

GENDER, SOCIAL EQUALITY AND BASIC INCOME

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Abstract

In recent years, international discussions about basic income initiatives have increased noticeably. These suggestions, in fact, represent an ideal to have *real freedom for everyone*. Thus, it would be possible to find a connection with the basic income and feminist movement. Hence, it would be quite necessary to make a criticism of the basic income from the feminist perspective which also includes the gender analysis issue. Some basic income advocates define basic income as a social policy that aim to recompense the undervalued and non-income generating housework and care work, predominantly performed by women. Today, gender-based division of Labor, which predicts women's housework and care work and men's participation in the labor market, remains the cause of serious injustices affecting women and one of the determinants of women's social and economic insecurity in the world. Therefore, starting with the feminist theory and considering the gender issue, this paper will discuss the potential of basic income to promote gender equality by providing women with financial security, reassessing the value of care, and challenging the gender division of labor. Consequently, this study concluded that a carefully calculated basic income can be proposed as a policy that can close the gender gap, if it is implemented with other well-functioning welfare state policies.

Keywords: basic income, housework, care work, women, gender equality, social equality, social welfare policy.

GENRE, ÉGALITÉ SOCIALE ET REVENU DE BASE

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Résumé

Ces dernières années, le débat international sur les propositions relatives au revenu de base s'est considérablement intensifié. L'idéal d'une *liberté réelle pour tous et toutes* prévaut dans ces propositions. À ce stade, il est intéressant de faire le lien entre le revenu de base et la lutte féministe. Pour cela, il est nécessaire de faire une critique du revenu de base, qui inclut l'analyse de genre, dans une perspective féministe. Certains défenseurs du revenu de base définissent le revenu de base comme une politique sociale qui vise à récompenser les travaux ménagers et les soins sous-évalués principalement effectués par des femmes. Aujourd'hui, la division du travail basée sur le genre, qui prédit les travaux ménagers et le travail de soins des femmes et la participation des hommes au marché du travail, reste la cause de graves injustices affectant les femmes et l'un des déterminants de l'insécurité sociale et économique des femmes dans le monde. Par conséquent, en commençant par la théorie féministe et en tenant compte de la question du genre, cet article discutera du potentiel du revenu de base pour promouvoir l'égalité des sexes en offrant aux femmes une sécurité financière, en réévaluant la valeur des soins et en remettant en question la division du travail entre les sexes. Par conséquent, cette étude a conclu qu'un revenu de base soigneusement calculé peut être proposé comme une politique qui peut réduire l'écart entre les sexes, si elle est mise en œuvre avec d'autres politiques de l'État providence qui fonctionnent bien.

Mots-clés: revenu de base, travaux ménagers, travail de soins, femmes, égalité des sexes, égalité sociale, politique de protection sociale.

TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET, SOSYAL EŞİTLİK VE TEMEL GELİR

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19. North American Basic Income Guarantee Kongresi'nde sunulan bildiri

Öz

Son yıllarda, temel gelir önerileriyle ilgili uluslararası tartışmalar belirgin bir şekilde artmıştır. Bu öneriler, en temelde, *herkes için gerçek özgürlüğü* sağlama idealini temsil eder. Bu bağlamda, temel gelir ve feminizm arasında bir bağlantı kurmak mümkün olmaktadır. Bunun için, cinsiyet analizini de içeren, feminist bakış açısıyla temel gelirin bir analizi yapılmalıdır. Bazı temel gelir savunucuları, temel geliri, ağırlıklı olarak kadınlar tarafından gerçekleştirilen, değersiz görülen ve gelir getirmeyen ev işi ve bakım çalışmalarını telafi etmeyi amaçlayan bir sosyal politika olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bugün, kadınların ev işine ve ev içi bakım çalışmalarına, erkeklerin ise işgücü piyasasına katılımını öngören cinsiyete dayalı işbölümü, kadınları etkileyen ciddi adaletsizliklerin nedeni ve kadınların dünyadaki sosyal ve ekonomik güvensizliğinin belirleyicilerinden biri olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu nedenle, feminist teoriden başlayarak ve toplumsal cinsiyet kavramını ele alarak, bu makale, kadınlara finansal güvenlik sağlayarak, bakım kavramını yeniden değerlendirerek ve cinsiyetçi işbölümüne meydan okuyarak toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliğini teşvik etme noktasında temel gelirin potansiyelini tartışacaktır. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma, dikkatli bir şekilde hesaplanan bir temel gelirin, diğer iyi işleyen refah devleti politikaları ile birlikte uygulanması durumunda cinsiyet farkını kapatabilecek bir politika olarak önerilebileceği sonucuna varmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: temel gelir, ev işi, bakım işi, kadın, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, sosyal eşitlik, sosyal refah politikası.

