



Nordic Solidarity as Justice and Fairness

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Abstract

The Nordic Social democracy is a mix of multiple ideologies with historical and traditional roots. These ideologies interpret labor and welfare in different ways. New financial challenges emerged in the 1980s in the Nordic States (such as aging population globalization etc.). With this increase in costs, and through the presence of ideological ambiguity, recommodifying policies such as the Arbeidslinja have been implemented. This thesis, first, shed light on problems arising from the implementation of Arbeidslinja from perspective of social work. Second, this thesis interpreted hermeneutically the various ideologies of the Nordic welfare state, and finally, this thesis presented an ideologically unifying ethical ulterior solution in the form of Negative Income Tax to the Nordic Welfare States.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The Nordic Welfare states today are facing major challenges: globalization, ageing populations, dependency burdens, changing needs and social risks (see, for example, Ferrara, Hemerijk & Rhodes 2000, Leibfried & Pierson 1995, OECD 1998, and Esping-Andersen 1999). In order to solve the problem of the enormous cost of maintaining the social democratic system, Nordic countries introduced policies to curb this problem. Paul Pierson (2001) claims that recommodification was one of the elements of intensive welfare state restructuring since the early 1980s. Major retrenchment in the unemployed insurance began in the mid-1990s (Pintelon 2012). OECD also confirms these findings by stating introduction to turn passive disability benefits into more active benefits with a re-employment perspective (2015).

In the Norwegian Stortinget decision no. 35 in 1994, *Arbeidslinja* (Translated to Line of Work) is defined as follows: ... instruments and welfare schemes - individually or collectively - are designed, dimensioned and adapted so that they support the goal of work for all. This means that taxes, social security and transfers must be designed so that for the vast majority it will pay to be in work rather than being out of the labor market.

The principle follows from a sharp increase in the number of people on sick leave, disability and unemployed persons, but also of weak economic growth, increasing globalization, the aging wave, lower fertility and new family constellations. This has resulted in major challenges for today's welfare states.

The problems have been met with active labor market policy and an inclusive working life (Halvorsen and Stjernø 2008, Viera and Pinto 2013, Lødemel and Trickey 2001). Passive benefits were to be replaced by activating measures, and the goal has been to get as many as possible work or activity (Lødemel and Trickey 2001; Kildal, 1999). Efficiency and effective measures are prominent aspects of such a policy.

Both neoliberal and socialist governments have had the *Arbeidslinja* as a foundation. There are several reasons for the support for *Arbeidslinja*, including that high employment is considered a prerequisite for value creation and thus for financing the welfare

benefits in the long run, that Arbeidslinja contributes to social integration, and that it can help to make connections between responsibility and rights visible.

Aberidslinja presents unemployment and benefit needs as the individual's "choice". It involves a strengthening in the reciprocity norm: To get something, one must provide something - if nothing else, then participation in activation. The award process gets in strong to a greater degree than before the character of a «quasi-contract» between the applicant and the state, which grants welfare benefits, where both parties must provide something.

1.2 Problem statement

While Arbeidslinja has been a cornerstone of the Nordic welfare state, the policy has elements of both "whip" and "carrot". While some need to be stimulated to activity through, for example, changing tax rules for pensioners with part-time jobs, then others must be forced. With this reform, one has moved away from the requirement to take work to also be able to demand that one do assigned work in return for the benefit. Chris Holden (2003) labels this trend as one of 'administrative recommodification', implying that the welfare state is being rebuilt in order to serve more effectively the needs of the market (Pintelon 2012). A step in the opposite direction of decommodification.

When Arbeidslinja in social assistance thus gets the role of more of a whip than a carrot, it becomes an expression of an attitude towards the able-bodied among the poorest. For example, the Norwegian poverty amendment program for the poor was based on the principle that benefits should never be seen as more tempting than paid work and was thus held on a bare minimum (Øverbye & Stjernø, 2012).

The Norwegian Rødt political party states that, NAV governed by Arbeidslinja, is in direct conflict with everything the trade union movement has stood for when it comes to the fight against unemployment.

Within welfare research, it has been argued that there is a cultural unification in the Norwegian welfare state's insistence that income-generating work should always be the first choice (Stjernø & Øverbye, 2012). However, "Characteristic of the Arbeidslinja in the social services are often strict conditions, sanctioning, close follow-up and monitoring, needs testing and targeting. We have to ask ourselves whether the Arbeidslinja is a producer of shame, which

increases the health problems of social assistance recipients.” In summary, working is good, if you can. But now people are being pressured to work.

The thesis looks to explore the problems with the implementation of Arbeidslinja on the micro and meso level. Thereafter, this thesis will try to find ulterior macro level solutions, through contextual interpretations of the three dominant Nordic ideologies (socialism, capitalism and egalitarianism), that can be implemented instead of Arbeidslinja.

1.3 Significance of the study to social work

One of the foundational goals in social work practice pays attention to the deficits in social environments, creating structural changes, combating social discriminations, and fighting for social justice (Poppo and Leighninger, 2008; Segal 2007; Kam 2012). Although critiques have been raised that social changes and professionalization have moved social work practice away from advancing social justice (Ferguson, 2008; Olson, 2007; Solas, 2008a, 2008b) and that ‘social workers have dismissed the “social” from their professional nomenclature’ (Figueira-McDonough, 2007). Social justice is an important element in social work practice and is found in the interactions between social workers and service users.

On one hand, social workers are committed to bringing about social justice with and for people who are poor, vulnerable, oppressed, and marginalized (NASW, 2017; Reamer, 1998). Therefore, Social justice serves as a guiding principle for social work practice.

On the other hand, through the hermeneutic interpretation of the current Nordic welfare state, this thesis aims to shed light on the social justice concerns arising from the recommodification of Nordic welfare states, and how Nordic recommodifying policies affect social work practice. Social work is a profession based on ethics and is involved in the micro, meso, and macro levels. Social work is heavily influenced by the welfare state’s recommodifying forces (Macro level), such as the Arbeidslinja, which can be seen as laws placed on the macro level through political influence. These political forces affect social work practice directly. Therefore, it is important for a social worker to understand and critically assess them in order to achieve better and ethical practice. Social work might be at risk with the fall of the welfare state and the critique of the modernist project, such as the Arbeidslinja.

1.4 Research questions

The following questions will guide my research:

- What are the problems arising from Arbeidslinja in the Nordic welfare state in the field of social work?
- Considering the ideological makeup (socialist, capitalist, egalitarian) of the social-democratic Nordic welfare states, can Universal Basic Income be presented as an ulterior solution for the current Nordic Welfare redistribution problem?
- If yes, what type of Universal Basic Income should be implemented?

1.5 Researcher's motivation for the study

My personal motivation behind choosing this topic of research stems from my interest in Universal Basic Income. In 2010, after my two-year of depression and trying to find solutions to my problems, I finally realized that people are not “good” or “evil”, but it was my personal fears which created the notions of “good” and “bad”. I later incepted an ideal world, which had ethics, justice, and equality as its cornerstone which made me interested in the idea of Universal Basic Income.

When I started studying psychology, I learned that income inequality in society is a predictor of mental disorders and social dysfunctions, which made me interested in the Nordic model where equality is considered a sacred ideal.

My personal fear of social work malpractice, especially trough conformity to laws is another contributing factor to my choice of topic in this thesis. During my childhood I was very conforming, however, I soon realized that people had their own motivations, and later, in psychology courses, I realized how conformity was the backbone of Hitler's rise to power. Therefore, I decided to critically analyze the current Nordic welfare state for possible injustices during future social work practice and find possible alternative ethical and ideal solutions I can add to my own repertoire and can use during practice.

1.6 Overview of the research structure

This study, which is exploring problems and solutions of Arbeidslinja in the field of social work is divided into five chapters.

- The first chapter is focused on highlighting and introducing the background of the study, problem statement and aim of the study, research questions, and position of the study in social welfare research and practice.
- The second chapter consists of a literature review to show what research has been done in the area and what was found and what needs to be done.
- The third chapter discusses the theoretical framework through theories and concepts that guide the discussion of results and data analysis in relation to the main variables.
- Chapter four of the research consists of the method, discussing research design, measures of validity and reliability, sampling method and procedures, data collection tools and lastly ethical considerations.
- Chapter five is the presentation of results, analysis and discussion of the findings.
- Chapter six summarizes the research, draws conclusions and suggests recommendations for future research on further supporting.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will discuss the historical and ideological foundations of social democracy in the Nordic welfare states which gave rise to Arbeidslinja. This will be discussed in the literature review because of two reasons:

- First, critical hermeneutics will be used as a methodology for this research. Critical hermeneutics holds the historical context as important for understanding and interpreting objective truths. (see George 2020) Therefore, following the critical hermeneutic approach, in order to try to understand the emergence of Nordic social problems that arise within the field of social work, one must first interpret the social democratic Nordic ideals and understand the framework through which these ideals and truths have emerged from.
- Second, the current welfare model's ideology and the rationality behind its emergence must be understood in order to understand if Universal Basic Income could be a solution in the Nordic welfare context. Hewitt states that the Social Democratic tradition is an important thread-

guiding policy (2000). In the end, the more correct interpretation will be the interpretation which best coheres with all the other notions and concepts we already consider normatively binding (Watzel, 1987).

The Nordic ideologies explored will be social democracy, capitalism, and egalitarianism. The next section will discuss the Nordic historical interplay of these ideologies in the welfare context.

2.1 Social Democratic Rise to Power

The kernel of social democratic policy lingers in the process by which human needs and labor power became commodities.

Under capitalism, human wants started to be gratified with the purchase of commodities. This was the precursor of the issues relating to purchasing power and income distribution (see Andersen 1990). Furthermore, under capitalism, labor power was also transformed into a commodity. The direct result of this transformation was that people's subsistence outside of the market became endangered.

Socialism explains that this commodification process results in and is a crucial part of the path to alienation and class. This issue was integral to Marx's analyses with regards to class development and wealth accumulation, he argued that independent producers are now transforming to propertyless wage-earners. The employer gained control over the worker as the latter had to abdicate control over their work in return for a wage which now became the worker's means of subsistence.

2.2 Labor: a special type of commodity

Even though workers were now treated as commodities, but workers constitute a special type of commodities as they must survive and reproduce. They must breed individually, and they must reproduce the society that they are part of. Inanimate objects as commodities can be withheld out of the market until the proper conditions such as price are adequate for their reintroduction, but the labor commodity cannot withhold itself for long without means of subsistence.

Furthermore, people were a commodity of a fickle nature as they were very much subject to and were easily destroyed by not only macro-events such as the business cycle or natural disasters, but even by minor social contingencies such as illness.

