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Feminist Demands and the Problem of Housework

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This article develops an account of demand-making and provides a novel framework for evaluating the demands and strategies of social movements. It explores three features of demands, arguing that they disclose social conditions, create constituencies, and set the horizons of the world that social movements seek to build. It does so by considering two feminist demands: the demand for wages for housework and for the socialization of housework. By revisiting revolutionary feminism in the 1970s, it contrasts two strategic perspectives articulated in debates about housework: what Selma James called the "perspective of winning" and what I call the "perspective of investment," a strategy for change that sees short-term reforms as investments in long-term transformations. In light of this, I endorse the demand to socialize housework as apt for the contemporary care economy and show how my account of demand-making contributes to the political theory of social movements by clarifying movement demands for "non-reformist reforms," such as defund the police.

The COVID-19 pandemic intensified the caring labors of women. Gender inequality in paid and unpaid work increased internationally (OECD 2021). In the United States, women's caring burdens grew, despite the range of policy responses, which emphasized cash payments over other support (Bariola and Collins 2021). Meanwhile, the disproportionately Black and immigrant women workers of the care economy—a rapidly growing sector of low-wage employment (Dwyer 2013)—performed high-risk health care and social assistance work. This situation exacerbated what Nancy Fraser (2016) calls the "crisis of care" that has taken hold across capitalist welfare regimes (Esping-Andersen 1999; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2010) as governments fail to fund adequate services, producing a "caring deficit" (Tronto 2013). In response, social movements coalesced around practices of mutual aid (Care Collective 2020). Abolitionist groups building on the Black feminist care politics of the Movement for Black Lives demanded the reallocation of investment from policing to community services (Woodly 2021). Thus, the politics of care became central not only to law- and policymaking but also to what can be called the domain of *demand-making*.

How might political theorists evaluate the demands developed by these social movements, whether about care or other problems? I will argue in this paper that the answer to this question depends on an evaluation not only of the policy goals of demands but also of demands themselves—what they are, what they do, and what movements hope to achieve in making them. Demands have political effects beyond the stipulation of goals and reforms. As a key part of the "repertoire" of modern social movements (Tilly 2013), they are often how those movements frame their values (McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Woodly 2015). Demands can articulate critiques, ideals, and strategies, but they can also function as organizational tactics. In what follows, I will suggest a novel account of demand-making, which shows how demands can both reveal hidden dimensions of social reality and build constituencies while also indicating a new world to be built that exceeds agendas for immediate reform. I offer this account by revisiting a moment in the history of feminist thought and practice in the 1970s when feminists made demands directed at transforming women's caring labors and, at the same time, debated the functions of demands. In doing so, I contribute to efforts in the political theory of social movements to read those movements as "social theorists in their own right" (Pineda 2018, 339; cf. Hayward 2020; Hooker 2016; Livingston 2018; Mantena 2012; Schwartzberg 2020; Shelby and Terry 2018; Weeks 2011; Zerilli 2005). I also suggest, following Kathi Weeks's (2011, 114) method of "creative reappropriation," that their insights can be redeployed: the feminist vision of demand-making can provide a way of making sense of contemporary demands concerning care work and other issues.

My focus is on practices of demand-making that emerged from two traditions of left anticapitalist revolutionary feminism in debates about housework. By revolutionary feminism, I mean the political movement born of a range of second-wave women's liberation, socialist, Black, anticolonial, and labor movements that sought to connect the commitments of Marxism and feminism.[1] I look, in particular, at the International Wages for Housework Campaign (WfH), the Marxist feminist movement active between 1972 and 1977 in Italy, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, and the Caribbean and its revolutionary feminist critics in the US and the UK, who were involved in feminist, socialist, and communist groups (Bracke 2013; Stoller 2018; Toupin 2018).

These feminists defined housework in broad terms. In contrast to the narrow definition of housework as gendered private domestic labor, they often took a wide view that included waged and unwaged caring and servicing work in the home, workplace, and community. Unlike egalitarian and neorepublican critics of

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[1] Cf. Bhandar and Ziadah (2020). I do not mean the British "revolutionary feminist" critics of socialist feminism.

workplace and labor market domination who mostly focus on the reorganization of standard employment through democracy or strike action (Anderson 2017; Gourevitch 2018; Landemore and Ferreras 2016; O'Shea 2019), or gender egalitarians who seek justifiable policies to remedy the unfair distribution of household responsibilities and their effects in the workplace (Brighouse and Wright 2008; Gheaus 2018; Schouten 2019), many of these feminists conceptualized a continuum of sites of exploitative work in the home and care economy—a continuum often now characterized as the "life-making" terrain of social reproduction (Bhattacharya 2017; Ferguson 2020).[2] They advocated transforming these sites not through policy reform but through practices of demand-making.

To explore these practices, I begin from two demands developed to address the problem of housework:[3] a demand for wages for housework (WfH) and a counterdemand for the socialization of housework—that is, for the creation of institutions to "socialize" women's private labors and bring them into the public domain (by creating, for example, free 24-hour publicly funded, community-controlled child-care, laundering, and cleaning services staffed collectively by well-compensated workers). I argue that these debates represent an innovative moment in ideas not only about work but also about what demands can do and where they are situated in strategies of social transformation.

My argument proceeds as follows. In reconstructing the housework debates, three key features of demand-making emerge. First, demands can disclose social conditions. Second, they can build constituencies. Third, they can set the horizon of the world which the social movement seeks to build.[4] I explore how these features work in the WfH demand and the counterdemand for the socialization of housework. Of the features I identify, the third—what I refer to as the horizon-setting function, by which the demand indicates the long-term transformation that a social movement seeks—raises a question about the perspective a movement takes in relating demands for reform to aspirations for revolutionary change. Since demand-making often involves appeals to the tangible effects of demands on strategy—what happens if concessions are won, reforms are met, or strategies fail—demands are a key way that radical movements articulate their relation to reform. I show how these rival demands about housework took distinctive forms and exemplified different ways of connecting reform and revolutionary transformation. They represent two contrasting strategic perspectives: what Selma James called "the perspective of wining" ([1972] 1974) and what I will call the *perspective of investment.*

I draw this contrast in the following way. According to James's ([1972] 1974) perspective of winning, demands were themselves agentic movement-building displays of power. The act of demanding wages for housework was itself cast as revolutionary, for even when the demand was not met, it disclosed social conditions and built constituencies. The demand for WfH thus performed two critical functions of demand-making. But it did not perform a third: it did not itself set a long-term revolutionary horizon. The WfH movement aimed at the abolition of work and the wage relation, but because the WfH demand did not articulate this horizon, it was easily misunderstood as a compensatory demand (like demands for wage increases). By contrast, the demand to socialize housework aligned the proposal of immediate reforms and the setting of long-term revolutionary horizons. It demanded the socialization of housework as a process that would end private labors and at the same time defined that socialization as an end-state alternative to the capitalist organization of reproductive labor. For this reason, I call it a *mimetic* demand, as its short- and long-term aims mirrored each other. In the case of WfH, by contrast, there was a *disjunctive* relationship between the demand and the movement's long-term goals. I argue that this mimetic form of demand typifies the strategic logic of the perspective of investment—a vision of transformative change by which demands themselves lay the foundation for future social and political transformations. The metaphor of investment here is apt: for in this case, the act of demand-making and the meeting of demands for short-term reforms was not only valuable for its own sake; it yielded returns that could be reinvested for significant long-term change.