Introduction

The question of recognition of housework and care work is one of the well-known issues of feminist analysis. On average, women spend more time than men helping their elderly relatives. Household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, laundry and childcare, elderly care or disability care are traditionally attributed to women. In our contemporary Western societies, the housewife who does these household chores is classified as "inactive". Feminists have called in different ways the traditional activity of women in the family, as "care"¹, "sex/affective production"², the work of "preservation of the world and social bond"³ and "love's labor"⁴, which do not count as economically valuable work⁵.

However, our market-oriented society mainly focuses on work done in exchange for money, but does not pay attention to unpaid work. This unpaid work has also been called in some theoretical traditions as *reproductive work*. Sociologists such as Dorothy Smith have made a similar remark when considering women and employment⁶.

Unpaid domestic work contributes to the material well-being of the population. Despite the recognition, at the level of the discourse, of women's "unpaid vital service" to the nation, this service is still treated as if it were only for their husbands. At this stage, the social

¹ Patricia Paperman, Sandra Laugier (eds.), *Le souci des autres. Éthique et politique du care*, Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2005

² Ann Ferguson, Zita Jacquelyn, Kathryn Pyne Addelson, "On "compulsory heterosexuality and lesbian existence": Defining the issues", *Signs*, Volume 7, Issue 1, 1981, <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1300138381?pq-origsite=gscholar&imgSeq=1>, (08 june 2021)

³ John Young, "Research, policy and practice: why developing countries are different", *Journal of International Development*, Volume 17, Issue 6, 2005, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1002/jid.1235>, (08 june 2021)

⁴ Eva Feder Kittay, *Love's Labor : Essays on Women, Equality, and Dependency*, New York: Routledge, 1999.

⁵ Naïma Hamrouni, "La non reconnaissance du travail des femmes : Smith n'est pas coupable", *Revue de philosophie économique*, Volume 12, Issue 1, 2011, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-de-philosophie-economique-2011-1-page-53.htm>, (08 june 2021)

⁶ Dorothy Smith, *The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1987

status of a woman largely depends on her partner. Sticking to traditional gender roles will likely imply that domestic work will continue to be underestimated by men, who are not a substantial part of it. In addition, individuals who demonstrate a preference for pursuing non-marketable supply activities are labeled as non-workers or "idlers" and suffer from the negative connotations that this label carries in a market-based society⁷. A more accurate interpretation of feminists would be that, in a society that already underestimates this work, women are at unacceptable risk of violence, poverty and other forms of exploitation.

According to feminist literature, if the time spent on domestic work was evaluated in monetary terms, the inequalities between men and women, or in other words gender gap, would be partially closed. In this context, in order to be able to recognize the unpaid nature of domestic work, the value of reproduction and household chores, which today are not valued, the potential for basic income draws attention.

In this study, I will examine this potential of basic income. But for this, it is essential to first examine the nature of the gender distribution of labor because it is the basis of many gender inequalities and affects the position of women in the household and society. In this context, I will discuss the concepts that cause gender equality and make an analysis within the framework of basic income, social equality and gender.

Sexual Contract

English feminist and political scientist Carole Pateman defends the idea that the construction of society is based on the sexual contract.⁸ According to her, while determining

⁷ Ailsa McKay, Jo Vanevery, "Gender, Family, and Income Maintenance: a Feminist Case for Citizens Basic Income", **Social Politics**, Volume 7, Issue 2, (June 2000), p. 278

⁸ Carole Pateman, **The Sexual Contract**, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988, Turkish translation Zeynep Alpar, **Cinsel Sözleşme**, İstanbul: Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 2011, p. 16

the relationships between people, in which notions of modern liberal democracy are based, the social contract also shapes the correspondences between men and women.⁹ To this end, she examines how the social contract, which is supposed to establish civil liberty and equality, keeps women in a position of subordination. Finally, it shows that the transition from the traditional order to modern society in no way marks the end of the patriarchy, and further, with a sexual contract, men's freedom is founded on the domination of women via *the model of the gender-based division of labor*. Starting from this contract, modern welfare states have often contributed to gender inequality. We can therefore assume that the social contract is *gender blind* and social justice was founded on gender inequalities. Consequently, Carole Pateman argues that we need a new social contract to build a more equitable society.