Additionally, workers as discrete commodities, had to compete and as the competition grows more severe, the cheaper becomes the price of the commodity.

Other traits of workers are that they are “replaceable, easily redundant and atomized” (Esping-Andersen 1990). Lindblom (1977) therefore argued, life under capitalism was freedom behind prison walls, therefore, fictitious.

2.3 The Fight for Decommodification

This disparity between these emerging classes, employer and worker, hindered collective unity. Thus, the labor movement adopted decommodification as its core intent and root policy. The fight against enslavement within the work environment begun as it was the guarantor of the worker’s wellbeing and the success of the socialist movement.

And so, as socialism was introduced as a critique to capitalism, decommodification became one of its guiding principles. (Powell and Barrientos, 2004). Decommodification is the degree to which individuals can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independent of market participation (Esping-Andersen 1990).

The socialist movement had opposition at every turn from the powers benefitting from the status-quo. The rural economy of continental Europe for example, was not a hospitable for red-green coalitions. In countries such as German and Italy, left wing parties and unions were even considered as threats, due to the fact that a grand portion. Furthermore, to help consolidate political isolation of labor, conservative forces in Europe persuaded farmers to form “reactionary” alliances (Esping-Andersen 1990).

As result of the different socialist movements operating under different conditions in different regions and political climates, different types of welfare policies were introduced in states.

2.4 3 types of Welfare states

We can classify the emerging welfare states under in three different categories according to Esping-Andersen (1990).

- Liberal welfare state

The USA and Australia can be grouped in this category. Liberal welfare states feature “means tested assistance, modest universal transfers, or modest social-insurance plans”, and are characterized by having benefits go to “mainly a clientele of low-income. Usually working-class state dependents”. In Piven and Cloward's study, government's willingness to provide relief to the poor depends less on acute need than on perceived threats to social stability. This summarizes the capitalist approach to the welfare state (1971).

- Conservative/Corporatist welfare state

The states rely heavily on social insurance more often than not “earned” through past experiences in the labor market and via notional contributions. It is worth noting that the welfare system in such states is influenced by the religious institutions that emphasize family support and charity.

- Social Democratic welfare state

Norway, Sweden and Denmark are considered examples of this type of regime. In social democratic regimes, the state assumes the biggest role in welfare provision with wide range benefits including care for children, the sick and the elderly (Esping-Andersen 1990). Under these regimes, individuals are not exempt from participating in the market, on the contrary, the state encourages individuals to participate in the labor market by providing the necessary skills training and also disincentivizing the lack of participation by making sure that the welfare benefits do not surpass the benefits of market participation. However, the state assumes the responsibility for providing welfare for the unemployed.

This interesting fusion between liberalism and socialism resulted in a model with novel properties such as the state assuming responsibility in taking care of children, the aged and the helpless. Additionally, the state became committed to an elaborate social service agenda, not

only would it service family needs but it would also allow women to choose to work instead of managing the household.

Also, the dominant belief usually held by such regimes is that welfare is natural and therefore is provided in a universalistic manner. The rationale behind this belief is that socializing risks promotes equality and solidarity, given that with the failure of an individual in achieving wellbeing, the collective provides assistance through government institutions. Therefore, naturally, under the social democratic regime, citizens are endowed with positive rights with the state providing adequate resources for the citizen to have a certain level of wellbeing. Thus, the magnitude of decommodification in such regimes ranks higher than liberal ones.

2.5 Nordic Historical Context

In the Nordic context, the paradigm shift towards class awareness came with the advent of the “red-green” alliance between the social democrats and the farmers. Nordic Social democracies embraced the stratagem of democratic reforms to achieve their goals of equality and socialism. They brought forth several arguments in support of this strategy.

First, they stressed that workers require social resources, health and education to participate effectively as socialist individuals.

Second, they argued that social policy is emancipatory, not only that but also is a precondition for economic efficiency (Myrdal and Myrdal, 1936).

The implications were as follows:

1. Services and benefits to be on par with the standards satisfying the most demanding expectations of the new middle classes.
2. Equality was guaranteed by ensuring the same the quality of rights enjoyed by the wealthy to the working social class.

However, there were consequences to this approach. There would a huge cost in maintaining a solidaristic, universalistic and de-commodifying welfare system. Thus, reducing social problems and increasing revenue income was crucial for the system to survive. Naturally, this is best

achieved with most citizens participating in the labor market, leaving a very small number of individuals living off social benefits.

Unsurprisingly, the cross-party unifying stance was that full employment is a public responsibility. The system trusted that most people attempted to support themselves by participating in the labor market and those did not manage to land a job would be entitled to financial security.

2.6 The Nordic Welfare state model

Despite worsening economic conditions, living conditions improved overall, hard-core resource poverty declined, and the trend towards greater equality continued (Erikson and Aaberg, 1984). The Nordic social democratic model of welfare is endowed with the unique characteristics that differentiate them from other welfare states. The model emphasizes egalitarian and extensive benefit levels, promoting gender equality, maximizing labor force participation, heavy income redistribution, liberal use of expansionary fiscal policy, decommodification, generosity, universality, and statehood.

I will further examine the current Nordic characteristics:

- A noticeable difference exists in labor union participation between the Nordic countries and the rest of the world. In 2016, 52% of Nordic citizens were part of a labor union (Ho, G. and Shirono 2015). In contrast, the US has 10.2% a participation in 2018 (Bureau of labor statistics, 2018). Furthermore, in the Nordic model, there is a partnership between the labor unions, the government, and the employers.
- Healthcare and education are socialized and are provided free of charge. Thus, there is a high expenditure in health and education in these countries compared to the OECD average (OECD 2015)
- A high tax rate exists in the Nordic countries. The income form taxes help maintain the welfare state in covering the generous and universal social benefits.
- Low levels of corruption are observed as per the Corruption Perception Index. The Nordic countries are among the top 10 least corrupt countries in the world. Low levels of corruption are crucial to welfare state building and sustenance. Corruption is considered to have a gargantuan weight in the citizen evaluation of legitimacy of states (Gilley 2006).

Experiencing corruption from public authorities does not only weaken people's trust in these authorities but also their trust in "people in general". (Rothstein and Eek 2009)

- The employment gap between the genders is the lowest in the Nordic countries compared to all OECD countries (OECD 2015).
- The state assumes a significant role in the lives of the citizens. Statehood refers to the overarching prevalence of the state in welfare arrangements be it via extensive public services and public employment, or in many cases taxation-based cash benefit schemes (Kuhle 2010). The big government does not send "rain and sunshine" from above (Marx 1852), it rather has developed as an agency through which society can be reformed.
- Universality is another distinguishable feature of the Nordic welfare states.
- Another distinguishing feature of the Nordic model is its universality. It is universal in the sense that it is available to everyone. It is universal in the sense that it is available to everyone equally. Social programs such as old-age pensions, healthcare, childcare, education, child allowances and health insurance are not targeted at 'the poor' but instead cover the entire population without consideration of their ability to pay for themselves (Rothstein 1998).
- Finally, generosity. The generosity and extensive coverage of payments, along with a strong emphasis on increased social expenditure, characterize the Nordic redistribution method, which results in decreased income inequality (Korpi and Palme, 2004).

2.7 Egalitarianism in Nordic countries

As the labor movement came into power in the 1930s, their focus was naturally on worker's rights. Socialism did not have a welfare model, it had working-class mobilization but did not address the needs of the most vulnerable (Esping-Andersen 1990). The central theme of socialist ideology lied in the emancipation of workers from the chains of capitalism. After World War II, in order to help the poor and vulnerable, the socialist had to operate outside their ideological realm. This created confusion as socialists had to now operate through the market and provide means-tested benefits in order to provide for the vulnerable (see Baldwin 1989).

As the socialists approached the poor and vulnerable, they became politically compelled to approach rights in terms of universal coverage. Therefore, the adoption of universalism emerged. However, in Nordic countries universalism was labor party's political move rather than the manifestation of the emergence of the egalitarian ideology.

Until the 1970s, the social-democratic labor party's goal became to eradicate poverty, not really to emancipate workers from market dependency.

2.8 Problems in Nordic Ideologies

Within the Nordic states, the labor movement's theory of *human nature* is Marxist and is not wildly accepted as "truth". Universalism on the other hand had political unity from both labor and liberal parties but had no egalitarian ideological foundation. Finally, liberals reject alternatives to the pure cash-nexus because that would disrupt the supply-and-demand equilibrium.

The egalitarian ideological gap in the Nordic context became apparent in the 1980s. With the rising cost of maintaining the solidaristic welfare state and taking advantage of the ambivalence between egalitarianism and welfare capitalism, social democracy has leaned towards the latter (Barrata and Cabrita 2019). In the 1980s *Arbeidslinja* was implemented and from the socialist perspective, *Arbeidslinja* can be considered as recommodifying. On the other hand, the welfare capitalist perspective hails it as a tool to increase national income and employment capacity.

Julian Le Grand states that assumptions concerning human motivation and behavior are the key to the design of social policy (1997). With that in mind, to understand the conflict between the socialist and capitalist ideologies regarding social policy, the difference in their interpretation of human nature is important.

2.9 Debate for Universal Basic Income

Universal Basic Income is a universalist welfare program in which every adult citizen receives a set amount of money on a regular basis. Ideologically speaking, in the Nordic context, UBI is interpreted from different perspectives.

The debate for UBI in the Nordic context is cross-sequential and , and varies from political parties, gender and even include artists. For example in Norway, three parties have had basic income on their party platforms, the Green Party (Miljøpartiet de Grønne) the Red Party (Rødt) and the Venstre. In terms of gender, since 1910s, Katti Møller supported the “Mother’s wage” as she stated that women should stop working without payment, and that mothers should be able to exist without the support of a man (Øyen 1981). Another group is artists, the Norwegian government provides guaranteed minimum income to eligible artists. Although UBI has been heavily debate, implemented, and requested across different sectors in society, and has political traction, the lack of egalitarian ideological ramification which creates an ambiguity in the process of progress towards UBI is prevalent.

On one hand, despite Marshall (1949) clearly delineating the responsibility of the state towards citizens. On the other hand, through political parties, this reciprocity norm has been changed from citizen to institution. Thatcher famously said there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families (1987).

Welfare redistribution is at the center of the capitalist, egalitarian and socialist ideological gap. This lack in coherent interpretation of welfare redistribution within the Nordic welfare states, and the ideological absence in egalitarianism, is going to be further studied in this thesis, trough understanding the relationships between human nature, labor, economy, needs and subsistence within the frame of the Nordic ideologies.