With my account of demand-making and the two perspectives in place, I explore the contemporary relevance of the demands for wages and the socialization of housework. Though both the content of particular demands and the evaluation of a given demand's strategic efficacy will ultimately be situational and context dependent, I argue that contextual analyses of demands can be facilitated by attending to the salient features of demand-making I describe here. I suggest that two features of demand-making—the disclosure of social conditions and the setting of horizons—would be better achieved by pressing for socialization than for wages, given transformations in the care economy since the 1970s.[5] To conclude, I show how the perspective of investment and my three-part taxonomy can provide a framework for evaluating demands and illuminate contemporary demand-making, taking the example of the demand to "defund the police."

My main claim is that this account of demand-making can provide a portable model for evaluating demands for what André Gorz (1967) called "non-reformist reforms," which are made by several contemporary movements (Akbar 2020). But I also want to show that these ideas about demand-making and the problem of

[2] For a survey of political theories of work, see Turner and Van Milders (2021).
[3] For a disaggregation of "housework," see Quick (2008).
[4] Thanks to Adom Getachew for help with developing these categories.
[5] I restrict my discussion to the US household and care economy. For the relevance of the housework debates to informal labor markets beyond the global north, see Hensman (2011), Mezzadri (2019), Kotiswaran (2020), and Forrester (2021).

housework were formulated at a hinge moment in what I call—invoking a concept of David Scott's (2004)—the *problem-space of deindustrialization*, when feminists adapted strategies from labor and socialist traditions (which centered industrial workplaces and tied demand-making to collective bargaining) to the "feminized" or informal workplaces of postindustrial societies—the home, the hospital, the school, the community, and the service sector. Because these feminists were political theorists of deindustrialization, their analyses are particularly relevant today, when nonstandard employment constitutes a growing share of work and when movements reject the view of the traditional workplace as the exclusive site of exploitation and of demands as part of collective bargaining alone.

THE HOUSEWORK DEBATES REVISITED

My proposed account of what demands can do emerges from feminist debates in the 1970s, which covered a range of issues about care work, service work, and domestic labor. Feminist movements initially turned to the problem of housework as a way of disclosing women's oppression in the home. In searching for novel ways to reject the activities characterized as women's natural duties, many used the language of work to recast them as alienating drudgery and as central to upholding patriarchal structures (Mainardi 1970). For the US and Western European feminists who, from the late 1960s, challenged biological or ideological conceptions of the family to locate the "material" basis of women's oppression (Sargent and Hartmann 1981) and situated housework not as an example of oppression under patriarchy or capitalism but as the reproductive activity at its core, focusing on housework provided a way of disclosing the functions of "women's work" for capitalism. This became a key feminist strategy: as Juno Mac and Molly Smith (2020, 55) argue, "naming otherwise invisible 'natural structures' of gendered labour"—housework, emotional labor, sex work, gestational labor—became central to thinking "about how, collectively, to resist or reorder such work."[6]

In the "domestic labor debates" of the early 1970s, much of which involved close readings of Marx and value theory (Vogel 2000), feminists debated whether households were sites of production with labor processes—housework, childcare, childbearing—that produced value for capital. Liberals and many socialists traditionally saw the household as a consumption unit. Some now argued that it was precapitalist (productive of use values, but not exchange value [Benston [1969] 2019] or that it involved its own mode of production (Harrison 1973; Kuhn and Wolpe 1978). They saw domestic labor as fundamental to capitalism because it reproduced labor power, creating and sustaining workers who produced a surplus, thus contributing to profits or lowering labor costs (Gardiner 1976; Gerstein 1973; Vogel 1983), because of its dual role in consuming the means of subsistence and reproducing labor power (Secombe 1974), or because it was itself productive (Dalla Costa 1972). Disclosing this work was not only crucial to understanding the "material basis" of women's oppression but also "politically vital" for "the development of the correct strategy for the Women's Movement" (Fox 1980; Himmelweit and Mohun 1977, 16–8; Malos 1980). Doing so also helped to reveal a constituency for feminist class politics (Gardiner 1976). It allowed feminists to frame the home as a site of struggle, and for those seeking a revolutionary subject beyond the industrial male working class, to center housewives in a revolutionary strategy (Dalla Costa and James 1973; James [1972] 1974).

But the problem of housework was never only about unwaged domestic labor. For many working-class women, Black feminists, and Black Power women (Farmer 2017), housework was only a small part of the "superexploitation" of Black women workers (Jones 1949; Williams 1970), who were often waged domestic workers and for whom time with one's family could equally be characterized as an unaffordable luxury (Beal [1969] 2008). Numerous Marxist feminists argued for an expansive vision of housework that encompassed servicing, maintenance, and caring labors, waged and unwaged. While some disaggregated domestic and reproductive labor (Vogel 1983, 163), others saw housework as analogous to or inclusive of reproductive labor performed by secretaries, nurses, teachers, domestic workers, and sex workers (Wandor 1972, 141–2, 150). WfH activists described the "public reproductive work" and "socialized housework" women performed in the service industry, including in "the home in the hospital" (Agger 1975; Edmond and Fleming 1975; Power of Women 1975, 69).

In this context, the demand to compensate unwaged housework was made by women with diverse commitments in groups like the National Welfare Rights Organization and at the 1977 Houston National Women's Conference and the UN's 1985 Conference on Women in Nairobi (Nadasen 2011; Swinth 2018). Yet many theorists of housework conceived of their politics as revolutionary, for at least five reasons. First, they characterized household labor as the work of reproducing and maintaining capitalism—work that was not only unfairly distributed and located in a space constituted by relations of domination but also performed under exploitative conditions. Second, they sought to transcend these conditions by abolishing or refiguring that space. Third, they saw this transcendence as impossible within capitalism. Fourth, they were not satisfied with gender equality but defended transfers of power away from capital and a class politics that rejected equality within oppressive hierarchies. Fifth, they reconceived sites of work by looking beyond the paid workplace—a move that, insofar as work was characterized as exploitative, had radical implications: the home and community were redefined as sites of labor action.

Given these commitments, what role did demands play in feminist strategies? Demands historically have taken a range of forms: they have been central to

[6] For a critique of this strategy as overvalorizing work, see Glazer (1993).

socialist, communist, and anticolonial manifestoes, as well as labor collective bargaining strategies for delivering social goods. In such circumstances, demands were relational: they named an addressee (the state, the workplace, a colonial power).[7] They were also often part of established strategies: socialist demands were disaggregated as minimal (directed at improving workers' lives), transitional (meeting needs while building power within bourgeois society and creating conditions for socialism), or part of a maximal program (Trotsky 1970).