Women's Revolution

When we look at the current global conjuncture, we see serious steps being taken towards gender equality. There is no doubt that we have been talking about a *women's revolution* for a long time. But despite all this, the rise in the level of education and social status of women, women's access to many rights and their active participation in the labor market, the women's movement continues to be an *incomplete movement*. Gøsta Esping-Andersen defines this phenomenon as “the incomplete revolution”.¹⁰ Gøsta Esping-Andersen argues that this incomplete revolution of women can cause great inequalities and examines them systematically in his book. According to him, social changes and transformations resulting from the progress of women in the world, globalization, the expansion of the tertiary and quaternary sector deeply affect societies in cultural and

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, **Incomplete Revolution. Adapting Welfare States to Women's New Roles**, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, Turkish translation Selin Çağatay, **Tamamlanmamış devrim. Kadınların yeni rollerine uymak**, 1st edition, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011

economic terms. As women gain many rights in this whole process of change, paradoxically, many negative situations arise in the context of gender equality and social justice.¹¹ Many issues such as social inequalities and new forms of inequality, the transformation of family policies of the welfare state, the attitudes of spouses towards childcare and housework, the decline in fertility rates, professional situation of women, the differences between generations and the poverty are directly linked to this whole process of transformation and change in the world today as a consequence of the female revolution.

According to him, the Scandinavian countries have almost completed the women's revolution, but if we are talking about the rest of the world, this is not the case and the global revolution of gender roles causes a lot of social inequalities. Esping-Andersen puts forward two important preconditions for solving all these problems and overcoming them, i.e. for the success of the women's revolution. The first is the need to establish partnerships on the basis of new gender rules, and the second is the adaptation of the welfare state.¹²

The male breadwinner, female homemaker family model

As Gøsta Esping-Andersen argued, the social policies of many states have difficulty in keeping pace with the concept of women's revolution. In fact, the welfare state policies of many political entities are based on the model of the gender-based division of labor (Male Breadwinner, Female Homemaker) theorized by Gary Becker. This model theorized by Gary Becker defines a nuclear family where the man sustains the family's needs and the woman is a housewife.¹³ Many factors played a role in forming such a balance in the newly formed world order after World War II. This post-war period, called the "golden age of the welfare state in

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74-75

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 27-28

¹³ Gary Stanley Becker, **A Treatise on the Family**, 1st edition, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981

Europe”, is built on such a model in terms of gender and family structure. During this period, -when many factories were opened, unemployment rates were reduced, an atmosphere of peace was partially established, early marriages and having children became widespread with high fertility rates, stable partnerships were established with low divorce and celibacy rates- welfare state policies glorified this family model where men work in the labor market and women stay at home to care for children and the elderly and do household chores.

Welfare state regulations were developed taking the family within the framework of this model. But today this model has almost lost its plausibility in many countries. In recent years, the educational level of women has increased, many women have gained economic independence and have the opportunity to work throughout their lives. At the same time, although at a very low rate, the participation rate of men in housework has increased. Women fought for gender equality in many areas and acquired many rights. Although we still cannot talk about the existence of equality between men and women in the societies, it is clear that women are firmly committed to this path. It no longer seems possible that this model, theorized by Becker, is accepted from the point of view of women. Women now listen to the voice of Olympe de Gouges and wake up, they no longer accept gender inequalities: “*Men are you capable of being just? It is a woman who asks you the question; you will not deprive her of that right at least. Tell me? Who gave you sovereign empire to oppress my sex? Your strength? Your talents?*”¹⁴

¹⁴ Olympe de Gouges, **Femme, réveille-toi! Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne**, Paris: Gallimard, 2014, Turkish translation Berna Günen, **Kadın Uyan! Kadın ve Kadın Yurttaş Hakları Bildirisi**, 1st edition, İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi, 2019, p. 28 (this passage is translated from French to English by me)

Rising social tension caused by the welfare state, which does not accompany the women's revolution

Despite the demise of this androcentric gender-based model, and the evolution of women's rights, social protection policies cannot keep up with this change because of the continued commitment to these policies, according to which family creates a “welfare¹⁵ and gender gap”. As a result, most developed societies face escalating tensions, as the women's revolution has not been accompanied by reform of family policy. This social protection system, based on the assumption that a man is employed full-time, and a woman is engaged in full-time household chores and childcare, is insufficient to describe the new social risks.¹⁶ A paradox of our time is that family social policies contrast with family structure.¹⁷

Housework, caring labor and evolution of family structures

If we want to promote more equality, or increase productivity, we need to look at what is happening in the family through an analytical look. It is in this area that many inequalities occur. The family structures are changing, but the traditional family model is failing to adapt to changing female roles.

From the 1970s, we began to observe the inclusion of the concept of housework in studies that examine the contribution of individuals to economic activity.¹⁸ Feminist literature

¹⁵ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Tamamlanmamış devrim. Kadınların yeni rollerine uymak*, *op. cit.*, p. 107

¹⁶ Olga Salido, Lois Moreno, “İspanya'da kadın istihdamı ve İspanyol refah rejiminin gelişimi”, in Ayşe Buğra, Yalçın Özkan (eds.), *Trajectories of Female Employment in the Mediterranean*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, Turkish translation Egemen Yılıgür, *Akdeniz'de kadın istihdamının seyri*, İstanbul: İletişim, 2014, p. 35