Chapter Three: Theoretical Framework

In this chapter I will first discuss the reasoning behind my theoretical choices and address conflict that might rise between them. Thereafter, I will introduce a modified version of Marx's *theory of human nature*. I will argue why I have chosen Marx's *theory of human nature* and the reason behind its modification. Further, I will explain Rawls' *theory of Justice*, discuss criticisms towards it and argue against them.

The *theory of human nature* will be used in my analysis to understand current problems arising from the implementation of Arbeidslinja at the micro level. Thereafter, I will use the *theory of human nature*, Rawls' *Theory of Justice* and Nordic capitalist *standard economic theory* to hypothesize an ideal ethical political solution for the micro, meso and macro level problems.

3.1 Personal Perspective

Before introducing the theories, I want to express my perspective for making these choices. While writing this thesis, I kept gaining new knowledge. At first, as I was trying to answer the first research question, a definition of human nature was important and the Marxist theory was the one used heavily in previous social work research, as it addressed vulnerable people and was suitable for dealing with social work problem. Given that social work is a profession based on ethics, non-utilitarian ideals were heavily available to understand these problems. However, as I kept expanding my knowledge about Nordic welfare state's macro perspectives, I discovered that egalitarianism and capitalism had a significant impact on social democracy (Weisskof 1992). I learned that socialism was born as a response to capitalism (Esping-Anderson 1990) and therefore, socialism had roots in capitalism and that capitalism is a driving force in the Nordic welfare state. This meant that I needed the egalitarian and capitalist perspectives of human nature as well, in order to understand and hermeneutically interpret all sides of Nordic welfare state's macro / institutional level policies.

This meant my thesis had to grow into something I had not planned in order to answer the research questions I had in mind. However, since I was already planning to introduce Rawls' egalitarian *theory of justice* as an ideal theory to present UBI as a solution to the macro level

problems, I only needed an ideal capitalist economic theory that encompasses the economic perspective in the Nordic interpretation of *human nature*.

I decided to present the capitalist economic theory of the Nordic welfare state in the analysis, rather than in this theoretical chapter. This decision was made because of the following reasons. First, the capitalist economic theory is presented as a criticism to one of Rawls' positions (therefore it warranted its presence in the analysis already). Second, the economic theory used – as you will read - did not need historical, traditional, or detailed context. Finally, because it will not influence the reader's comprehension of the thesis.

Interferences between

It is important to note that, the *standard economic theory* does not interfere with Rawls' egalitarian theory of justice (will be discussed further). Additionally, the modified *theory of human nature* and an ideal capitalist economic theory are also in agreement and can operate in tandem (This will be discussed in the analysis chapter). Reason for Choosing Theory of Human Nature

It is important to explain the reasoning for choosing the theory of *human nature* and Rawls' *theory of social justice* and the conflicts that might arise in their interaction with one another.

First, it is important to understand the fundamental nature of humans and what is beneficial for each human when it comes to welfare policy. Julian Le Grand argues that assumptions concerning human motivation and behavior are the key to the design of social policy (1997). Human nature is important to understand ideologically because it can dominate and even mislead public policy (Hewitt 2000).

Four different definitions of human nature were considered to interpret the Nordic social democratic model: The atomistic model, the organic model, the basic needs model and the mutualist model (See Hewitt 2000). These models formed the basis of social democracy. However, social democracy provides theories of basic needs and mutuality as two separate models of human nature. Marx's theory, by contrast, provides a mutualist account of praxis that can give rise to an understanding of the process of satisfying needs. (Hewitt 2000). Since my

goal was to eventually understand the process of satisfying needs (as that formed the basis of Universal Basic Income), Instead of making a new model from scratch, I decided to start from the most fundamental parts of Marx's *theory of human nature* and discard the aspects which did not fit with the Nordic Welfare Model, rather than reinventing the wheel and developing a model from the ground up.

My decision of developing a *modified theory of human nature* rather than using Marx's *theory of alienation* or *historical materialism* directly, was due to a conflict of interpretation that I discovered between Marx's *theory of alienation* and the Nordic ideology. Let us explain this discord in the interpretations. Marx states that in a capitalist society ... objectification becomes the loss of the object (1844). which causes alienation. Marx assumes that the separation of producers from the product of labor causes alienation in the capitalist cash nexus. Marx wanted to shed light on the vile aspect of capitalism. He mentions that in his ideal classless society, this would not happen. The premise he uses to prove his point is that human nature is essentially communal because during one's individual activity, one would have directly confirmed and realized one's true nature, one's human nature, one's communal nature (Marx, 1844). For Marx, a person sharing the products of their labor cannot do so in a capitalist society because humans are essentially communal. Marx believes people acting selfishly is a product of capitalism, not an immutable human characteristic. On the other hand, Cohen argues against Marx stating that Marx's conception of human nature and human good overlooks the need for self-identity than which nothing is more essentially human ... Marx came to neglect the subject's relationship to itself, and that aspect of the subject's relationship to others which is a mediated (that is, indirect), form of relationship to itself (1978). In Honneth's words, social freedom is not the result of individuals who merely act with one another [*miteinander*], but for one another [*füreinander*] as well, such that the aims of the members of a community not only overlap but are intersubjectively intertwined (1995). However, this does not mean that human nature is fully communal as Marx had presumed.

Therefore, although, Marx's conception of *human nature* explains the theory of alienation (Cohen, 1978), our analysis will focus on only few aspects of his *theory of human nature*. In this thesis, I discussed in the second chapter that the Nordic views on human nature are individualistic with solidaristic tendencies, rather than fully communal. Solidaristic implies

individuals with different abilities and needs co-operating in producing goods and thereby coming to recognize their shared humanity (Hewitt 2000). This modified definition of Marx's *theory of human nature* makes the theory fitting for the social democratic Nordic Welfare State. This "selfish" view of human nature is also shared among Kant and Hobbes, for different reasons. Let me say in passing that I agree with Marx in the belief that people act selfishly due to scarcity, and capitalism can be a driving force for scarcity, however, capitalism is not the sole force.

Another point that is also important to note that, Marx's *theory of historical materialism* was also considered for the purpose of this thesis, however due to this same discord between the Nordic interpretation mentioned above, it was discarded. Finally, the *theory of human nature* is the essence of both Marx's theory of alienation and theory of *historical materialism*, it was decided to stick with parts of his *theory of human nature* rather than use the developed corollaries of his theory.

Finally, although Marx's *theory of human nature* will not be used in totality, it provides a mutualist account of praxis that can give rise to an understanding of the process of satisfying needs (Hewitt 2000). Therefore, it could be used to interpret micro level problems and later, it will be used as a theory to understand macro level perspectives and solutions as well.

To conclude this point, this research will only use parts of the theory of *human nature* and build upon them rather than directly using the developed versions of his theories (*such as Theory of alienation and historical materialism*), in order to have a moral compass that will serve as a guide in the interpretation of problems within the Nordic welfare state at the micro level, and meso level.

3.2 Reason for Choosing Theory of Justice

Rawls' *theory of Social Justice* is used in order to have a fundamental ethical understanding of social justice which follows neo-Kantian ethics. It is relevant to social work, social justice, and welfare redistribution. The *Theory of Justice* can be directly integrated into the Nordic welfare system because of its essential similarity with regards to egalitarian values.

Theory of Justice is used in this research for the following reasons:

- a) Hewitt states that Rawls' account of human nature, equality and difference principle lies within the Social Democratic tradition with its concern to fulfil common basic needs (2000).
- b) Social workers are committed to bringing about social justice with and for people who are poor, vulnerable, oppressed, and marginalized (NASW, 1999; Reamer, 1998) and the *Theory of Justice* addresses this cause.
- c) Social workers have uniformly and heavily drawn from Rawls (1971) to promote social justice in micro to macro levels of practice; and this thesis will be involved in both.
- d) The problem with recommodification lies with its emphasis on individual responsibility to gain economic self-sufficiency without a focus on social responsibility to make this possible (see Anderson, Halter and Gryzlak, 2004; Long, 2000; Stoesz, 2000; Reisch, 2002; Taylor and Barusch, 2004). Understanding the egalitarian perspective of public responsibility is important.
- e) *Theory of Justice* is heavily mentioned in several Nordic government reports, starting with one on civil disobedience in 1979, and subsequently addressing topics such as just quality of life, considerations of efficiency in the public sector, and public transfers to families with children ... sustainable development, immigration, basic income, civil disobedience, animal ethics and international justice (Føllesdal 2002). Therefore, the theory has empirical evidence backing its suitability into the Nordic model, which improves its validity.
- f) The *Theory of Justice* describes the Nordic Welfare model's egalitarian (Nordic universalism) perspective from an ethical point of view, rather than a historically politically reactive point of view as discussed in the second chapter.
- g) Social work seeks to address social injustices and Rawlsian justice is highly suited to furthering justice concerns related to various people whom social workers interact with. "Social primary goods" promote justice in various fields and aspects of social work practice (see Beverly and McSweeney, 1987; Figueira-McDonough, 1993; Raber and Conrad, 1999; Reisch and Taylor, 1983; Wakefield, 1988a; Wright and Bodnar, 1992).

3.3 Conflict Between the Theories

It is important to address the conflict between the two theories of Rawls and Marx. Rawls' uses *Rational choice theory* in the *Theory of justice* - where he perceives the principles of economic theory and the laws of psychology as "ahistorical with impersonal character" (Wolff, 1977); and Marx's, through the science of *historical materialism* – perceives these 'laws' and 'principles' to be historical products of productive forces.

Even though the debate between the two theories is outside the scope of this thesis, and this thesis only uses *human nature* rather than *historical materialism*, it is still worth mentioning that there are few reasons why this interaction does not affect the validity of this research. The reasoning behind this confirmation is that Rawls' *theory of justice* will only be used as an ideal theory where the actor is always assumed to be ideal and rational. This is done to come up with an ideal ethical interpretation which could be used in tandem with the social democratic Nordic Welfare Model. This means in simpler terms, that even though people can neither be fully rational or irrational, the research will use the *theory of justice* from the perspective of an ideal rational person that follows the social democratic principles. This will be also discussed in the analysis section.

On the other hand, *historical materialism* will not be used in our analysis, instead critical hermeneutics will be used to infer new hermeneutic interpretations from the modified *theory of human nature*, which, as I will further discuss in the analysis chapter, is not in conflict with Rawls' theory of Justice. Therefore, in summary, the differences between *rational choice theory* and *historical materialism* will not be interfering with our analysis.

To conclude the reasoning of my choices, some aspects of Marx's *Theory of Human Nature* which fit the Nordic Model's narrative will be used in order to answer the first research question, and provide an understanding of human needs and thereafter, the *Theory of justice* will be used in tandem with the *modified theory of human nature* for the inception of a new hermeneutic interpretation that can be applied to gain new knowledge in the Nordic welfare commodification context.