In the 1960s, the new social movements forged a different relationship to demand-making. Many groups developed packages of demands in manifestoes or programs, such as the Seven Demands of the UK National Women's Liberation Conference in 1970 or the Black Panther's Ten Point Program (Spencer 2016; Stevenson 2019). The demands proposed arrangements that signaled desires for transformative change (Weeks 2011) and sometimes provided standards for gauging revolutionary progress (Firestone [1970] 2003). Their strategic role was distinctive: often, they were what Ben Trott (2007) calls "directional" demands. Unlike minimal demands (realizable within social democratic society), transitional demands (reasonable but unlikely to be accommodated under capitalism), or "impossible" demands (which reveal the impossibility of change under capitalism), directional demands would individually or when combined "necessitate a break with capitalist social relations," and show "a way out" of the status quo order (cf. Russell 2015). Such demands, if met, would force a paradigm shift. Demands of this kind were also sites where movements with revolutionary aspirations expressed their often dissonant relationship to reform by naming an addressee, like the capitalist state, whose legitimacy they otherwise denied. In the late 1960s and 70s, the content of demands often reflected what Salar Mohandesi and Emma Teitelmen (2017, 59) argue was the incorporation by revolutionary movements of "the welfare state's precepts … even as they tried to subvert them." However, for these movements, demands also functioned as tactics of organization. Despite naming concrete addressees, the real audience was often the constituencies affected by the problem the demand diagnosed. In this way, demands were themselves movement-building tools.

In this context, the WfH movement articulated an innovative account of the role of demands in feminist social transformation. WfH were attentive to what demands do qua demands—that is, even if they were not met. It was in the debate between WfH and their critics at the high point of feminist demand-making in the early 1970s that the disclosure, constituency-creating, and horizon-setting functions of demand-making can be clearly seen, as feminists brought together new and old features of demands in innovative ways. Demands were conceived as being able to disclose the social conditions that feminists diagnosed in the housework debates, to build the constituencies for feminist class politics, and to articulate the relationship of the movement's interests in immediate reform to their visions of long-term social transformation.

WHAT DEMANDS CAN DO: THE CASE OF WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

Like other feminists seeking to revalue women's work, the groups that constituted the WfH movement initially demanded compensation as part of a package of demands (James [1972] 1974). The demand for wages for housework appeared as a proposal to facilitate financial independence and secure recognition. However, because WfH was rooted in the autonomist Marxist tradition in Italy, the US, and the Caribbean (Taylor 2014), it joined this tradition in critiquing reformist strategies like working with parties, organized labor, and the state. WfH adopted the commitment to worker self-activity, the aim of "more money, less work," and the strategy of refusal (refusing waged labor on capital's terms) articulated by Italian workerism and autonomism (Tronti 1972). As part of this tradition of antiwork Marxism, WfH—particularly as theorized by Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Selma James, and Silvia Federici—not only targeted the specific goal of compensation but also sought to politicize housework as a means of refusing it and achieving autonomy through struggle (Weeks 2011, 128–9). The wage demand was conceived by many WfH theorists as part of a struggle against the wage, which was diagnosed as "the fundamental expression of the power relation between capital and the working class" (Cox and Federici 1975, 4) and as a tool for incorporating workers into capital and transforming them into collaborators as the "economic category" of labor. As Federici wrote pseudonymously, the aim was to "overcome passivity" and claim the power represented in the wage by refusing the work of the "social factory" of capitalist society in which every sphere of life is infused with capitalistic relations (Baldi 1972).

WfH developed a distinctive vision of demand-making, which held that demands could serve as provocations and provide new perspectives on the latent realities of capitalist society (Weeks 2011, 128–37). The first core feature of the WfH demand was this disclosure function. As both Brandon Terry and Erin Pineda have argued, the "pedagogical aspect" of protest (Terry 2012) involves "tactics of disclosure" that reveal "invisibilized realities" (Pineda 2021, 20). The WfH demand functioned as an imaginative device: it was designed to make women's activities visible by naming them labor and to unsettle the ideological frames that allow them to be seen as natural. Given that work is recognized as socially valuable, this was a way of claiming recognition for "women's work"—the labors of love performed as "housemaids, prostitutes, nurses, shrinks," without wages or strikes (Federici 2012, 20). But, given WfH's Marxism, this claim was also designed to demystify and denaturalize that work

[7] Thanks to Oona Hathaway, Judith Resnik, and Reva Siegel for pushing me on this point.

and the wage system itself (Weeks 2011, 128–37). WfH insisted that housework was productive work "in the Marxian sense, that is, [of] producing surplus value" and that the family was "functional to capital" (Dalla Costa and James 1973, 16, 29). The housewife was not simply in a relation of dependency but also exploited and "indispensable to capitalist production" (2).

The act of disclosure had a series of consequences. The demand qua demand functioned as a world-making act that exposed women's realities by changing their representation (Srinivasan 2019), thus seeking to transform the meaning of present practices through a change in perspective (a feature of much feminist innovation; cf. MacKinnon 1989; Smith 2020).[8] Disclosing women's situation as labor was also a tactic in the WfH strategy of multiple refusals across different sites of gendered work. The first refusal was the housewife's withdrawal of labor—a refusal to reproduce capitalism for free, which rejected the subordination of society to the factory (and women's economic part in it). WfH identified the strike as a lever for refusal that could break processes of capital accumulation, since unwaged reproductive labor lowers the cost of labor power. The wage demand was intended to pull that lever. There was also a multidimensional social refusal: the disclosure of women's activities as labor involved a rejection of the essentialist myth—produced by capitalism's devaluation and naturalization of unwaged work—of that labor as personal service (Federici 2012, 16–7, 19). This entailed a struggle to "destroy the position of the housewife as the pivot of the nuclear family" (Dalla Costa and James 1973, 21) and to reject the work of heteronormative sexuality—a focus of groups in the WfH network like Wages Due Lesbians, Black Women for Wages for Housework (BWWfH), and English Collective of Prostitutes (Brown 1976; Capper and Austin 2018; Federici and Austin 2017).

Closely tied to this disclosure was the second feature of the wage demand: its capacity to reveal and create a constituency. Though WfH demanded compensation from the state as capital's representative, their main audience was the constituency of women workers among whom the campaign sought to build power. The naming of housework as something requiring a wage was intended to identify this constituency as an agent of feminist and class struggle. This constituency-creation function proceeded by three conceptual strategies. First, by characterizing domestic labor as productive, women were redefined as workers in the revolutionary class. If labor power is produced in the kitchen and bedroom, then the home is the foundation of the factory system not its other, and houseworkers should demand wages so they have time to struggle against labor (Dalla Costa and James 1973, 21–2). Second, by redefining housework to include all reproductive and servicing work, WfH claimed that "all women were housewives," including those who performed "waged housework" across several sectors (nursing, education, secretarial work, or sex work [Edmond and Fleming 1975]). Therefore, contra the view of WfH as a movement tied to Fordist models of family and work (Weeks 2011, 140), the figure of the universal housewife redefined women as key workers of deindustrializing societies. Third, by characterizing unwaged housewives as part of the "wageless of the world" (James 2012), the wage demand vested hope in unwaged surplus populations, organized by the social division of labor as the reserves of capitalist labor markets. Analogies with Black and anticolonial struggles were invoked to locate household production in a spectrum of spaces of unfreedom, from plantation to bedroom (Dalla Costa and James 1973, 30). The revolutionary class were those who appeared outside (but were, in fact, inside) the wage relation—housewives included. As such, the WfH perspective was described as *the* perspective of class struggle (Federici 1975).