¹⁷ Gøsta Esping-Andersen, *Tamamlanmamış devrim. Kadınların yeni rollerine uymak*, *op. cit.*, p. 107

¹⁸ See William Nordhaus, James Tobin, “Is growth obsolete?”, in Milton Moss (ed.), *The Measurement of Economic and Social Performance*, Cambridge: NBER, 1973, <https://www.nber.org/chapters/c3621.pdf> (05 june 2021), p. 509-564, Joseph Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, Jean-Paul Fitoussi, “Rapport de la Commission sur la mesure de la performance économique et du progrès social”, 2009, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/sites/default/files/rapport/pdf/094000427.pdf> (05 june 2021), Sophie Ponthieux, Dominique Meurs, “Gender Inequality”, in Anthony Atkinson, François Bourguignon (eds.), *Handbook on Income Distribution* (vol 2A), Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280483336_Gender_Inequality (5 june 2021).

attributes particular significance to housework and care work, and maintains that the gendered distribution of household chores causes many inequalities, because these works are predominantly carried out by women. According to the ILO report published in 2000, *“housework (as distinct from paid domestic work) is the unremunerated work of maintaining a household which is performed by household members. Women everywhere still bear the primary responsibility for housework”*¹⁹, and care work or caring labor *“may be very broadly defined as the work of looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people. Care recipients are generally identified as infants, school-age children, people who are ill, persons with a disability, and elderly people.”*²⁰

These unpaid works, mostly performed by women, contribute enormously to the well-being of society. It should not be forgotten that if the care work and housework are not carried out, the children, who will contribute to the society, will not be able to grow up in a healthy way and the elderly care and the disability care cannot be assured.²¹ However, our market-driven society predominantly values paid work and underestimates unpaid work, especially housework and care work, within households, families and communities.²² However, as Guy Standing pointed out, in today's market-oriented world capitalist order, the main reason for insecurity is economic uncertainty, and traditional security mechanisms cannot be effective against uncertainty.²³ Therefore, we need new mechanisms.

¹⁹ ILO, “ABC of women workers’ rights and gender equality”, 2nd edition, Geneva, **International Labour Office**, 2007, p. 107

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 27

²¹ Ingrid Robeyns, “Some thoughts on basic income from a feminist perspective”, **Paper presented during a workshop at the Heinrich Böll Stiftung**, Berlin, 2007, p 9

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Guy Standing, **Basic Income: How we can make it happen**, London: Pelican Books, 2017, Turkish translation Ceren Demirdöğdü, **Temel gelir**, 1st edition, İstanbul: Tellekt, 2020, p. 79

Child welfare policies

Gendered division of labor is one of the causes of serious injustices affecting women²⁴ and children. The promotion of the well-being of children has occupied an increasing place in the public debate. In fact, it is a question of social investment by facilitating the reconciliation between professional life and care work, and by making it possible to fight against inequalities. Child welfare can be interpreted as a continuity of services designed to guarantee that children are safe and that families have the necessary support to care for their children successfully.²⁵ Child welfare policies are policies created to support families for this purpose. But, child welfare is a concept mostly related to the mother, and these policies are mainly based on the work done by the mother, like other welfare state policies. For example, caretakers' allowances aim to compensate for women's undervalued care work, such as looking after children. For this reason, according to feminists, while such policies seem to reward unpaid and unseen housework and care work, traditionally attributed to women, they strengthen the traditional gender-based division of work that accepts these works as women's natural responsibilities.

The main problem with these policies is the understanding that the care provided by women in child welfare is a natural duty and responsibility of women, as these policies are the schemes of the welfare state based on the gender-based family structure we mentioned earlier. In addition, these policies pose a risk in terms of citizenship, because they perpetuate social policies that favor men and confine women to households.²⁶ In other words, they strengthen

²⁴ See Diemut Bubeck, *Care, gender and justice*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus. Critical Reflections on the "Postsocialist" Condition*, New York: Routledge, 1997,

²⁵ Child Welfare Information Gateway, *What is child welfare? A guide for educators*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau, 2018

²⁶ Joan Tronto, "Who Cares? Public and Private Caring and the Rethinking of Citizenship", in Nancy Hirschmann, Ulrike Liebert (eds.), *Women & Welfare: Theory and Practice in the United States and Europe*, New Jersey: Rutgers, p. 65-84.

the secondary position of women in society. Modern welfare states that define citizenship requirements based on Carole Pateman's concept of sexual contract, which we mentioned earlier, reinforce gender inequality by allocating care work to family and women. For this reason, child welfare policies based on the male breadwinner model do not reduce gender inequality, on the contrary, it strengthens it. This reflects the androcentric approach based on the belief that women are dependent on men's income.