3.4 Marx's Theory of Human Nature

As previously mentioned, only few aspects of the theory will be used because of problems in generalizability in the Nordic welfare model. These foundations of Marx's theory can be summarized by: "Needs and Drives", "Humans as free and purposive producers", "Species as the Object of Humans".

- Needs and Drives.

Marx states that the objects of his [human] instincts exist outside himself ... yet these objects are objects that he needs – essential objects, indispensable to the manifestation and confirmation of his essential powers (Fetscher 1973). For Marx, needs can be characterized as "animal" needs such as sexual relations, food, water, clothing, shelter, rest ... (Geras 1983), but men can be distinguished from animals by consciousness. They begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to produce their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. By producing their means of subsistence men are indirectly producing their actual material life. (Marx german ideology) Therefore, according to Marx, the essence of being human is the needs of humans. He also asserts that human must fulfill those needs through labor.

- Humans as free and purposive producers

The difference between humans and animals according to Marx is that humans are self-conscious actors. "It is true that animals also produce...but they only produce their own immediate needs or those of their young (Marx 1844). On the other hand, humans produce even when they are not under the burden of 'physical need'.

Marx states that the animal is immediately one with its life activity. It is not distinct from that activity; it is that activity... Man makes his life activity itself an object of his will and consciousness (Marx 1844). He further explains that humans have two types of ideas of "self", the actual self and the idea of a future self. The 'current self' imagines what the future self needs, and through this imagination the human produces. Humans' production is purposive and planned. To further confirm this assumption, Marx gives a comparison between bees and humans. "... a bee puts to shame any architect in the construction of her cells. But what distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect

raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality.” Therefore, humans are conscious purposive producers that both produce their 'life activity' and 'species' the 'object' of their will. This is related to Foucault’s idea of *biopolitics*.

- Species as the Object of Humans (Self Actualization)

As conscious beings, the essential nature of a human being is actualized when an individual, is free to subordinate their will to the internal demands they have imposed upon themselves by their imagination through labor. In other words, as long as humans have control over their own labor, they can overcome natural obstacles, because labor is, for Marx, a bridge between what humans are, and they want to become. Therefore, self-actualization and freedom require freedom of labor of individuals. Labor for Marx is the essence of self-actualization and freedom.

3.5 Conclusion to Theory of Human Nature

In conclusion, for the purpose of this research, we will assume that the Nordic model’s interpretation of human nature follows only these three assumptions made by Marx regarding human nature. These assumptions are:

- Humans have needs and drives.
- Products made through the imagination of humans are what defines them because humans produce to become their imagined self and their life is therefore the object of their purpose.
- Labor is the key to human freedom and self-actualization because labor is the only way humans can satisfy their internally imposed demands.

It is worth noting that the operational definition of labor is not the same as “employment”. For the *theory of human nature*, it is any act a human performs in order to reach any of their internally imposed goals.

3.6 Rawls' Theory of Justice

In his book *Theory of Justice*, Rawls infers a neo-Kantian social contract using a hypothetical thought experiment where any reasonable reader would also affirm the same conclusions.

3.7 Explanation of the Theory

In the thought experiment, you are asked to consider which social policies you would select for the basic structure of society if you were behind the veil of ignorance. Being behind the veil of ignorance means that you had no prior knowledge of your place in the society you will be born into. Your class position or social status, your fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, your intelligence, strength ... your conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities (Rawls, 1971). The social policies you select for the basic structure of society are chosen behind a veil of ignorance.

Rawls uses the "maximin theory" to make his conclusion. The maximin theory states that, any rational person would make the choice that produces the highest payoff for the least advantaged position, because the worst outcome of justice as fairness would be better than the worst outcome in all alternative scenarios, especially in utilitarianism (Freeman, 2014). He explains this theory using an analogy of cutting a cake fairly which explains the maximin theory well. What is the best way to cut a cake fairly? The answer is that the person with the knife gets the last slice - one person cuts the other chooses.

Using the maximin theory, he concludes therefore that any rational person would choose the following social contracts behind the veil of ignorance:

1. Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all. (Rawls, 2001).
2. Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both:
 - (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle (Rawls, 2001)
 - (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity." (Rawls, 2001)

In other words, behind the veil of ignorance, a person

- a) Would not choose to discriminate one group's liberties, wealth, or opportunities over since that person would not know which group he or she will be born into.
- b) Income and wealth would be of greatest benefit to the least advantaged individuals.
- c) Liberties or opportunities or income and wealth should not be sacrificed at any cost. So, it is good to maximize each item between liberties, opportunities, and wealth but to the constraint that it does not come at the expense of another one of the three items.

3.8 Why is Rawls' theory important?

- 1) Rawls argues that humans have many differences, however, there are also basic needs that everyone shares. Everyone has the same physiology. Everyone needs basic resources regardless of who they will become. It does not matter if one ends up becoming an intellectual, a construction worker, a homeless, a physician or unemployed, that person will still have basic needs that have to be met. There is an overlapping consensus between everyone when it comes to basic needs. This is related to the third research question of Universal Basic Income which will be covered later in the analysis.
- 2) All social resources (liberty, opportunity, income, wealth, and the social bases of self-respect) should be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution of any or all of these values is to be everyone's advantage. This is also important since it provides a tool to understand ideological and ethical principle behind Nordic egalitarian ideologies such universality.
- 3) A corollary to Rawls' argumentation is that justice is a not the result of nature or nurture, the differences between people are morally arbitrary. Humans do not make a choice whether they are born in a third world country or a rich or poor family. Genetics and environment happen out of "luck".
- 4) Rather than using religion or utilitarianism to bring forth a social contract, Rawl's theory uses a neo-Kantian aspiration in the sense that, any rational person, must on reflection, affirm.
- 5) Behind the veil of ignorance liberty would be rationally chosen over fundamentalism.

- 6) Rawls came up with an ideal theory using neo-Kantian ideas, by which we could set an independent standard for judging existing political systems.
- 7) Rawls came forth with a new social contract that could be used in-lieu of utilitarianism. Utilitarianism allowed strong interpersonal judgement in utility which could result in draconian ideas. His theory focuses on the equal distribution of resources rather than subjective judgements in utility.
- 8) According to the Pareto principle, it does not suffice that no one becomes worse off; also, those who are worse off must become better off than they are (Barata & Cabrita 2019). This means that the capitalist approach of assistance to welfare recipients does not suffice, as they are victims of inequality.

In conclusion, after previously mentioning the reason why the *theory of justice* complements the egalitarian interpretation of the Nordic Welfare state and why it is highly suited to furthering our justice concerns in the Nordic Model, in this section we explained the theory of justice in detail and demonstrated the importance of its principles.

3.9 Criticism of Theory of Justice

In this section, criticisms to the theory of justice will be discussed. The criticisms will be further addressed in the analysis section.

Every theory has limitations, and it is important to address them in order to build a stronger theoretical framework. Discussing criticisms in this section of thesis is most adequate, since to better interpret the Rawlsian egalitarian perspective of *justice as fairness*.

- 1) The first criticism to Rawls's thought experiment is that it presumes everyone would choose equality behind the "veil of ignorance". It also assumes that equality is a good thing. It also presumes that it is already decided that every person would choose equality over inequality, and finally it assumes that people are going to behave in a self-interested way.
- 2) The second criticism is the following: if justice is a not the result of nature or nurture, and the differences between humans are morally arbitrary, then, in simple terms why should anyone working receive more than someone who is not. Rawls addresses this criticism by making a distinction between the capacities humans have and the use one makes of these capacities. So, a person who works should receive more than a person who chooses not to

work because willingness to work is a result of a difference in capacities (mental capacities cannot be physically distributed).

- 3) The third criticism to Rawl's *theory of justice* stems from utilitarianism, insofar that it assumes an enormous degree of risk aversion. Rawls theory tries to arrange resources so that it benefits the people at the bottom but does not take into consideration the cost of doing so. It is not rational to disregard the cost of the endeavors to help the person at the bottom (Harsanyi 1975), especially, if the benefits are marginal. For example, is it always better to pay the entire GDP of a country to help a newborn baby to recover from a disease? Therefore, when you plug in different set of assumptions related to human psychology into Rawl's theory, you would get different answers. That is because Rawls made a distinction between the laws of economics and human psychology which, in reality, are interrelated.

3.10 Answers to *Theory of Justice* Criticism

It is important to note that, In the case of the *theory of justice*, I will address these criticisms from the perspective of ideals of the Nordic social democratic welfare state. There are two reasons for this rationale, first, because the theory of justice needs a criterion to establish what is morally correct independently of what is taken to be correct in our society for philosophy cannot just remain linked to given convictions. It also has to judge them (Vergés-Gifra 2006). Second, this will help the *theory of justice* in its validity and generalizability in the Nordic welfare model, by interpreting its underlying principles and theories through the idea of *justice as fairness*.

Therefore, I want to address this issue by setting the theory in the proper context and seeing it through the Nordic social democratic ideals, where egalitarianism, equality and universality are not just normative ideas which can be debated but considered "truths" emerged through solidarity and the 1930s red-green Nordic revolution. This will also help with the generalizability of the theory into the Nordic welfare system. This means that during my address of the criticisms, I will assume that equality, solidarity, and various other Nordic social democratic ideals will be considered as "morally correct".

3.11 Answer to Criticism #1

Rawls's thought experiment presumed equality is what everyone would choose behind the "veil of ignorance". However, as stated in the previous paragraph, for the purpose of this research which focuses on the Nordic model which has the realization of the socialist ideals of equality, justice, freedom, and solidarity (Esping-Andersen 1990) as its cornerstone, it is safe to assume that equality would be chosen over inequality from behind the veil of ignorance.

The second part of the first criticism argues that, not everyone would want to behave in a self-interested way". However, we can merely assume that an ideal Nordic social democratic state would always want to work in a self-interest manner.

3.12 Answer to Criticism #2:

The second criticism states that, if justice is a not the result of nature or nurture, and the differences between humans are morally arbitrary, why should the employed be entitled for more pay than a person who does not work? Dworkin argues this point by making a distinction between, what he called "material resource" and "physical and mental capacities" (1983). He states that one can distribute material resources in morally arbitrary ways but cannot do the same with the differences in physical and mental capacities, the reason being, one cannot distribute the latter as this is a physically impossible feat to achieve (See Dworkin 1983). However, this position is not a satisfactory argument since, one could, for example, distribute more resources to a person with physical or mental disability in compensation.

