter and Lin Huilin

11:30 – 11:45 **Break**

11:45 – 13:00 **Group 2: Feminist activism**

Elisabeth Engebretsen, Di Wang, Mia Liinason, Olga Sasunkevich, Xiong Jing

13:00 – 14:00 **Lunch**

14:00 – 15:15 **Group 3: Welfare states and feminist transnational knowledge production**

Liu Xin, Lily Yu, Katarina Lepänen, Elina Oinas, Yan Zhao, Trude Sundberg

15:15 – 16:00 **Break**

16:00 – 18:00 **Dialogue and actions round-table**

**Transnational Solidarities in Feminist and Queer Spaces**

Moderators: Mia Liinason, Olga Sasunkevich, Xiong Jing and Di Wang

18:30 – 20:00 **Dinner**

## Friday 29 March

Theme Day: *Gender, Sexuality, Violence and Power*

Open to the general public. Event in both English and Chinese

### MORNING SESSION 10:15 – 12:30

Moderator: Hung Huang - television host, author, actor and publisher

10:15 – 11:00 *The social recognition and awareness of sexual harassment and violence - the case of Iceland* (English)

Associate Professor Irma Erlingsdottir, Head of Centre for Gender Research, University of Iceland

11:00 – 11:45 *From offline to online: A brief history of 30 years of anti-sexual harassment activism in China* (English)

Lu Manman, Editor, Huisheng Project

11:45 – 12:30 *The 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the Quest for Justice* (English)

Giti Chandra, Associated Scholar with the United Nations University, Gender Equality Studies and Training Centre, Iceland

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

### AFTERNOON SESSION 13:30 – 17:30

Moderator: Hung Huang - television host, author, actor and publisher

13:30 – 14:15 *Love and exploitation: entangled narratives of marriage and sex work* (Chinese)

Professor Ding Naifei, Centre for the Study of Sexualities, National Central University, Taiwan

14:15 – 15:00 *Sex work in mainland China: situations, changes and tensions* (Chinese)

Associate Professor Huang Yingying, Director, Institute of Sexuality and Gender, Renmin University

15:00 – 15:30 Break

15:30 – 16:30 Documentary film *The Countess & Her Daughters* about the fight for the first shelter for battered women in Denmark (film excerpts with Chinese subtitles). Introductions and Q&A by the director of the film Mette Knudsen (English with interpretation to Chinese)

16:30 – 17:30 *Chinese Vagina Monologues Performance* (Chinese)

BCome Group

18:00 – 19:30 Dinner

20:00 – 21:00 *The Wildest Band*

## 3月29日星期五

### “性别、性、暴力及权力”主题日

对公众开放，语言为中英

#### 10:15 – 12:30 上午

主持人：洪晃——节目主持、作家、演员、知名出版人

10:15 – 11:00 *社会对性骚扰和性别暴力的认知和意识——以冰岛为例*（英文）

Irma Erlingsdottir

副教授，冰岛大学性别研究中心主任

11:00 – 11:45 *从线下到线上：中国反性骚扰运动30年简史*（英文）

陆蔓蔓

编辑，Huisheng Project

11:45 – 12:30 *二十一世纪及对公正的追求*（英文）

Giti Chandra

联合国大学学者，冰岛雷克雅维克性别平等研究及训练中心

#### 12:30 – 13:30 午餐

#### 13:30 – 17:30 下午

主持人：洪晃——节目主持、作家、演员、知名出版人

13:30 – 14:15 *爱与剥削：婚姻与性工作的纠缠叙事*（中文）

丁乃非

教授，台湾国立中央大学性别研究室

14:15 – 15:00 *中国大陆的性工作：形势、变化与矛盾*（中文）

黄盈盈

副教授，人民大学性与性别研究所主任

#### 15:00 – 15:30 休息

15:30 – 16:30 *纪录片《伯爵夫人和她的女儿》* 放映，影片讲述了丹麦第一个为受暴力压迫的妇女设立庇护所的故事（节选，配有中文字幕）。导演 Mette Knudsen 介绍影片，问答环节（中英文）。

16:30 – 17:30 *中国《阴道独白》演出*（中文）

BCome Group

18:00 – 19:30 **晚餐**（请提前报名）

20:00 – 21:00 **女性民谣乐队——九野**