If we are talking about child welfare, we should mention single mothers or in other words, single-parent families because the number of such families is increasing day by day. A single parent family refers to a family consisting of an adult without a spouse and children under the age of 25. Parents in single-parent families are usually women. This increase in single-parent families is strongly linked to changes in family structures. Moreover, we can easily observe that single-parent families are often in precarious and vulnerable situations. It should be noted that welfare child policies can basically help single mothers or in other words, single-parent families. Through child welfare services, these women can provide economic security for their families by working in paid employment. But here another problem arises: The danger of stigmatization of single-parent families, as they have often been accused of being one of the causes of social disorder. Or, to put it more clearly, these families have become *scapegoats* during the escalation of tension resulting from the failure of the welfare state to keep up with the evolution of family structures following the women's revolution.

In short, as long as the child welfare policy alone targets women and heterosexual nuclear families, we cannot really talk about changing the underestimation of women's unpaid housework and care work. In other words, as long as care remains the exclusive domain of

women and not a basic aspect of human life, child care policies cannot guarantee gender equality and be expected to close the gender gap. While it seems like it will make a positive contribution to single mothers, it can actually stigmatize them and increase the existing gender gap. Therefore, some feminists think that basic income, in addition to or in place of these child welfare policies, can contribute to gender equality.

Basic income and gender equality

Basic income has emerged in recent decades as a radical proposal for reforming social welfare state, and support for such a social policy proposal has gained ground all over the world in a wide variety of intellectual and political fields. According to some feminists, achieving a basic income will make positive contributions to women's lives. Proponents of a basic income argue that unpaid work would be recognized²⁷, that the autonomy of poor women or all women would increase²⁸, that it would contribute to greater gender equality in the labor market and household by improving women's bargaining position and encouraging men to participate in housework and care work.

According to Sara Cantillon and Caitlin McLean, the general argument that basic income could facilitate a reduction in inequality within households can be broken down into four possible effects: the first is the effect on the financial or material well-being of women, the second is the effect concerning the role of independent income in increasing women's economic autonomy, the third possible effect is that a basic income could have a positive

²⁷ Annie Miller, "Basic Incomes and Women", **1st international congress**, Louvain-la-Neuve: BIEN, 1986

²⁸ Tony Walter, **Basic Income. Freedom from Poverty, Freedom to Work**, London: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1989

psychological impact on self-esteem and the well-being of women, the last effect relates to the issue of inequalities in leisure and participation in unpaid work.²⁹

Feminists argue that when basic income is established, it can encourage men for an equitable sharing of roles and responsibilities in domestic and public spaces.³⁰ It is also argued that basic income could create the institutional balance between work and family life by redefining housework.³¹ Ailsa McKay and Jo Vanevery had argued that a new system that includes basic income could be an effective tool to promote an understanding of gender-neutral social citizenship in, what they call, post-family society.³² The idea that the introduction of a basic income can create a social base for a more equitable sharing of domestic responsibilities, is therefore a vision defended by the feminist basic income advocates³³. A basic income model that emphasizes the recognition of equal citizenship rights has the potential to reorient socially constructed preferences.

Furthermore, in feminist debates on basic income, the question of how the state can recognize unpaid work, which is largely carried out by women, without reinforcing existing inequalities between women and men, comes to the fore. Therefore, the ability of a Basic

²⁹ Sara Cantillon, Caitlin McLean, "Basic Income Guarantee: The Gender Impact within Households," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*, 2016, Volume 43, Issue 3, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/144152497.pdf>, (07 june 2021), p. 100

³⁰ See Erik Christensen, "Feminist Arguments in Favour of Welfare and Basic Income in Denmark", **9th International Congress of BIEN**, Geneva, 12-14 september 2002 <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/ses/download/docs/chris.pdf> (07 june 2021), Julieta Elgarte, "Basic Income and the Gendered Division of Labour", *Basic Income Studies*, 2008 Volume 3, Issue 3, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/24015248_Basic_Income_and_the_Gendered_Division_of_Labour, (07 june 2021), Ailsa McKay, Jo Vanevery, "Gender, Family, and Income Maintenance: a Feminist Case for Citizens Basic Income", art. cit., Carole Pateman, "Democratizing Citizenship: Some Advantages of a Basic Income", *Politics & Society*, Volume 32, Issue 1, (March 2004), Nicola Stanley-Clarke, "The Needs of Women and the Universal Basic Income as a Solution?", **Actes d'UBINZ (First National Conference on Universal Basic Income)**, Wellington, 1996

³¹ Erik Christensen, "Feminist Arguments in Favour of Welfare and Basic Income in Denmark", art. cit., p. 20

³² See Ailsa McKay, Jo Vanevery, "Gender, Family, and Income Maintenance: a Feminist Case for Citizens Basic Income", art. cit., Ailsa McKay, "Rethinking Work and Income Maintenance Policy: Promoting Gender Equality through a Citizen's Basic Income", *Feminist Economics*, Volume 7, Issue 1, (January 2001),

³³ See Bill Jordan, "The Prospects for Basic Income", *Social Policy and Administration*, Volume 22, Issue 2, (August 1988), Bill Jordan, "Basic Income and the Common Good", in Philippe Van Parijs (ed.), **Arguing for Basic Income: Ethical Foundations for a Radical Reform**, London: Verso, 1992, p. 171-172.