However, Rawls and Dworkin did not need to argue this point as such the *Theory of Justice* did not need to be modified; people should not ideally be entitled for more pay for any reason and the differences between people are morally arbitrary. Van Parijs's (1991, 1995) on the other hand believes that Rawls, Dworkin, and others are failing their own commitment to liberal neutrality, noting a "productivist" bias in their conceptions of justice. This debate will be explained and presented further in the analysis chapter. I will argue for Van Parijs' position, with three distinct reasons.

3.13 Answer to Criticism #3

The third criticism was that it is not rational to always help the person at the bottom specially if the benefits are marginal.

It is important to note that, throughout this thesis, the *Theory of Justice* will be used in the Nordic context to interpret the theoretical roots of egalitarianism and universalism within the Nordic context and to have a moral compass that defines redistributive justice compared to the current Nordic lackluster perspective of egalitarianism. In the analysis chapter, the problems with the lack of coherent interpretation between egalitarianism and welfare capitalism will be further discussed to be the reason for the emergence of laws such as the *arbeidslinja*. Therefore, since the ethical foundation of the *theory of justice* is only needed in its ideal form where there are no economic problems, rather than the practical form. The criticism presented here is a practical problem. In simpler words, this thesis will use the ideal egalitarianist perspective only. The *theory of Justice* is used in this thesis for this purpose.

Moreover, this criticism does not render Rawls' ethical original position obsolete, it only adds the economic factor as a problem. This problem arises in Rawls' position due to the distinction between laws of psychology (rationality) and economics.

It is important to note that the *Theory of Justice* is economically agnostic, this means it can be used in any economic system. In this thesis, I will eventually use the *theory of justice* as a morally ideal distributive justice system, within the Nordic economic framework.

Nonetheless, it might be worth discussing the problem a little further. There are not many situations where helping "people at the bottom" would prove to be a bad idea. The only cases are ones that are extreme, such as cases of deadly illnesses. Currently, for example, in the Nordic states, hospitals tackle this problem using science by allocating resources depending on a patient's perceived level of emergency. This means that the practical problem is rather philosophical rather than empirical.

3.14 Conclusion to Answers to Criticism

In conclusion, in an ideal egalitarian Nordic social democracy, all social resources (liberty, opportunity, income, wealth and the social bases of self-respect) should be distributed equally. It can also be concluded that the *theory of justice* is an ideal theory based on ethics,

which can be used in tandem within the Nordic social democratic welfare system in order to ethically, fairly and justly allocate resources to its citizens.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

This chapter is an explanation of why I think critical hermeneutics is the most suitable method for this thesis.

4.1 Why Critical Hermeneutics?

Critical hermeneutics argues that social problems are influenced and created by societal structures and cultural assumptions. Critical hermeneutics is the method chosen to conduct this research based on the following reasons.

First, because continuity in the Social Democratic tradition is an important thread-guiding policy (Hewitt 2000). In the context of this research, the Nordic welfare state's capitalist, egalitarian and socialist ideologies, are a result of traditions which are critical to finding new and better interpretations. These traditions will be further interpreted in the next chapter. I think critical hermeneutics has the tools deemed adequate to delicately analyze history and the nuances of the different traditions that Nordic complex societies are comprised of. No tradition is automatically defensible just by the virtue of existing, however traditions should not be discarded as completely irrational. It is wise to assume that these traditions need to pass the "critical test", but in order for them to be properly understood, they should be interpreted taking into consideration the rationale and reasoning of the social actors adhering to them as part of their collective identities with which they identify (Marcelo 2012).

Second, hermeneutics brings with it a distinctive methodological attitude. Walzer (1987) discusses about three possible paths for social criticism: invention, discovery, and interpretation.

- Invention is the constructivist means by which we try to envision the best values or rules that when implemented result in a just society.
- Discovery, on the other hand, assumes an essentialist approach to the values and rules. It attempts to ascribe some predetermined transcendent order to them, this way granting an ontological foundation to social orders and basing them elsewhere.
- Interpretation, in the context of critical hermeneutics, argues that in order to socially and morally criticize a society and to elaborate the rules and values that ought to guide it, we need to examine the very same societal order, as they do not require invention or

discovery, but only interpretation. Finding better and more authentic interpretations of the same rules and values that are already present in a society should guide our practices in this path.

In the context of this research, Rawls' theory of justice can be analogous of Walzer's "Invention" path of hermeneutics where the best values and rules of a just society are procedurally determined. Discovery would be analogous to Marx's theory of human nature, which he uses to find an ontological foundation to social order. Interpretation is also important for this research to interpret how and why the current social orders are grounded in order to find new and better interpretations. This will be done in the solutions section of the analysis chapter.

As a result, in comparison to social reality, hermeneutics does not follow foundationalism. It also arrives at "truths" from inside rather than relying on outer sources. It is also not just relativist in the conventional sense as it does not try to define itself through other phenomena, but rather the truth in hermeneutics is comprised of the multitude of interpretations and the process of perspective enlargement implemented through the adoption of certain measures (Marcelo 2012). Given its interpretative nature, both descriptive and normative elements are found in its evaluations. These evaluations resort to values be it explicitly or implicitly. Third, Rawls' "Theory of Justice" can fit into the critical hermeneutic framework. The explanation for it is a long philosophical debate outside the scope of this research. In short, on one hand Walzer agrees that *Theory of Justice* is essentially hermeneutic, on the other hand, others (such as Warnke, Dworkin) disagree and sees it as non-ideal, conservative, and normative, since it does not follow a historical or social dimension but rather, is theoretical. However, I do agree with Walzer when he states that the *theory of justice* is essentially hermeneutic because, a person who agrees with the *theory of justice* has to first interpret it within their own perspective. The historical context of the interpreter is therefore part of the rationality behind the theory. Walzer explains his point, by stating "What would individuals like us choose, who are situated as we are, who share a culture and are determined to go on sharing it? And this is a question that is readily transformed into, what choices have we already made in the course of our common life? What understandings do we (really) share?" (1983). In other words, a person who agrees with the principles of Rawls' theory is already sensitive to the demands of the moral conceptions that it idealizes.

Fourth, Marx's *theory of human nature* is hermeneutic, which also makes the reduced/modified version developed in this thesis, hermeneutic as well. Marx is part of the foundation of critical hermeneutics. The Frankfurt School perspective of critical hermeneutics is based upon Marxist and Hegelian premises of idealist philosophy. Marx's believes it is important to interpret and "critically test" the history and traditions of a society because "history is nothing but the activity of man pursuing his aims ... Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past." In short Marx follows the critical hermeneutics principles where he looks at society through the lens of traditions, cultures and existing circumstances in order to find better and improved interpretations. We can see that the activity of man pursuing his aims is the very building block of Marx's theory of human nature. His theory of human nature is also the backbone of all his theories. Therefore, modifying it should not conflict with the usage of critical hermeneutics.

Fifth, I will argue that hermeneutics is actually anti-conservative and progressive. The main reason why critical hermeneutics is considered a conservative tool is the fact that notable hermeneuticians leaned to conservatism (For example Gadamer and Heidegger). Furthermore, Vattimo and Zabala argue that critical hermeneutics is a post-metaphysical project, as it aims to go beyond being as presence, that it can be considered an alternative to descriptive and objectivistic rationale as seen in the natural sciences and that it is a transformative endeavor (2011). Critical Hermeneutics, belonging to a "politics of interpretation" with emancipatory goals, can be the most adequate methodology in solving and analyzing social problems, it is not yet another method to be applied social theory, it is not yet another theory dealing with populism. (Vattimo and Zabala, 2011). This means, critical hermeneutics will help with the third research question, as it will stimulates this thesis into finding ulterior solutions.

Critical hermeneutics is steadfast on deeply interpreting existing practices rather than ostracizing them in a dogmatic fashion and discarding them as unthinkable or irrational. Yet it is also committed to transcending institutionalized conventions, practices and principles, by not blindly trusting or enforcing them. Surely, hermeneutics is in itself political (Vattimo and Zabala, 2011) which helps this thesis in understanding the political aspect of the problem in *Arbeidslinja*. Hermeneutics is considered a tool for action, and for Vattimo and Zabala, a potent tool against

power structures (2011). This identification of power structure will be seen in the analysis chapter.

Consequently, the adoption of a hermeneutical approach in the Nordic welfare system can surely be promising and fruitful, as it adopts an interpretive and emancipatory approach to social reality, and can assist in identifying the interests, power-relations and power-structures in a given society. Additionally, it can help visualize the greater context within the neoliberal status quo that resulted in the rise of prevalent ideas. This is the current case in the Nordic welfare system as explained in the literature review chapter (See Barrata and Cabrita, 2019). Given its interpretative power, it can surely identify acceptable options from the many available ones.

The above-mentioned points emphasize the critical facet of critical hermeneutics. Critical hermeneutics is suggestive to a Post-Kantian process of identification and distinction, of separation of sincere and dishonest uses of an ability and of depuration in general. (Ricoeur, Thompson, 1981). Critical hermeneutics has the same level of involvement with the multiplication of possibilities and clarification of realities as it has in rejecting and discarding political, social or philosophical possibilities by dint of its evaluative capacities. This helps in the current research perspective, in order to find new and perhaps better Nordic welfare interpretations.

In conclusion, critical hermeneutics' proposal is the critical and normative ideal which can serve as a standard for hermeneutic analyses.

With this description of a critical hermeneutics in mind, and with the indications already given as to the way in which it might apply to both Rawls' ideal theory, and Marx's theory let us move to the analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS

In the analysis, the first research question will be first discussed through the modified *theory of human nature*, in order to understand micro level problems Arbeidslinja has caused, and in order to build a basis for macro level solution. Thereafter, the second research question will be answered using a new unifying interpretation of justice and labor, using the *Theory of Justice*, the capitalist *standard economic theory*. I will argue further (also argued in the third chapter) that the *theory of justice* can be used in tandem with the Nordic social democratic welfare state. Finally, the third research question I will present Negative Income Tax (NIT) and automation, as holistic solution for the Nordic Welfare State.

5.1 Recap: Decommodification vs Nordic Welfare state

From the socialist perspective, decommodification is the idea that “the degree to which individuals or families can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living independently of market participation.” (Esping-Andersen, 1990). The ramification of this statement can be explained through Marx’s *theory of human nature*, where Marx states that “the essential nature of a human being is actualized when an individual—within their given historical circumstance—is free to subordinate their will to the internal demands they have imposed upon themselves by their imagination and not the external demands imposed upon individuals by other people.” In simpler words, freedom, self-actualization, and emancipation require the freedom to choose when and what one can work. Without this freedom to choose labor, humans cannot be self-actualized. The reason is because humans strive to fulfill natural and psychological demands imposed upon themselves, and labor is the only way in which one can go from his current state to his imagined state. Self-actualization, emancipation, and freedom are achieved through the free expression of inner demands imposed upon oneself, through labor.