CAN DEMANDS SET HORIZONS? THE PERSPECTIVE OF WINNING

I have so far shown how WfH sought to reframe housework by using the wage demand to disclose social conditions and create constituencies. But demands can also signal aspirations for different futures, as movements articulate strategies for long-term change and set the horizons of worlds they seek to build. The relationship between the reforms that movements demand and their revolutionary aspirations can be mediated in a range of ways. What I ask here is whether demands that seek to produce tangible effects in the short term can also articulate the horizons of a radically different future.

The WfH demand is an example of a demand that did not do so. Weeks has argued that WfH's demands were statements of desire designed to generate "distance from the present" and to "provoke, desire for, imagination of, and movement toward a different future." The WfH movement articulated the desirability of a postcapitalist future without waged labor, in which social reproductive work was performed collectively and the drudgery, exploitation, and subordination of the wage system and home was abolished (Weeks 2011, 208, 29, 131–5). But this future horizon was not explicitly articulated in the demand itself. Rather, the wage demand relied on an underlying logic to explain the relationship between demand and horizon. It was this broader WfH theory that brought the totality into view, explaining how the demand would bring the movement's revolutionary goals closer to realization, since it was not self-evident how the likely consequences of the demand being met—the waging of housework—would bring the desired future into being. Therefore, I call the relationship between the demand qua demand and the horizon *disjunctive*.[9] The demand did not itself set the horizon of the world the movement sought to build.

[8] Thanks to Sophie Smith for clarification of this point.

[9] Thanks to Alyssa Battistoni for pushing me on this distinction.

Like many radical movements, WfH inhabited what Jane Mansbridge (1994) calls an "oppositional enclave"—a protected space that allowed for the generation of insights, some of which were difficult to translate more broadly. To those outside the WfH enclave, it was not obvious how the demand paved the way to a world without waged labor or operated alongside the strategy of refusal. The disjunctive nature of the WfH demand meant that it often appeared prima facie as a demand only for housewives' compensation. Rendering the demand and the revolutionary WfH horizon compatible relied on a kind of refusal-recognition logic: WfH demanded the recognition of housework at the point of refusing that work. They also demanded compensation from the state while refusing its legitimacy and assuming that true compensation was impossible under capitalism. This strategic logic was shared by other revolutionary movements demanding reforms from the state (for instance, those demanding reparations for slavery, a demand that BWWfH's 1974 New York campaign supported). In the case of WfH, it was easily misunderstood outside the enclave. As a result, even some inside, like Dalla Costa (1972), had doubts about the demand. (In light of such misunderstandings, Federici [1975] recast the demand as for wages *against* housework to articulate the core WfH thesis that, as Beverley Best [2021, 898] puts it, "housework could not be waged under any conditions less than the exploding of the capital-labor relation.")

This misunderstanding had costs and benefits, particularly in terms of the demand's constituency-creation function. On the one hand, it enabled alliances between WfH and social wage campaigns. Though some Black feminists argued that WfH's strategy had little potential for mobilizing paid domestic workers and therefore Black women (Davis 1981)—and that many white feminist treatments of housework upheld racialized divisions of household work (Collins 1999; Roberts 1997)—the demand's claim of recognition and for independence helped WfH build alliances with the New York welfare rights movement and British and Canadian family allowance campaigns (Brown 1976; Prescod-Roberts 1980). This was true despite these movements' occasional hostility to WfH's revolutionary focus (Yamamori 2014, 18). On the other hand, WfH were criticized by other revolutionary feminists who saw the wage demand as reactionary reformism: waging housework risked institutionalizing women in the home and reifying rather than subverting the family wage system. One organizer with British autonomist group Big Flame described WfH as a "blind alley on the road to communism" that would reinforce division and isolation (Big Flame 1976c). Others saw it as insufficiently antagonistic to capital or patriarchy (Dixon 1977; Lopate 1974).

Some WfH theorists responded by developing an account of the function of demands in revolutionary strategy. Selma James ([1972] 1974, 82) called this "the perspective of winning." This described the act of demand-making as part of a revolutionary strategy—even when the demand was not met. On this view, the key reason the WfH demand was characterized as revolutionary was not because it set a revolutionary horizon but because it was a "demonstration of power." According to James's theory of social change, which prioritized building power among those deemed powerless, such displays of power would create the conditions for winning (the real prize to be won was the end of capitalism). The demand was also characterized as revolutionary because, as an act of disclosure, it changed the meaning of existing practices and built constituencies. It was not only the act of demanding itself that mattered: for WfH theorists, the effects of reforms that followed from the demand being met were also intended to have additional constituency-creating consequences. That is, if wages for housework were actually paid, it would give housewives "more money, more time." This would have a snowball effect (Toupin 2018, 61), creating conditions for further demonstrations of power. However, despite this, on the agentic perspective of winning, practical reforms that followed the demand being met were secondary to the revolutionary effects of the act of demand-making itself. Even if it failed to secure institutional change, the demand qua demand was meant to have tangible effects.

This account reflected WfH's adherence to autonomist Marxist frameworks that upheld a vision of agentic struggle as self-emancipating. Through the perspective of winning, WfH attempted to dissolve the tension between the reformist interpretation of the demand and the movement's revolutionary aspirations—not by setting the postcapitalist horizon through the demand but by describing it as already a revolutionary act.

AN ALTERNATIVE DEMAND: SOCIALIZE HOUSEWORK!

Whether or not we have reason to demand WfH today—a point to which I will return—the WfH movement's practice of demand-making provides a framework for making sense of other demands, including the counter-demand for the socialization of housework. In the 1970s, this was a popular alternative among revolutionary feminists (as well as nonfeminist socialists), many of whom criticized the value-theoretic basis of the WfH demand. Rather than a demand for payment for reproductive labor, this was a call to bring that work out of the home with a range of free 24-hour state-funded, community-controlled caring and cleaning services, with a view to transforming and transcending the capitalist organization of social reproduction.

The socialization of housework was listed as part of a package of demands for reorganizing social life and addressing women's oppression under capitalism; it did not stand alone as a perspective like the WfH demand. For Angela Davis (1981, 232), for example, institutional solutions to the housework problem required a guaranteed income, equal access to employment, and affordable public childcare. Some saw the socialization demand as one plank of a "dual strategy" of institutional provision alongside women's unionization, which would build power and create the experiences of

sociality necessary for transformation (Morton 1970; Oakley 1974). Big Flame, which shared many of WfH's commitments, debated whether socialization was compatible with the WfH demand, with some members casting the two demands as complementary (because a wage or basic income would underwrite freedoms afforded by childcare, launderettes, and so on) and others as contradictory (because the wage reinforced the existing organization of reproductive work [Big Flame 1976a; 1976b; 1976c]).[10] It was in part because of such objections to WfH that the socialization alternative emerged.