Income to value this unpaid work often done by women is one of the most important questions in feminist basic income literature.

For some researchers, basic income will contribute to the recognition of the value of women's unpaid work (we say women's unpaid work, because those in these occupations are predominantly women). It should be noted that this argument is the most important argument of feminists advocating a basic income. They claim that the most important contribution of basic income to women's lives will be in this area. First of all, it should be remembered that the basic income is paid to everyone, not just those who do more household chores. For this reason, it should not be considered a special income for those who exercise these jobs. Men who contribute less to household chores will also benefit from this income. But this does not mean that the introduction of a basic income does not recognize the value of women's unpaid work.

As basic income advocates point out, family members depend on unpaid work performed primarily by women in the family, especially in traditional families. In this context, basic income can encourage those who do not fulfill their duties within the family to do these duties and thus become a tool for recognizing women's domestic contributions. Some academics argue that an implementation of basic income can contribute to the revaluation of unpaid care work, by recognizing the non-market structure of this work. On the other hand, basic income activists believe that basic income is a way to reduce the gender division of labor in the family, for a more equal society. It should not be forgotten that feminists believe that a *paradigm shift* requires reorganization of the distribution of work both within and outside the family.

In our contemporary societies, where citizenship is defined by an individual's degree of contribution to the country's economy and by wage labor, the introduction of a basic income can move society away from *productivist ethics*. It would also be a great help in recognizing works that have no monetary value (as well as jobs that make a huge contribution to society)³⁴. Some academics believe that basic income can promote gender equality by re-evaluating care work (family care, childcare etc.) that is traditionally undervalued (mostly done by women). They also believe that, thanks to the basic income, men will contribute to care work³⁵ in addition to housework, and that the basic income will contribute to the fact that care work will cease to be female work. In this way, it is argued that care work would be rewarded with a basic income, since it is possible that basic income calls into question unequal distribution of household chores³⁶.

Supporters of basic income therefore believe that the work of unpaid care will be recognized³⁷. We can make the assumption that in a welfare state that includes a basic income, the value of reproductive labor will be mechanically recognized. With promoting the financial revaluation and recognition of unpaid work, basic income can also help increase the population's respect for this work. For some, basic income can therefore be an important policy for the social validation of unpaid activities such as domestic responsibilities and care work.

³⁴ Ailsa McKay, Jo Vanevery, "Gender, Family, and Income Maintenance: A Feminist Case for Citizens Basic Income", art. cit., p. 278

³⁵ See John Baker, "All Things Considered, Should Feminists Embrace Basic Income", **Basic Income Studies**, Volume 3, Issue 3, (January 2008), Sara Cantillon, Caitlin McLean, "Basic Income Guarantee: The Gender Impact within Households", art. cit.

³⁶ Ingrid Robeyns, "Some thoughts on basic income from a feminist perspective", art. cit., p. 2

³⁷ See Tony Walter, Basic Income. Freedom from Poverty, Freedom to Work, *op. cit.*, Ann Withorn, "Is One Man's Ceiling Another Woman's Floor? Women and BIG", **Document presented at the 3rd International Basic Income Congress**, Florence: BIEN, 1990, John Baker, "All Things Considered, Should Feminists Embrace Basic Income", art. cit

In addition, a basic income can aid in the acceptance of unpaid work and care work as a valuable contribution to life. Moreover, we can hypothesize that a basic income will be a positive contribution to the lives of housewives, because an introduction of basic income can give them the feeling of contributing to the family income, and to better recognize their care work and their household chores.

Hence, the implementation of a basic income can lead to a change in the *definition of citizenship* for women³⁸, since the recognition of women's care work and housework can have a positive impact on women's working conditions. This justifies the argument that all citizens contribute positively to society, and therefore it makes sense that every citizen has a basic income to meet their basic needs. For example, according to Guy Standing, basic income can contribute to the conciliation between work, family and personal life, and encourage people to participate more in society³⁹.

As Guy Standing points out in his analysis on the results of the Madhya Pradesh Unconditional Cash Transfers Project:

*Basic income has helped fight cultural oppression, encouraged these women and enabled them to claim their own cultural rights. Taking off their veils of their own accord, these women were able to participate more freely in the public life of their villages. They also passed the “eye contact test”, which meant that they learned to look people in the eye knowing that they didn't have to give in to the opinions and wishes of others.*⁴⁰

In summary, basic income, with its ability to recognize women's unpaid work and present care work as a collective responsibility, has been proposed as an alternative social

³⁸ Ailsa McKay, “Rethinking Work and Income Maintenance Policy: Promoting Gender Equality through a Citizen’s Basic Income”, art. cit, p. 103

³⁹ Guy Standing, *Temel gelir*, op. cit., p. 54

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 57

policy proposal by the advocates of the basic income. But it should be noted that it is often argued that to achieve such a result, basic income must be implemented in conjunction with other mechanisms of the welfare state.