To understand the ideological conflict in the Nordic recommodifying laws and the *theory of human nature*, we can find empirical evidence in the consequences of the Nordic reciprocity norm. To keep the Nordic social democratic norm functional, recommodifying laws, on one hand, add demands which “can be explained by the replacement of passive benefits and the addition of activating measures, with the goal ... to get as many as possible work or activity (Lødemel and Trickey 2001; Kildal, 1998). This is done for the purpose of increased taxation

which in turn is used to fund the solidaristic welfare state. This means that taxes, social security and transfers must be designed so that for the vast majority it will pay to be in work rather than being out of the labor market.

This Arbeidslinja approach adds external demands that the citizen must meet in order to uphold an acceptable standard of living and therefore hinders his/her path to self-actualization as explained by the modified version of Marx's theory of human nature.

5.2 Empirical Problems: Social work and Unemployment Vs Arbeidslinja

For service users, Arbeidslinja changes the reciprocity norm from having the freedom to choose work to being pressured to work. Unemployment and related problems are no longer regarded as a consequence of social and economic developments (blaming the system), but as a consequence of the actions of the individual citizen (blaming the victim). (Valkenburg 2007, 31). These demands are in the opposite direction of decommodification, because compared to no demands and full trust, in order to receive benefits, one has to go through added processes which cause multiple social and mental problems for service users and social workers.

First, when one has to prove they are actively looking for work in order to receive benefits, and go through "strict conditions, sanctioning, close follow-up and monitoring, needs testing and targeting, we have to ask ourselves whether the Arbeidslinja is a producer of shame, which increases health problems of social assistance recipients." (Lødemel 1997)

Second, by being pressured to look for a job in order to receive benefits, welfare recipients lose the chance to withhold themselves from participating in the market, thus they have a decreased chance of finding a job they consider fulfilling to their internal demands. They are also expected to take any job available, even to relocate to another city which requires added mental effort in order to reinvent their imagined self.

In some cases, this new reciprocity norm results in fear of unemployment. In these cases, the welfare recipients might decide to stick to their job which they do not deem fulfilling, because they wouldn't want to go through the welfare system or because they are afraid of being sanctioned unexpectedly or stigmatized once they lose their job. Fear of punishment is the driving force here which can be considered as an "added external demand". From the standpoint of the *theory of human nature*, that is counter-productive to self-realization and emancipation.

Labor in this case becomes external to the worker. Not because he is working for a capitalist necessarily, but only because according to this thesis's modified *theory of human nature* he is forced to perform labor that he does not deem fulfilling. Labor in this case "does not belong to his essential being; he, therefore, does not confirm himself in his work, but denies himself, feels miserable and not happy, does not develop free mental and physical energy, but mortifies his flesh and ruins his mind (Marx 1884).

The third problem is deeper. While some might reason that the employment activation meeting is necessary because authority is always right, and therefore it is okay to have a meeting (which is a problem for another research paper), others question its ramification. Loss of trust can be felt from a service user's interaction with the social worker, because although, services users "must have the right to co-determination in decisions concerning themselves and shall be given an influence on the design of services offered (NOU 2004; Slettebo 2000), yet a certain type of cunning is still used as a component of communicative paternalism between the social worker and service user. What is expressed to the user is that they "own the communicative process" to ensure a good result and the end point of the process is not anywhere. In the perspective of the social worker on the other hand, communication is not meant to end quickly and in happy agreement. Unrealistic notions about how fun work the user can qualify for are used. At the same time weaning these unrealistic notions should not appear as coercion to the service user (as it can damage service user motivation), although there are undoubtedly elements of implicit coercion in this type of interaction. Here we can also see the unethicity of the work done by the social worker. Instead of seeing the service user as an end, they see them as a mean. A service user becomes a mean for the social worker, through commodifying laws such as the *Arbeidslinja*. During this activation process, this hegemonic discourse funded by the state (will be discussed later in the chapter further) might be apparent to some, and social capital is expended. Experiencing mistrust from these social workers does not only diminish people's trust in these authorities, but also their trust in "people in general". (Rothstein and Eek 2009)."

5.3 Other Problems in *Arbeidslinja*

Similarly, other social benefits are also affected by *Arbeidslinja*. These social benefits have all similar problems: privacy issues, and the addition of "external demands" onto service

users which reduces the self-actualization and emancipation of Nordic welfare recipients. The following examples discuss the problems of Arbeidslinja in the Norwegian context.

Empirical evidence of this can be seen in the introduction of Arbeidslinja laws in 2009 in cases of illness. The Dagpenger (Sickness benefits) recipients started attending activation meetings with NAV (Norwegian welfare administration), GP (Doctor) and employer. They are obliged to share information about the disease state with them. In some cases, yearly activation meetings have been recommended.

Work clearance allowance (Arbeidsavklaringspenger) states that “to have an income in periods during which you are ill or injured and need assistance from NAV” <https://www.nav.no/en/home/benefits-and-services/relatert-informasjon/work-assessment-allowance-aap> the recipient accepts assessment and participation in rehabilitation activities. However, In order to receive Workers' clearance money one must send a report card to NAV every 14 days where they explain their activity to get a job.

Disability pensioners are entitled to their pension, and they are still not obliged to participate in counseling - or other activation measures, but financial incentives have been introduced to lure recipients back into working life, should working ability improve. One can be gainfully employed and still receive pension funds without it being reduced. The disability pension is also offered to the employer as a wage subsidy, so that they get an extra financial incentive to hire disability pensioners.

In the old-age pension, income testing of pensions against earned income was removed in connection with the transition to a new pension system in 2010. This means that there is a financial incentive to continue working even if one receives a pension at the same time.

In conclusion, all these Arbeidslinja policies involve ethical and privacy issues, and the addition of “external demands” onto service users which reduces the self-actualization and emancipation of Nordic welfare recipients. In order to continue the narrative of the solidaristic Nordic social democratic welfare state, the government must increase taxes, and therefore, it justifies the use of Arbeidslinja laws.

So far, I have presented “empirical” evidence of various problems arising from the implementation of Arbeidslinja, on the micro and meso levels of social work. Therefore, a change in approach and a new narrative that encompasses the Nordic ideals might be beneficial. What could be this different approach?

5.4 New Approach

Given that the Arbeidslinja had a lot of drawbacks, I decided to try to understand the reason behind these problems. What I found was that macro level problems also existed alongside the above-mentioned micro and meso level issues. For example, the accumulation of wealth and the escalation in inequalities are two faces that social democracy has been unable to contain (Barrata and Cabrita 2019) which not even ethical frameworks such as utilitarianism - which aims for the greatest good for the greatest number of people - can justify (Barrata and Cabrita 2019). This meant that the problem was a symptom of the system.

Therefore, I decided to interpret the current Nordic narrative in order to find new and better hermeneutic interpretations, which can fit together with the current narrative. The solution in that sense, as Walzer puts it, is a new interpretation that is sensitive to the demands of the moral conceptions that it idealizes ... In the end, the more correct interpretation will be the interpretation which best coheres with all the other notions and concepts we already consider normatively binding (1987).

In this part of the thesis, I will discuss a new contextual interpretation that could be used as a new narrative for the Nordic welfare state. In order to understand this new approach, I'd like to reinterpret the current situation hermeneutically. So far, the thesis has answered the questions of why de-commodification and self-actualization go hand-in-hand according to Marx's and the modified *theory of human nature*. And how, in order to achieve self-actualization, one must have the liberty to choose work. However, instead of using the traditional Marxist idea of *human nature* and *historical materialism* to explain the current social democratic narrative through the perspective of the mode of production, this thesis will - through critical hermeneutics - come up with welfare socialist, capitalist and egalitarian interpretations of *human nature* as well. This is done in order to understand all sides of the contemporary debate within the Nordic welfare redistribution context. Using these new interpretations, this thesis will try to pinpoint at the common denominator between all three approaches which can be used as a unifying solution for the Nordic welfare state.

The current Nordic narrative solves the problem of scarcity with taxation but violates the egalitarian principles of *the theory of justice* (Barrata and Cabrita) speak about social democracy has taken advantage of the ambivalence between egalitarianism and welfare capitalism, social

democracy has leaned towards the latter (1987). This ambiguity between socialism, egalitarianism and welfare capitalism, is what we will further explore. In the next section, we will try to encapsulate traditional Nordic social-democratic interpretations and new interpretations rather than having an unclear position when it comes to economic and welfare policy.

5.5 Nordic Welfare State: Capitalism Vs Egalitarianism Vs Socialism

On one hand, welfare capitalism argues that the accumulation of wealth is good for welfare redistribution and society. Clark explain that the distribution of income to society is controlled by a natural law, and that this law, if it worked without friction, would give to every agent of production the amount of wealth which that agent creates (1899). In this perspective, the market can solve welfare problems because higher levels of wealth indicate stronger productive capability, and individuals receive what they deserve.

The socialist narrative came as a response to capitalism, as it addressed workers' rights. To socialism work was commodified by capitalists and created alienation and therefore, it addressed the vulnerability of the workers but not the rest of the population.

The Nordic egalitarian narrative emerged as a response to the social democratic narrative. As discussed in the second chapter, once socialists gained power after WW2, they realized that the war had left a lot of people in vulnerability and therefore, extended social benefits to everyone. However, neither socialism nor capitalism address the vulnerable and welfare redistribution. Therefore, Nordic universalism emerged as an ideological gap in the socialist and capitalist narrative in addressing the vulnerable.

The Nordic egalitarian narrative of universalism can be explained through Rawls' *Theory of Justice*, where Rawls confirmed that basic liberties cannot become contingencies dependent on any considerations related to society's economic order (Barrata and Cabrita 2019). Rawls argues that social justice is an innate right rather than a right gained through policies or reciprocity norms or something gained through nature or nurture.

The *Theory of Justice* confirms that allocating resources to benefit the vulnerable should be an ideal. It is worth noting here, as previously discussed in the theoretical framework above in this thesis, although for Rawls, differences in classes violate the *principles of justice*, Rawls

himself was okay with having a difference in classes between workers and non-workers. In other words, for Rawls workers must receive an income higher than non-workers. This will be reflected upon in the next section.

5.6 A New Nordic Interpretation

In this section I will interpret how the capitalist, socialist and egalitarian ideologies interrelate when it comes to income, employment (labor) and subsistence (basic needs), as these three components form the basis of the welfare system and constitute to the gap in meaning discussed throughout this thesis between the Nordic egalitarian, socialist, and capitalist ideologies.