Objections to WfH often challenged the demand's disclosure function by arguing that its perspective was static or overreached: it overextended the labor framework or mischaracterized the structural position of housework by downplaying the role of the bourgeois family in stabilizing property regimes or by overstating the necessity of housework to capitalism or of wage demands to its downfall (Dixon 1977; Freeman 1973; Landes 1975; Mitchell 1971). Davis (1981, 234–5) famously challenged several WfH claims: that housework was productive, that there existed a special class of workers named housewives, and that the family was necessary to stabilize capitalism. Assuming that WfH took a narrow view of housework as private domestic labor, Davis rejected the claim that such labor was always wageless or essential: she pointed to apartheid South Africa, where Black men were valued for their productive potential but denied a family life, since this was deemed "superfluous and unprofitable" (235), but where the capitalist economy thrived without the reproduction of labor power in the nuclear family (236). Ultimately, she suggested that the family may stabilize capitalism over the long term, not because of its economic role but its political and ideological importance. For this reason, Davis stressed the minoritized family or kinship network could be a site of resistance (Davis 1972; cf. Reddy 1998).

Revolutionary feminists demanded the socialization of housework on the basis of arguments like these. Yet the socialization demand was not designed to itself make visible the work of housework via a compensatory demand like WfH (even if it similarly named the household as a workplace). Moreover, many who advocated socialization did not privilege demand-making in their organizational strategies for social change, particularly by the late 1970s (Big Flame 1976b, 2). But still, I want to suggest that if we creatively reappropriate the main features of WfH's demand-making to reconstruct the socialization demand in light of them, it becomes clear that it nonetheless did function to create constituencies and to disclose distinctive social conditions, beyond the fact of women's exploitation.

How did it do so? The demand for socialization disclosed two sets of social conditions. The first was explicit: by characterizing housework as isolated work that required socialization, it challenged the relegation of social labors to nuclear families and the role of the household in the reproduction of capitalism. If a narrow view of housework was assumed, the demand called for a private activity to be made social and for the collectivization of women's individual struggles (Big Flame 1976c).

However, many revolutionary feminists began with an additional premise: that the organization of domestic labor was in flux. WfH saw hospital and service workers as "waged houseworkers," thus connecting different forms of concrete labor as reproductive labor. Others argued that, in advanced economies, housework was being socialized. For affluent women, that labor had long been outsourced to domestic workers and subject to restructuring by market and ideological imperatives (Ehrenreich and English 1975). But now women's unwaged work was being socialized more broadly—as it became central to the distribution of goods in retail, consumption, and services and through the commercialization of domestic labor (Gardiner 1976; Glazer 1984; Vogel 1973). Despite the value of that labor for capital accumulation, the opposing tendency—of drawing women into the labor market—was making socialization potentially profitable and inevitable (Gardiner 1976, 114; Milkman 1976, 94), although this process was still constrained by circumstances of economic crisis (Gardiner, Himmelweit, and Mackintosh 1975).

In their accounts of socialization, these feminists disclosed two processes of change. The first was what scholars of welfare regimes call "defamilialization," which captures the degree to which a regime frees individuals from dependence on kinship units, unburdening households by transferring caregiving responsibilities to other institutions or collectivizing costs through labor markets or state provision (Esping-Andersen 1999, 51; Lister 1994, 37). This process of socialization as defamilialization—which revolutionary feminists welcomed as hastening the breakdown of the nuclear family and family wage so that the household was no longer the linchpin of the capitalist system—also entailed a second process: the construction of a novel social and economic infrastructure, the care economy. The demand thus offered a double critique of the private, disclosing both unwaged private domestic labor and this actually existing form of socialization, which in the growing US health and care sectors was privatized, commodified, and marketized (Boris and Klein 2015; Glenn 2010; Winant 2021).

The demand to socialize housework also had a constituency-creating function and offered a distinctive vision of feminist class politics. Like WfH, a met demand was intended to increase the mobilizational potential of women by freeing them from housework. For some, the socialization demand additionally served productivist commitments by allowing housewives to leave the home to challenge capitalists at the point of production, which was framed, contra WfH, as a privileged site of revolutionary struggle (Davis 1981). Others, who rejected this productivist framing, saw the demand as naming working-class constituencies who would benefit from the collective risk sharing in communities and workplaces that socialization would

[10] For a recent account of WfH and full socialization as complementary see Best (2021).

entail (Big Flame 1976c). One nascent strategy, to which I will return, proved particularly prescient. While WfH connected unwaged and waged reproductive work by appeal to ideas of the universal housewife and social factory, the socialization demand identified a coalition by pointing to the care infrastructure—the growth of which provided a basis for the demand that reproductive work be controlled not only by women in homes and communities but also by workers of the racialized and feminized care economy (Ehrenreich and Ehrenreich 1973, 1975).

STEPPING STONES TO REVOLUTION: DEMAND-MAKING AS HORIZON-SETTING

The WfH demand and socialization demand thus shared two features in common: they both disclosed social conditions and created constituencies, though they did so in different ways. They diverged more significantly in how each demand for immediate reform related to longer-term change. For the vision of socializing housework encompassed both the short-term goal of socialization as defamilialization—the construction of institutions to unburden the labors of private homes—and an end state in which the socialization of housework would take an anticapitalist form as a key feature of the socialist society to come (Jenness 1972). The organizational changes required to begin the socialization of housework might appear as though they could be secured within the existing order, but revolutionary feminists insisted full socialization could not be achieved under capitalism. Reaching this horizon would involve reclaiming the new care infrastructure for emancipatory purposes: the task was to seize control of processes of socialization already underway (themselves conditions of capital accumulation [Big Flame 1976d, 6]). If this wider view of housework was taken, the demand for socialized housework therefore implied a strategy for transcendence based on reclamation rather than refusal. In further contrast to WfH, the demand pointed to this multiscale transformation at the same time that it illuminated the contours of the world that transformation would create.

The feminist advocates of socialization also differed from the WfH movement in how they articulated the place of reform in relation to revolutionary horizons and of demand-making in accounts of social change. Many operated within New Left and Marxist traditions—primarily, but not exclusively (viz. Big Flame), Gramscian, Althusserian, and Eurocommunist. They conceived of the social and political realms as relatively autonomous terrains of contestation, promoting counterhegemonic strategies that used a variety of agents and mediators of transformation including parties, unions, and the state. That meant their strategies were often part of a more institutionalist vision than WfH's agentic one. Thus socialization entailed bringing housework under democratic, collective control: "socialized housework on our own terms" was seen as a way of "giving us space to establish our own needs" (Big Flame 1976d, 2). While the mechanism for this was underspecified—it was sometimes said to require preceding technological transformation (Davis 1981; Firestone [1970] 2003) or to result from class struggle and its concomitant reorganization of life—the call for socialization appealed to those skeptical that the wage demand was a sufficient lever for disruptive change. Many advocated allocating the state a central role in controlling processes of socialization and transcending current conditions. For Davis (1981), for instance, full socialization was unfeasible in capitalist economies and entailed putting housework under state control, providing programs and subsidies to poor families. (This was why some WfH theorists rejected the socialization strategy—on grounds that it extended state control [Federici 2012, 21].) It was often insisted, however, that state-funded programs be controlled cooperatively (the goal was the "socialization of housework, paid for by the state … controlled by the working class" [Big Flame 1977, 3; 1976d, 6.]) in, for instance, "neighbourhood childcare centers" (Brenner 1989). Regardless of the precise role of the state, many saw reforms as, under the right conditions, hastening rather than preventing ruptures with capitalism. The task for feminists was to formulate demands for reforms of this revolutionary kind.