On the other hand, feminists do not always have the same view on basic income. There are researchers who are skeptical of basic income, as they believe basic income can reinforce existing gender inequalities in this area. The main argument of academics from this point of view is that the basic income will push women, who are already working in difficult conditions, out of the labor market. Some are therefore skeptical about the implementation of basic income, as it is argued that there is a risk that basic income will turn into a housewives wage, maternity salary or hush money.

Concepts of housewives wage, maternity pay and hush money

In the arguments put forward by opponents of basic income, we observe the idea that basic income can cause the dissociation of women from employment and for this reason such a proposal can turn into a housewives wage, maternity pay or hush money. According to this skeptical feminist literature, the universality of basic income therefore remains masculine.

Indeed, existing research does not predict that women will withdraw en masse from the labor market, but it does indicate that some women will become less attached to the labor market, either by working fewer hours or withdrawing. The direction of the effect of female labor supply is therefore clear, but its magnitude is uncertain.⁴¹

According to Samira Ouardi, from a feminist point of view, and more specifically from a materialist feminist point of view, the demand for a basic income, dissociated from

⁴¹ Ingrid Robeyns, "Will a Basic Income Do Justice to Women?", *Analyse & Kritik*, Volume 23, Issue 1, 2001, p. 91

employment, poses as many problems as it opens up perspectives⁴². We can assume that the idea of a "living wage" dissociated from employment leads some feminists to take a stand against basic income. Finally, it will have a negative effect on those women who withdraw from the labor market, as they could suffer a depreciation of their human capital, and in this way, they could lose the non-pecuniary benefits of paid work. In the arguments put forward by opponents of basic income, we also observe the idea that with the introduction of a basic income, some women undoubtedly reduce their labor supply, and they will be less attached to the labor market. This could worsen (probably for some) the *statistical discrimination* against women. In this regard, some feminists note that the establishment of a basic income could become a device to the detriment of women.

As Ingrid Robeyns points out:

*Women [...] have much more elastic labour supply, and micro-simulations with the introduction of a modest basic income suggest that the total labour supply of women could drop between 20 and 30%. If part-time jobs are widely available, we may expect that women would especially move to part-time jobs, rather than quitting the labour market altogether. However, it should be said that the labour supply changes of women are hard to predict, since they are influenced by many factors. [...] On the one hand women will receive an unconditional income, but on the other hand they may earn less labour income, in part due to the higher taxation on labour income, and in part because women may reduce their hours on the labour market.*⁴³

⁴² Samira Ouardi, "Le revenu universel : outil de lutte féministe ?", *Revue Mouvements*, Volume 73, Issue 1, 2013, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-mouvements-2013-1-page-79.htm>, (08 June 2021), p. 79 (this passage is translated from French to English by me)

⁴³ Ingrid Robeyns, "Some thoughts on basic income from a feminist perspective", art. cit., p. 7-8

On the other hand, in response to criticism that basic income is creating a *free rider* problem, feminists who favor basic income argued that there are more *free riders* at home than in the labor market. At this point, we see in the arguments put forward by the advocates that, the criticism that basic income diminishes work incentives, significantly undermines and socially undervalues the kind of work that most women do in society. Conversely, for skeptics of basic income, this idea can lead to a rise in inequality and gender stereotypes that women face in both society and the labor market. And in this way, basic income can further increase male dominance over women.

Recognizing motherhood and parenthood as a profession raises the question of "maternity salary": a question that is much discussed ethically, and highly connoted politically⁴⁴. Maternity pay is the wage a woman receives from her work during her absence immediately before and after childbirth. This salary is often seen as a solution that would allow mothers to engage in a paid activity, while spending a lot of time at home. In addition, if women prefer to stay at home with the confidence of a guaranteed income, this can also be considered a housewives wage. However, this finding contains gender inequalities, as it is seen as a concept that imposes responsibility only on women.

Some feminists worry that basic income could transform into maternity pay or housewives wages. As economist Rachel Silvera argues, basic income could reinforce gender divisions in the labour market and in the household, between those (especially men) who would keep a job and have a wage and those (especially women) who would not have access to *real work*, but would *overinvest* in the domestic sphere⁴⁵. This approach is also part of the

⁴⁴ Yvonne Knibiehler, "Introduction", in Yvonne Knibiehler (ed.), *La revanche de l'amour maternel ?* Toulouse: ERES, 2015, <https://www.cairn.info/la-revanche-de-l-amour-maternel--9782749248301-page-7.htm>, (07 June 2021), p. 9.