First, it is important to understand the current capitalist interpretation of the relationship between labor and income within the Nordic Welfare State. In the capitalist perspective, based on *standard economic theory*, it is precisely because work [labor] is not voluntary that someone is willing to pay the person who performs it. Income is one compensation for the loss of the more attractive leisure time. Work is externally motivated, and it is the salary that makes one work. Therefore, based on *standard economic theory*, work in the current capitalist state, by definition takes away the leisure time of “other” people to perform externally motivated tasks by providing salary in return.

I will briefly discuss the connection of this capitalist interpretation of labor in comparison with Rawls’s *Theory of Justice* and Marx’s *theory of human nature*. Rawls’ egalitarian *theory of Justice* is not against the capitalist interpretation of labor as the theory of justice is agnostic to economics. In his inception of an ideal society, Rawls’ *theory of justice* does not include economic calculations. Therefore, this capitalist interpretation of labor can be used in tandem with Rawls’ *theory of justice*, and the *Theory of justice* can be used in the capitalist economic model, including that of the Nordic Welfare state.

On the other hand, Marx also states that labor under capitalism adds external demands and causes alienation. However, in a perfect capitalist state, it is beneficial for job creators to have job seekers to be internally motivated rather than externally motivated through salary. (see Mao 2013) Therefore, in an ideal capitalist state, work would be internally motivated in order to increase productivity and is considered leisure time (will be discussed further). Marx of course

has different conclusions towards capitalism because of the non-ideal state of capitalism. It is also worth noting that, although the ideal capitalist society has different premises in its interpretation, a society with prospering economy is related to Marx's classless ideal society, which has freedom and self-actualization of people as the cornerstone of its philosophy.

I will now use an ideal situation to further the interpretation of the capitalist relationship between leisure time and labor. This is done to explain how the components of the *standard economic theory* interact. The ideal situation is as follows: In an ideal Nordic Welfare state, where everyone (workers and non-workers) always has their leisure time, based on the previously mentioned *standard economic theory*, everyone would always be paid equally. The question of the judgement of *the willingness to work* would not be of any importance, since, in such a system, everyone's time would be relatively of the same importance, and therefore, everyone would always be equally paid.

This can be considered a criticism to Rawls' and Dworkins positions and as mentioned in the theoretical framework chapter. The *Theory of Justice* states that differences between classes violates the principle of mutual advantage as well as democratic equality (Rawls *Theory of Justice*). However, I argue that all differences between people are actually morally arbitrary when it comes to justice, and justice is not limited by willingness to work. There are three reasons for this. First, because of the "productivist" un-ideal stance also supported by Van parijs (1995), second, through my existential reasoning where I stated that: No one knows what the point of life is, and to judge it by one's willingness to produce for other's demands is only serving others and definitely has external power involved. This criticism is validated trough critical hermeneutics by Walzer when he states that criticism does not require us "to step back from society as a whole but only to step away from certain sorts of power relationships within society (Vergés-Gifra 2006) and third, since in a commodified state the only way to receive an income is trough employment, and income in a commodified state is important for subsistence and to cover other psychological needs (according to the definition of human nature in the theoretical framework section), the judgement of the will to work becomes an issue. This means, a person's willingness to work is a matter of debate only when wealth is regarded as an end goal rather than the wellbeing of the people.

In fact, the scarcity of income and resources is the precursor to the reason behind this judgement of one's motivation to work and not the fact that humans are ethically born to perform external tasks. This productivist narrative in the Nordic Welfare state is therefore currently creating a class separation between workers and non-workers due to scarcity of resources and is perpetuated by the Arbejdslinja. In other words, if resources were abundant, an ideal Nordic state would not need people to work and pay taxes in order to secure the huge cost of running the solidaristic Nordic economy, and therefore, one's willingness to work would not be important.

It is important to see the influence social democratic ideals have on Nordic governments and how the perspective of people changes with the dominant ideology. It is important to be critical to the idea (using Critical hermeneutics) to understand what constitutes preconceived knowledge. Gramsci writes, new ideas and paradigms are always pushing history aside as they enter into the dominant discourse or contribute to the 'common sense' (1971) Currently, in the welfare state, where laws such as the Arbejdslinja are considered mainstream, and work is idealized through politics, citizens accept it and are forced to live in this non-ideal state.

Dufour (2008) writes about *symbolic slavery*. The new human is presented as a consumer and becomes human capital to enhance the competitive power of a nation. This non-ideal state is also related to Foucault's concept called "The medical gaze" in which the doctor objectifies the body of the patient, as separate and apart from his or her personal identity. The government's regards citizens providing taxes as a given. In the same way as the doctor has "the medical gaze", the government looks at its citizens as "consumers who must produce taxes". In conclusion, this section can be summarized with four main ideas.

- According to the egalitarian *theory of justice* and capitalist standard economic theory's interpretations, in an ideal Nordic social democratic state, where everyone has their leisure time and are freedom to choose their labor, once resources are abundant, the judgement for the willingness to work would cease to exist and social resources would be spread equally.
- In an ideal Marxist society (Where people would be paid equally and is theorized through the *theory of human nature* used in this thesis) resources are spread equally. However, instead of using Marx's theory of *human nature* where Marx assumes that humans are essentially collective, this new theory is using a hermeneutic social democratic contemporary definition

which encapsulates egalitarian, and capitalist definitions alike. Therefore, this new interpretation can be seen as one continuing the social democratic narrative.

- The Nordic social democratic ideal, once dissected to its components, according to Barrata and Cabrita, can be seen as a combination of socialist, egalitarian, and capitalist ideologies. (2019).
- Another important conclusion made was that the ideal “standard economic theory” of capitalism, can work in tandem with the Marxist and egalitarian ideals.

5.7 Solutions

Before I start with the solutions - which answers the second and third research question - I'd like to mention that on one hand, social workers are among those who are supposed to contribute to the fabrication of the autonomous self as the object of expert knowledge – [social workers are] a system of moral orthopaedics (Rose, 1999). On the other hand, social actors are not dumb puppets who need the social critic to come fully explain the world to them and come liberate them from the ills that the critic denounces. (Honneth, 1995). Therefore, solutions presented in this thesis are not supposed to be seen as elite perspectives, because that would be self-serving and fuels anti-intellectualism and resentment, but rather as enriching the moral foundations of the Nordic welfare model.

With this in mind, the previously discussed Nordic welfare model, which encapsulates the capitalist, socialist and egalitarian interpretations, explains labor and leisure time through their relationship with scarcity of resources. However, the problematic aspect of the interpretation which was not discussed enough was that, according to the standard economic theory's definition, labor is externally motivated. Therefore, in a non-ideal capitalist state where all available jobs are externally motivated, how can job seekers always choose jobs that are internally motivated?

According to Marxist views, the problem with external demands is that, for Marx, since subsistence is only achieved through income and once “labor power became a commodity, peoples' rights to survive outside the market are at stake. It is this which constitutes the single

most conflictual issue in social policy.” (Esping-Andersen, 1990) Polanyi argues that it becomes “a freedom behind prison walls, and hence fictitious.”

However, the new contemporary Nordic socio-economic interpretation (which is deduced from the capitalist *standard economic theory* and is in direct agreement with the Rawlsian egalitarianism and the modified *theory of human nature* and is argued to be working in tandem with views of the Nordic welfare model), suggests ulterior interpretations.

5.8 UBI as a solution

This thesis will argue for UBI as a solution through shared contemporary egalitarian and capitalist interpretations of the Nordic welfare state. Therefore, it is important to understand both perspectives. Universal Basic income can be defined as every citizen or resident of a country receives a modest income without means testing or conditions. From the egalitarian perspective, UBI is put forward as an instrument of freedom from state paternalism (Van Parijs 1995). While from the capitalist perspective, cash benefits have also been defended as a superior economic tool (Friedman 1962, Tobin 2013).

UBI offers multiple benefits. From the theoretical perspective presented in this thesis, each individual will have the liberty to choose their internally motivated jobs and this way, their chosen job can always be their leisure time since it is them who picked it out of internal demands rather than external ones. From the Nordic bureaucratic side, Econ (2001) also argued that basic income has low administration costs and can contribute to a simplification of the transfer system. From the capitalist perspective, capitalist economist argued that “the administration cost is reduced, poverty is alleviated, and benefits are streamlined” (Friedmann 1962). From the welfare recipient’s perspective, stigmatization is tackled through acceptance of welfare benefits and social capital is improved by the improved interaction between welfare recipients and welfare system. From the social worker’s perspective, the sanctioning, close follow-up and monitoring, needs testing and targeting will stop. The employees in the welfare offices would be freed to focus their time and resources to supervise, help and advise the recipients, rather than controlling them (ECON 2001).

However, all these benefits need to be justified on an ideological basis and given the trilateral ideological composition of Nordic welfare states, this thesis will try to find a shared interpretation between the capitalist, egalitarian and socialist ideologies.

5.9 What type of UBI fits the Nordic interpretation?

From the Nordic capitalist perspective, and according to the standard economic theory, as discussed previously, labor is a function of leisure time. In an ideal Nordic capitalist state, First, job seekers and job creators must be equally and fully motivated to work together (In order to remove the externality of work dilemma and achieve the capitalist sacred dream of higher productivity and therefore wealth), and second, workers and non-workers alike will receive the same pay because work, in an ideal capitalist state, work is the same as leisure time as it helps with capital accumulation - Income equality leads to GDP growth (see Ostry 2014). It is important to note here that, from the ideological perspective of capitalism, utilitarian judgements in utility rather than ethics are used to deduce the value of a policy. This means, that all financial benefits discussed in the previously also contribute to this argument. For example, the administration cost is reduced, poverty is alleviated, and benefits are streamlined, and finally, the poor becomes a consumer.

Seeing these two requirements as an ideal which the capitalist Nordic state would strive to achieve, a progress towards this ideal would-be made through: The freedom to choose work in order to better match jobseekers with job creators (in order to remove the externality of work dilemma and improving the efficiency of labor), and second, redistribution of wealth (because work and leisure time should ideally be the same and because equality increases GDP growth)

In more technical terms, the capitalist Nordic solution is a negative income tax (NIT). Negative income tax is a system which reverses the direction in which tax is paid for incomes below a certain threshold. This means that a person with low income would receive extra funds until they have their basic needs covered, and a rich person would have to pay more taxes. This type of basic income is not new, and has already been proposed in Econ (2001) and by Friedman (1968).

On the other hand, Rawls agreed with the implementation of NIT, as it is also theorized in the egalitarian interpretation in the *Theory of Justice* as well. He states that the social

minimum is to be guaranteed by the government either by family allowances and special payments for sickness and employment, or more systematically by such devices as a graded income supplement (a so-called negative income tax) (Rawls, 1971). By implementing an egalitarian redistribution of wealth, the economy should be restructured to help the people at the bottom.