The classic articulation of such a position was provided by Juliet Mitchell (1971, 73) in her canonical account of the "role of reformism in revolutionary politics." For Mitchell, women played an uneasy role in capitalism's stabilization. The family—a site of dependency, work, and consumption yet also some autonomy for women (hence her title: *Women's Estate*)—was "a stronghold of what capitalism needs to preserve but actually destroys: private property and individualism" (161, 136, 109). The family wage enforced the "unity of the couple" over worker solidarity (125); women were divided on class lines (130). Mitchell drew from Althusser to argue for the separation of four "separate structures" that make up women's situation—production, reproduction, sex, and the socialization of children (100). It was crucial to find the "weak link"—the structure that was the site of most contradictions, where governing ideologies were unsuccessful in regulating behavior (given the recent introduction of the contraceptive pill, Mitchell saw sexuality as that link). Yet any demand that sought to address a particular structure had to be integrated into a set of demands that addressed all structures at once. What was required was a revolutionary attitude that included "immediate and fundamental demands, in a single critique of the *whole* of women's situation, that does not fetishize any dimension of it" (Mitchell 1966, 34).

For many revolutionary feminists, the socialization demand was part of the kind of synthetic strategy that Mitchell identified, according to which demands were tools of persuasion in a strategy to build and actualize power. Mitchell rejected the maximalist demands of radical feminism, framing demands as maximalist "in the bad sense" when they had "no chance of winning wide support" and functioned to keep subjects outside politics (34). Here, demand-making included a consideration of a demand's consequences: they must be "concrete and positive," and able to be "integrated into the real course of history" (36). But Mitchell also rejected a reformism focused on "ameliorative

demands" (equal pay, more nurseries, better retraining facilities) that on their own were "tepid embellishments" of the status quo. If demands for reform were to occupy a place in revolutionary politics, they would have to offer a "fundamental critique" and set a "vision" of liberation (33); as part of a revolutionary strategy, reforms could function like "stepping-stones" to more significant change (Mitchell 1971, 73).

Although Mitchell's account of women's situation did not go unchallenged by revolutionary feminists, it provided a distinctive account of how demands for reform might coexist with revolutionary aspirations. This was exemplified in the socialization demand's proposed stepping-stone reforms and long-term liberatory horizon and its indication of a process of traveling between the two. Advocates argued that institutional efforts to socialize housework would free women from work and the responsibility to consume, especially during economic crises when capitalism was particularly reliant on women's unpaid labors (Milkman 1976, 94). It would make reproduction a social responsibility: "Society must carry the responsibility for its own arse-wiping and reproduction," one activist wrote (Big Flame 1977, 3). The claim was that if the demand were met, it would provide reforms on the way to the full socialization that was only possible in a postcapitalist world. The inclusion of both short- and long-term goals in the demand was also a strategy for movement-building: since demands being met often result in disappointments that cause movements to disintegrate, the horizon provided a lasting focal point for facilitating organizational endurance in spite of such disappointments. But the real hope was that changes ensuing from a met demand would not only have agentic effects, freeing women for struggle; they would alter the institutional terrain of struggle and reorganize work and life to enable transformational practices of care.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTMENT

I want to suggest that the demand to socialize housework embodies a distinctive vision of the pathway that connects demands for reform to revolutionary horizons. It worked differently to WfH's perspective of winning, which cast each act of demand-making as a show of power, even when the demand was not met. As I have argued, the force of the WfH demand derived from the changes in meaning enacted through the disclosure function, which facilitated its constituency-creation functions. But another feature of the WfH demand was its disjunctive character: it did not point to the WfH campaign's long-term antiwork goals. By contrast, a key feature of the socialization demand was the intimate relationship between its near-term goals and horizon-setting functions: it pointed in an unmediated way to both immediate goal and end state. It thus did not have a disjunctive relation with the horizon but, instead, a *mimetic* one.

By characterizing the socialization demand in this way, I mean to clarify a particular kind of connection between a demand and the future a movement seeks to build. In the case of the socialization demand, the demand itself sets an imagined future world to invest in—the world in which housework is socialized. This future also bears a resemblance to the conditions of the present world if the demand were realized: the creation of free at the point of use, publicly funded, well-paid, 24-hour daycare, for example, could prefigure a world of fully socialized care. Thus the demand is mimetic: the demand qua demand draws a tight relationship between reforms and horizons, between socialization as defamilialization and socialization as an alternative to the capitalist organization of reproduction. This represents a benefit of this form of demand, one lacked by the WfH demand: it minimizes the risk of misunderstanding outside an oppositional enclave. Whereas WfH exploited misunderstandings of their demand to grow its constituency, the socialization demand allows for an alignment of near and long-term goals that is legible outside its enclave and facilitates organizational endurance.

Additionally, that these reforms can be characterized as representing a step toward the imagined world is important to the persuasive role of the socialization demand. To explain this, take another contrast between the wage and socialization demands. If the latter were ceded to in the fullest sense possible under capitalism, it might issue policies entailing, at best, a national care service, or free-at-point-of-delivery communal meals and household services. In this scenario, this would create an institutional arrangement closer to the horizon the socialization demand sets than if wages were given for housework, which would not bring a world without work any closer. Waging housewives might well allow time for struggle and so bring WfH's revolutionary goals closer in a broad sense, but the organizational and institutional changes produced by doing so would not prefigure the postwork horizon at which the movement aimed.

Therefore, the demand to socialize housework implies and typifies a distinctive strategic logic of social change. This logic is why I am suggesting that the socialization demand is underpinned by the perspective of investment. In contrast to the perspective of winning, this perspective asks whether a demand represents an investment in a future world that demand-makers seek to build. In doing so, it provides an additional way to evaluate demand-making: it refers both to the functions of the demand qua demand and to the consequences of the demand being met, asking whether the entailed reforms would actualize tangible gains by changing organizational and institutional conditions. If a demand issues in reforms that yield results in this way, pushing conditions in the direction of the horizon set by the demand, the demand would function as an investment, directing resources to where they are needed to bring about longer-term change and serving as a stepping stone to the future.