⁴⁵ Delphine Gardey, Rachel Silvera, "Le revenu universel : une chance ou un piège pour les femmes ?", *Travail, genre et sociétés*, Volume 40, Issue 2, 2018, <https://www.cairn.info/revue-travail-genre-et-societes-2018-2-page-151.htm#no6>, (07 June 2021), p. 152

debates of the 1970s on the revaluation of work, as a real source of women's emancipation and autonomy⁴⁶. For some feminist, basic income would therefore not make it possible to create a *just society* by transforming the gendered division of work that is currently underway. Basic income could thus easily take the form of a maternity pay, giving women the choice to stay home and perform caring labor.

As Samira Ouardi points out:

"Moreover, given the historical and mechanical link between "entering the labor market" and "leaving the home," such an income, not accompanied by other measures to reorganize social functioning (particularly within the family) may lead to fears of a "return" of women to the home that no feminist can wish for."⁴⁷

Mark Anspach and Philippe Van Parijs defended the idea that with a universal income, women can choose (this choice is presented as a *liberator* for women) to stay at home⁴⁸. If a basic income is provided to allow women to concentrate on the activities of their choice and if it includes domestic tasks, then this is not neutral, because behind the universality of the allowance, a maternity pay may therefore be hidden.

Essentially, at first glance, the main beneficiaries of basic income are women, but at the same time, they may become the first victims, as such income may encourage women to stay home for child care. A basic income will thus turn out to be a kind of housewives wage or hush money, sending women home. According to Ann Orloff, a basic income is not a good strategy for achieving gender equality and justice⁴⁹. She argues that other elements of social

⁴⁶ Anne-Marie Grozelier, **Pour en finir avec la fin du travail**, Paris: Éditions de l'Atelier, 1998

⁴⁷ Samira Ouardi, "Le revenu universel : outil de lutte féministe ?", art. cit., p. 79

⁴⁸ Jean-Marie Harribey et Christiane Marty (Eds.), **Faut-il un revenu universel ?**, Ivry-sur-Seine: Atelier, 2017, p. 65-66

⁴⁹ Ann Orloff, "Comments on Ann Withorn : Is One Man's Ceiling Another Woman's Floor? Women and BIG", **Paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Basic Income**, Florence, 1990

policy, which change the structure of paid and unpaid work, can be much more effective in achieving gender justice⁵⁰.

Ad summam, such a proposal, which applauds its potential to emancipate women from the gender-based construction of the labor market and society, may paradoxically worsen women's conditions by dissociating them from employment and by decreasing their participation in the labor market. In the arguments proposed by opponents about basic income, we encounter the idea that such an income could not contribute to the overcoming of this patriarchal society. In addition, according to the skeptical literature on basic income, such an income can provoke the establishment of a maternal salary. This risk of turning of basic income to a housewives wage, a maternity pay and a hush money for women, worries a lot feminists and leads them to adopt a skeptical and opposed position with regard to basic income. Thus, while basic income is often propped up by its advocates for overcoming the unemployment or poverty trap, it is likely to introduce a childcare trap.

Conclusion

The limited feminist literature on basic income reflects a dichotomy. One part of the literature draws attention to its potential to ensure at least a basis of emancipation for women. Vice versa, the other part of the literature is skeptical, as they believe that an introduction of a basic income would exacerbate existing gender inequalities. As a result, it turns out that a basic income will have both positive and negative effects on women.

Well, don't those who support basic income and those who are skeptical about basic income come together on a common point? In fact, when we look at the current literature, two views seem to converge on the importance of the amount paid of basic income and that basic

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

income should not replace well-functioning welfare state policies. Basic income advocates respond to the criticism that basic income will transform into a housewife wage and increase existing social inequalities, by arguing that a meticulously calculated basic income will not have such an effect, but on the contrary, it will empower women economically and increase their participation in the labor market. Indeed, the amount paid of basic income is very important, as a large basic income payment may cause women to leave the labor market. This will undoubtedly increase the gender gap and cause a talent drain for women. So, if the amount paid of basic income is not at a level that will encourage women, or individuals in general, to leave the labor market, it will certainly benefit women.

Another important issue is how basic income will affect other welfare policies. Contrary to popular belief, advocates of basic income do not claim that basic income should replace all other welfare State policies. This is something more desired by libertarians who advocate basic income. The introduction of the basic income system does not mean that public services or all other welfare benefits will disappear. On the contrary, basic income is proposed to function as a base income in a new income distribution system, which also includes other needed public services and benefits. As a result, I argue that basic income can be proposed as a policy that can close the gender gap, if the amount paid of basic income is carefully calculated and implemented in conjunction with other well-functioning welfare state policies.

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