The *Theory of Justice* explains that justice is fair when welfare redistribution is not concerned with what one chooses to do during his lifetime nor under the conditions one is born into. It was also argued in this thesis that justice is not concerned with willingness to work either. Justice encompasses for all circumstances of life, no matter one's nature or nurture or willingness to work. On the other hand, according to the Pareto principle, it does not suffice that no one becomes worse off; also, those who are worse off must become better off than they are. (Barrata and Cabrita 2019).

On the other hand, Rawls' *theory of justice* can easily fit the Nordic socialist and capitalist model because of its lack of economic perspective, and finally provide a neo-kantian ethical framework for the redistribution of income⁸ Therefore, we argue that the egalitarian, social democratic and capitalist Nordic ideologies would accept NIT as an ideal solution.

5.10 Improving NIT

One ethical argument against NIT is why not strive to cover every need for every citizen, but rather have a welfare redistribution based on equity? This can perhaps be understood by the *capability theory* of Amartya Sen, where he argues with a normative approach to human welfare that concentrates on the actual capability of persons to achieve their well-being rather than on their mere right or freedom to do so (Sen, 1992). Sen argues that poverty isn't just lacking basic needs, its being denied substantive freedoms because of their combined capabilities (Sen, 1992). Although his theory also confirms the need for a new welfare model, however, in practical terms, the capability approach is focused on what individuals are subjectively able to do, which requires tracking each user's request to check if it's deemed more worthy than another's. This would practically, within the current Nordic welfare system, require tracking users and requires moral judgments. For example, (Should one receive funds to travel to China to visit their mother once a year? Or should another person receive funds for traveling to visit their

grandmother?) Tracking this would exponentially raise the cost of UBI and ethical issues are raised through the monitoring individuals, and most importantly, it doesn't follow the Rawlsian Pareto principle, therefore it doesn't fit into the current Nordic ideology.

However, this does not mean the *capability approach* does not help in theorizing NIT. It could be used in tandem with the proposed NIT scheme to pay different people different amounts depending on consumer prices in different location. For example, a person living in Svalbard (In Arctic Norway) pays more for heating than his counterpart in Oslo. The idea behind this is that social resources (As Rawls calls them) should theoretically be provided by the government. Since they are not provided physically by the government, the funds used must be enough to acquire them.

On one hand, the Nordic ideal aim "is to maximize capacities for individual independence (Esping-Anderson 1990). On the other hand, the egalitarian Rawlsian principle also agrees to the implementation of a NIT in accordance with the Pareto principle. They also both agree with the implementation of a NIT in order to increase the individual independence. The NIT proposed in the egalitarian interpretation in this thesis, focuses on needs that are constant among people. These needs are shared among all rational beings. It does not matter what you want to become or who you are, one should still be provided with these basic needs. Marx's distinction of basic needs between vital or animal needs and psychological ones can be used in tandem with Rawls' theory to understand the overlapping consensus between all individuals and have an operational definition of what constitutes the "wellbeing" of individuals.

Currently, in the Nordic welfare state, healthcare and education are considered universal services paid for by solidarity through tax payment. However, water, housing, food and other basic needs are individual responsibilities. With the NIT, basic needs should be also seen as animal needs which follow the Rawlsian and Marxist interpretation of "human nature" and therefore, everyone's animal needs (water, food, shelter etc.) should be covered. To put this into perspective, here is an example:

- A threshold must be first placed. This threshold is the amount of money to cover a person's basic needs (Food, housing, safety, water). This amount is then multiplied by 2. Therefore, if this threshold is 2000\$, anyone who receives less than that amount will receive tax refunds, and anyone who receives more will pay extra taxes.

- An unemployed that has made 0\$ income is entitled to get paid 1000\$ per month. $(2000\$ - 0) / 2$
- If, on the other hand, a person makes 5000\$ a month, they would have to pay back a percentage of their income to fund for others who are currently with no income. Using the 2000\$ threshold mentioned earlier, they would pay $(5000\$ - 2000\$) / 2 = 1500\$$

It is important to note that, the threshold is only a bare minimum, and it should increase as the wealth of the Nordic states increases. Specially trough automation, which will be discussed in the next section.

5.11 Automation as Solution

As lack of tax funds have been argued as the reason for the implementing laws such as the Arbejdslinja. Arguably, three industrial revolutions have passed since Marx's separation of labor between natural and psychological demands. We are currently witnessing a "fourth industrial revolution" in which millions of jobs could potentially disappear as a result of digitalization, artificial intelligence and robot technology, accentuates the need for such an analysis (Wærness 2018).

In the Nordic economy, vegetables grow in vertical hydroponic farms, houses can be 3D printed at reduced cost, water is abundant and automatically provided. In other words, one does not need to do the redundant task of building or farming anymore, basic needs can be automated. The argument here is that, if everyone has basic needs (animal needs), and all basic needs can be automated, and the Nordic ideology has "stateness" as one of its ideals, the production of basic needs should be provided by the government trough automation.

At the same time, automation is of utmost importance in the Nordic economy because are high. Therefore, the solution proposed is the automation of natural needs of humans and providing them freely or minimal cost to the public. This solution goes in tandem with the NIT proposal and is not mutually exclusive, but instead of the funds being disbursed trough the government in the form of cash transfers, a new governmental plan on investing in automating physical resources and providing them freely to the public trough automation could be implemented.

Marx on the other hand states that the associated producers, rationally regulating their interchange with Nature, bringing it under their common control, instead of being ruled by it as by the blind forces of Nature; and achieving this with the least expenditure of energy and under conditions most favorable to, and worthy of, their human nature.” Therefore, the efficient automation of resources to control “blind forces of nature” is definitely a mean to achieve this Marxist ideal of human nature.

Therefore, the government could invest in automating and creating abundance of natural needs. This will reduce the cost of running the solidaristic welfare state, the cost of subsistence, and have an emancipatory effect on individuals.

5.12 Reduction of Psychological Need as a Solution

Regarding the reduction of psychological needs, further research is recommended in the field of indigenous and eastern philosophical interpretations of “needs” and perhaps integrating it into the Nordic narrative. Indigenous cultures are connected with nature and have a different interpretation of basic and psychological needs. Although not indigenous, perhaps Henry David Thoreau explains this best when he writes “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived.”(quote)Eastern philosophy on the other hand, and specifically meditation, is based on the exercise of control over one’s needs. Buddhism interprets psychological needs as a weakness to reach self-actualization. Further research can help with uncovering richer interpretations to this phenomenon.

In conclusion, three different new interpretations have been discussed as possible solutions that fit in the current Nordic welfare system. The implementation of NIT, Automation, and further research on the reduction of psychological needs.

CHAPTER SIX: LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will explain what limitations and recommendations for this research, and thereafter present the conclusions made.

6.1 Limitations and recommendations

- One limitation is the fact that I have picked only parts of Marx's theory of human nature. Picking a few parts of a theory (even after arguing the reason) raises some concerns. I reflected upon these concerns by reasoning that since this theory was not the product of other theories, and since all it can be used as is a premise for other theories to lie upon, I had no reason why it could be problematic.
- Although the micro meso level problems discussed were said to be "empirical" and believed to be true, further research in this field could be beneficial to understand what actually goes on in employment centers and welfare centers, and if social workers actually violate ethical concerns while performing activation or other tasks mentioned in this thesis.
- Although this research presented unifying ideological solutions through socialist, capitalist and egalitarian ideologies, however, democracy was not considered in the implementation of NIT. Therefore, popular opinion was dismissed. The effect of this problem however is reduced as critical hermeneutics was used in this research. However, citizens might still be against some of the ideas presented, such as the equality of classes between worker and non-worker.
- NIT as a solution in this research is institutionalized. It presents the problem of individuals as one that cannot be solved without a government, the individual cannot be empowered without a government. This is a problem outside the scope of this research to discuss however, it's worth mentioning. Although, when it comes to responsibility of the state towards citizens, this is not violated. This later part could be explained by T.J. Marshall's idea of social citizenship.
- NIT deduced in this thesis does not address all vulnerable people, it forms an ethical redistribution basis derived from various ideologies. Decommodification is too focused on labor, according to Gough (1999). This is due to the historical socialist ideology dictating the Nordic welfare state narrative of labor. Cross-sectional definitions of decommodification should be used to incorporate other social groups, such as gender. For example, labor is

generally assumed to be gainful employment, so Lewis argues that, unlike men, de commodification for women can be through unpaid work. (Kennett, Lecture, 29, March).

- One recommendation is a pilot program which empirically tests the validity of the assumptions made in this research.

6.2 Conclusion & Summary

This is the final section of the study and explains in short what was discussed in this thesis.

- The Nordic Social democracy is a mix of multiple ideologies with historical and traditional roots. These ideologies interpret labor and welfare in different ways. As financial challenges emerged in the 1980s (such as aging population globalization etc.). and with this increase in costs of running the solidaristic welfare state, and taking advantage of the ideological ambiguity, laws such as the Arbeidslinja have been implemented.
- In order to understand the differences between the dominant Nordic ideologies when it comes to welfare redistribution, I dissected them into their moral, ethical and economic components and compared them with each other. Labor, subsistence and income were interpreted in each of the three dominant perspectives, and finally, new interpretations have been made which unify all three ideologies.
- Problems arise with the implementation of Arbeidslinja from the social work perspective at the micro and meso levels. On the one hand, ethical issues, privacy concerns, stigmatization and shame, reduction of self-actualization of Nordic Welfare recipients and the reduction of social capital were associated in the implementation of arbeidslinja laws have been found. On the other hand, social worker practice unethicity problems have also been found.
- On the macro level, the Nordic Welfare state three major ideologies were dissected. It was found egalitarianism as an ideology lacked economic perspective which capitalism had. Socialism lacked perspective outside the worker's rights which egalitarianism had, and capitalism had no moral perspective which socialism and egalitarianism had.
- A unifying ideological solution was presented in the form of Negative Income Tax. This scheme was argued to be egalitarian, capitalist and socialist at core. Egalitarian because Rawl's theory of justice theorizes it. Capitalist because it increases wealth through equality and helps with capital accumulation. Socialist because Marx argued that it decreases animal needs and external demands.

- Another finding was the amount the Negative Income Tax scheme should aim to provide and how the math would add up. It was suggested to be the amount required for subsistence.
- Another solution was in the form of automation, which can be used in tandem with NIT. It reduces external demands according to Marx, improves productive efficiency, and therefore helps fund the solidaristic welfare state and reduce the need for Arbeidslinja.
- The study finally suggests looking into indigenous and eastern philosophy as a solution to psychological external demands.

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