SOCIALIZATION OR WAGES REVISITED

So far, I have made three arguments about what emerges from the housework debates. The first is that

they offer an account of what demands can do: demands disclose social conditions, create constituencies, and set the horizons of the desired world. The second is that they illuminate two different forms of demand. By focusing on the horizon-setting functions of demands and how demands themselves mediate the relationship between reform and revolutionary change, the distinction between disjunctive and mimetic demands comes into view. The third is that they embody two distinctive strategic perspectives: the perspective of winning and the perspective of investment, which assign different weights to the function of demands qua demands and the likely agentic and institutional effects of them being met. Taken together, what can these features of demand-making tell us about the force of the demands for wages for housework and for the socialization of housework today?

Before answering this question, I want to clarify that these demands can be evaluated in ways I have not discussed. They might be assessed as policy proposals, the overall evaluation of which depend on a range of normative and empirical considerations. For instance, the demand for WfH can be recast as issuing in policies for basic income, tax credits, or cash transfers like a "caregivers allowance" (Alstott 2004), each of which are justifiable by appeal to various theories of justice and equality. Care-supporting income policies might be defended by gender egalitarians as benefitting the worst-off women (Gheaus 2020), as securing the right to an equal share of free time (Rose 2016), or as promoting freedom and self-determination (Pateman 2004; Robeyns 2008; Van Parjis 1995). By contrast, policies issuing from the socialization demand to outsource care by funding child-care institutions might be justified as embodying a "universal caregiver model" (Fraser 1994) or establishing a "care corps" that defends care as a duty of citizenship (Berges 2015). Those who see cash transfers as negatively affecting gender equality in the labor market and access to the "goods of work" (Gheaus and Herzog 2016) might prefer moderate socialization measures to support a combination of care-giving and paid work (Orloff 2013; Schouten 2019; Williams 2000); those who see them as subsidizing markets for care and household servicing prefer state services to secure labor decommodification (Esping-Andersen 1999). Socializing institutions might also be defended as key to a feminist socialism (Müller 2021) or a green industrial strategy that casts care work as the green jobs of a sustainable future (Battistoni 2022).

The demands might also be assessed in terms of the desirability of the revolutionary feminist goals they set, the contribution they make to the project of revolutionary feminism, and whether the reforms they might entail would help secure that project. These goals would, of course, be contested by those who reject the revolutionary feminist commitments outlined above. But revolutionary feminists might also object to both demands as merely distributional demands that bring reproductive labor into the "waged indirectly market-mediated" sphere, thus leaving it subject to imperatives of capital accumulation (Gonzalez and Neton 2014; Hester and Srnicek 2018; Munro 2021). Yet many critical and antiwork Marxists today prefer a basic income to WfH as providing a better "way out" of capitalism by disconnecting income from labor (Srnicek and Williams 2015; Van der Veen and Parijs 1986; Weeks 2011). They cast socialization policies as entailing the incorporation of the working class into capital, thus perpetuating unfreedom even while resolving crisis. Feminists more broadly might worry that the socialization demand's invocation of the social in a critique of commodification indicates unjustifiable nostalgia for pre-neoliberal social democracy.[11] By contrast, defenders of socialization might embrace it as signaling a pathway to what Erik Olin Wright (2010) calls "social empowerment," or, if understood as state-funded cooperatively controlled reproductive work, as providing a basis for collective action (Brenner 1989, 258). Socializing the care economy might also be justified as entailing more organizational change than a basic income—which, as some have argued, is likely to be set low without prior democratic transformation (Benanav 2020; Gourevitch and Stanczyck 2018)—since bringing the for-profit social assistance, childcare, and health care sectors under public control could involve significant disruption for capital, at least in the short term (though long term, others suggest, it could stabilize capitalist reproduction [Best 2021]).

Although such substantive judgements can never be entirely detached from formal considerations, I want to leave these arguments aside. My main claim is that we can also assess the rival demands in terms of how each delivers on the core aspirations of the three features of demand-making: the disclosure, constituency-creation, and horizon-setting functions. These features offer a framework for considering movement demands that can accommodate both the fact that the features' relative importance and success will vary in different conjunctures, as demands are articulated to different projects, and that long-term goals will be set by movements themselves according to their own interests and considerations. To show the value of this framework, in the remainder of this paper I evaluate the two demands, suggesting that the socialization demand is today the more fitting of the two because of how it discharges its disclosure and horizon-setting functions. I will conclude by proposing that the investment strategy it illuminates also has broad reach.

First, what of the WfH demand today? Its constituency-creating functions remain largely intact. The WfH wager was that the demand would appeal to those uncommitted to revolutionary horizons, so it could build power by appealing to a range of constituencies. This is likely to still be true, given the popularity of cash transfers among low-income and affluent women. However, the horizon-setting functions of the WfH demand remain limited and the challenges born of its disjunctive form persist: it risks operating as a claim of recognition divorced from a revolutionary strategy of work refusal. Thus, despite the resurgence of feminist strategies of

[11] On feminist nostalgia, see Cooper (2017).

refusal and the antiwork WfH perspective (Arruzza, Bhattacharya, and Fraser 2019; Hartman 2019; Honig 2021; Lewis 2019), few defend the WfH demand itself.

But the major shift in the demand's force is in its disclosure function, and the constituency-creating features that flow from it, which is overall less apt today than when first made. In the 1970s, WfH played a significant role in disclosing women's hidden labors. The perspective was applied to other domains: in 1975, "Wages for Students" sought to disclose the corporate university as a site of value-production. More recently, "wages for Facebook" discloses the labor performed on digital platforms, while "wages for transition" reveals the labors of gender nonconforming people (cf. La Berge 2019). However, in the realm of housework, the capacities for disclosure are diminished. This is in part because, as Weeks (2011, 139–43) has argued, WfH—with its focus on unwaged domestic labor—was more appropriate to the family wage regime than today's two-earner households. Women's changing labor market position and the globalization, outsourcing, waging, and marketization of social reproductive activity have changed housework, making WfH less revealing of women's situation (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003; Huws 2019).

However, the household remains an important site of social reproduction, having been opened to new markets (Glenn 2010), while the family-household structure is still enforced by the state as responsibilities are thrown back onto families (Bakker 2007; Cooper 2017). Therefore, I want to suggest a different reason to think the disclosure function of WfH has been disrupted. Even if we take seriously WfH's efforts to grapple with deindustrialization and theorize housework in a wide sense and we are skeptical that the importance of unwaged domestic labor has declined, the acceptance of aspects of the WfH perspective means the demand does not have the pedagogical and educative effects it once did—in part because of its own success. Since the 1970s, languages of labor have been extended thanks to feminist efforts to make exploitation visible by naming the reproductive labors of the service, biomedical, and digital sectors (Cooper 2014; Hochschild 1983; Jarrett 2016).[12] This has issued in formal and informal recognition of "women's work" through compensatory policies (tax credits, pensions, divorce law (Folbre 2007; Lefkovitz 2018; Misra 1998). Such recognition indicates the adoption in postindustrial economies of elements of WfH's diagnosis, particularly the popularization of the social factory thesis, which criticized factory-centric conceptions of the working class.[13] After all, the "essential workers" of the COVID-19 pandemic are WfH's waged houseworkers. These representational shifts have taken place without parallel structural transformations—the caring labor forces remain exploited—but they nonetheless suggest the WfH demand is less well placed to reveal hidden realities.[14]

By contrast, I want to suggest the socialization demand discloses more, rather than less, today—precisely because of these transformations. The expansion of the health and care sector has created an infrastructure of housework outside the home, which revolutionary feminists presciently anticipated and which a disclosure of exploitation alone cannot reveal. With its attention to processes of change and its positing of an end state of socialized housework, the socialization demand can disclose the commodification of housework and the privatization of the care economy as unjust socialization processes, thus doubling as a critique of neoliberal economic and family privatization (Brown 2019, 115).

This disclosure has constituency-creating effects. For the socialization demand also discloses a continuum between the home as workplace and the workplace of the care economy. Like WfH, it expands the site of housework, not by characterizing servicing labor as housework but by pointing to a multiscale infrastructure of care work that includes providers, users, and consumers of care. In this way, the demand encourages the groups assigned those categories to envision a shared community of interests and articulates a solidaristic basis for a feminist class politics. As Gabriel Winant has argued (2021), this constituency could provide the support for a transformation of the care economy into a society that worked to meet people's needs—one long called for by both Marxists and feminists (cf. Kittay 1999; Tronto 2013).

The benefits of the horizon-setting function of the socialization demand are also magnified, thanks to its mimetic form and the investment strategy it typifies. Recall that the demand sets a long-term goal by envisioning a world of collectivized social reproduction, in which emancipatory norms of sociality are reinforced and socializing institutions are built. But it also calls for reform of existing social relations and processes, suggesting that new modes of life may be dormant in the old. In the contemporary context, the claim is that the end state could be built from relations embedded within the capitalized care industry by reclaiming the socialization of housework for emancipatory purposes. Though the likely reforms that would follow from a met demand would fall short of

[12] For a critique of the labor paradigm, see Oksala (2019).

[13] I do not mean the value theory basis of the social factory model has been accepted; it has not. Among revolutionary feminists, the question of whether social reproductive activities produce value is once again the subject of debate, with some arguing, contra much Social Reproduction Theory, that unwaged social reproduction is not value-producing (Best 2021), that it is because non-value-producing activities are necessary to capital accumulation that the gender distinction persists (De'Ath 2018; Gonzalez and Neton 2014), and that the labor that reproduces capitalism is not "life-making" (Munro 2021).

[14] That such representational shifts have not ended exploitation would be no surprise to the WfH movement, who were always attuned to the social location and class position of their audiences, and who disclosed the realities of the hidden abode of reproduction not in order to convince elite women of those realities—a goal that would not itself achieve lasting change—but to build class power. What I am suggesting here is that these shifts have an impact on what kind of demand is best suited to disclosing that hidden abode today.

revolutionary hopes, their outcome could entail the reorganization of reproductive work in such a way that they could nonetheless have a mimetic relationship to the world imagined by the demand. Therefore, because these reforms have the potential to reorganize life by changing the institutional (as well as agential) conditions of possibility for a feminist class politics, they also function as stepping stones toward it.

CONCLUSION: THE PERSPECTIVE OF INVESTMENT BEYOND HOUSEWORK

In this study of the housework debates, I have revisited one chapter in revolutionary feminist attempts to transform care and service work to identify three features of demands and two distinctive perspectives on demand-making. In light of these, I have defended the demand to socialize housework as having advantages: its capacities for disclosure, given the changing conditions of the care economy, and its form as a mimetic demand.

But I want to conclude with another claim: that what I have characterized as the perspective of investment provides a distinctive yet transferrable model for evaluating a range of social movement demands. Whereas James's perspective of winning emphasizes the importance of demands that functioned as assertions of power, using the investment perspective provides a way of identifying a different kind of relationship between a movement's demands for reform and its long-term goals. A stepping-stone investment demand need not take the political or institutional form explored here (in the case of housework, a solution that primarily depends on state action). Rather, what the perspective of investment offers is a way of identifying which demands—or which dissenting practices broadly understood—yield dividends and direct change toward the desired future world. In this, the investment perspective offers something distinct from an advocacy of prefigurative politics, which commits movement participants to practices or values that model the world they seek to build, for it involves assessing how practices and oppositional strategies also secure outcomes outside an enclave and how those outcomes affect long-term goals.

Today, demand-making is back. Following a period of "demandlessness," when demanding nothing was a way of revealing "the lie behind capitalism's promises" (Millner-Larsen 2013, 115), demands for non-reformist reforms are crucial to the repertoires of many left movements in a way not seen since the early 1970s. In the US, these movements seek to transcend the current order, even while demanding change within it. Many uphold horizons of abolition, particularly but not exclusively those linked to the Movement for Black Lives, while also advocating immediate reforms. Some demand the socialization of health care, housing, care work, debt, the food system, and finance. Others demand system-changing reforms that seek to "unravel" oppressive systems and hierarchies, by defunding the police, canceling debt, or enacting rent moratoriums.[15] These demands operate at multiple levels: for instance, the demand for "Care not Cops" posits a future world of care in which to invest and advocates the unravelling of a current system through an immediate shift from policing to life-making institutions.

The revolutionary feminist account of demand-making offers questions to ask of these movements and a framework to make sense of their demands. Take, by way of conclusion, the demand to defund the police. What does it disclose, what constituencies can it create, and in what way does it set a long-term horizon of change? It discloses an overfunded, militarized system of policing that is part of a repressive carceral apparatus, created by racist state practices of exploitation, expropriation, and organized abandonment (Gilmore 2007) and grounded in anti-Black violence; it creates a constituency of all affected by that apparatus and it points toward a horizon of a future world in which prisons, police, and carceral control have been abolished—a world that its advocates characterize as attainable via "abolitionist steps" (Critical Resistance 2020). Some abolitionists who advocate strategies of refusal cast the demand to abolish the police as more revolutionary than the demand to defund. However, in light of my account of demand-making, we can now see that the demand to defund also embodies an investment strategy. It sets a horizon of a future world to work toward and has a mimetic relationship to that world; if met, reforms that involved significant defunding may yield returns toward larger-scale transformation.

The trade-offs between different features of a demand—whether the disclosure, constituency-creating, or horizon-setting function is more desirable and effective as a tactic—will always be contextual. What the housework debates provide is an account of what demands can do that allows for that choice to be posed. Reconstructing and reappropriating the strategic logic its participants articulated in the perspective of investment also provides a novel way of evaluating movement strategies for revolutionary change. The question the perspective raises—of whether a practice of dissent yields returns that count as investments—can be asked not only of demands but also of other tactics of resistance, protest, disruption, and confrontation. These visions of demand-making and social change are just a few of the many fresh ways of thinking about the transformation of work and life that we might find in the problem-space of deindustrialization and its revolutionary feminist archive.

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[15] I adapt "unraveling" from Gilmore (2007, 242)—herself affiliated with WfH—who characterizes non-reformist reforms as changes that "unravel rather than widen the net of social control."

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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ETHICAL STANDARDS

The author affirms this research did not involve human subjects.

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