HOW TO REMUNERATE DOMESTIC LABOUR

Possible Strategies to Account for the Contemporary Crisis of Social Reproduction

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Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master in Political Science (MSc)
Political Theory
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June 24th, 2022
Word count (excl. references): 25171

ABSTRACT

Social reproduction, namely all those practices which aim to reproduce and maintain not only our social bonds but also our societal organisation, is at risk. This condition is due to the fact that our society is grounded on a strict gender division of labour in the sense that economic production is typically associated with men, who are compensated for their work with a wage, whereas social reproduction has been traditionally made to coincide with the inner nature of women, leaving them without proper remuneration. Even though dual-earner households are on the rise, women are still the ones who need to shoulder most of the household responsibilities, thus becoming subject to the so-called second shift. Moreover, because the main traditional providers of care are being recruited into the workforce (also because more hours of work are required in order to materially sustain a household), we are witnessing the creation of a care gap. In this thesis, I argue that there is a need to challenge the gender division of labour and allow for more individuals, regardless of their gender, to be involved in the domestic sphere. One possible strategy to achieve this could be to remunerate the activities which are carried out in the domestic realm, in order to challenge the current androcentric model of citizenship which privileges male life patterns and take them as the canon for everyone. In this thesis I will focus on two main possible approaches: I will first analyse the theories developed in the 1970s by Marxist feminist scholars and secondly, I will focus my attention on the more recent and possibly more feasibly proposals of basic income. Ultimately, I will argue in favour of the latter strategy which appears to be more appropriate in ameliorating the crisis of social reproduction.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROBLEM

The debate concerning domestic and reproductive labour began to arise during the late 1960s when women started leaving their houses in order to enter the workforce. Being able to exit the house and earn a weekly or monthly salary certainly allowed women to become more financially independent. However, this newly found independence did not come without novel burdens. Women indeed found themselves confronted with a double shift: after their paid day's job, they still had to shoulder most of the domestic and reproductive labour within the house, practices that were traditionally assigned to women and that were not compensated with a monetary wage (EIGE, 2021; Hochschild, 2012). This non-compensated double burden, which is a reality that still stands nowadays, engenders disparities and inequalities between men and women who find themselves in a subordinated position via-à-vis their male counterparts. Indeed, because of their involvement and responsibility within the house, women are more likely to experience career interruptions and to be absent from their workplace more frequently (Robeyns, 2000). Taking these factors into consideration, during the early 1970s, several Marxist feminists began to critically analyse the problem of unpaid domestic work, tracing the origin of the oppression of women to their confinement within the private sphere.

The main forum for these debates was the movement Wages for Housework (WfH), which animated the feminist panorama between 1972 and 1977. It is important to highlight that this movement had its roots in Marxism, and more specifically in Italian autonomia (autonomy) and operaismo (workerism), according to which, the collectivity of workers had the potential to overcome the capitalist class by virtue of being (or possibly becoming) revolutionary subjects (Tronti, 2010). In this optic, the proponents for WfH rejected possible reformist strategies that involved working closely with political parties and/or the state. The demands put forward by WfH served as clear provocations aimed to imagine new standpoints concerning capitalist production and the general outlook of the society. As a consequence of this, WfH demands, namely, remuneration for domestic labour, aimed to change the prevailing perception which saw women's activities in the household realm as natural, and instead presented them as a full-fledged form of labour. Moreover, since the movement was rooted in Marxism, one of the main aims was also to question labour and the wage system itself (Weeks, 2011). The theorists active in the movement mainly put forward "demands qua demands[1]" (Forrester, 2022) which had the function of both showing that the precarious role of women was indeed part and parcel of the capitalist system and possibly providing new tools to radically transform the current practices. At the same time, this radical overhaul aimed to suppress the unfounded myth of housework as "labour of love" (Federici, 1975), according to which domestic labour was made to coincide with female physical bodies and essences. This factor, namely that domestic work was deemed to be connatural to women, prevented them from successfully struggling against the labour itself. In other words, if working-class men were able to refuse their labour with strikes and collective actions, housewives could not afford this luxury because their activities inside the household were not considered a proper form of work, but rather, a disposition of the heart.

In light of these considerations, it is important to highlight that there was never an intention to celebrate or sanctify domestic work, indeed, classifying domestic activities as work, was "the first step towards refusing to do it" (Federici, 1995, p.191). As Kathi Weeks (2011) argued, these demands served as a new political perspective, as a tool to imagine the configuration of a new post-capitalist society where the wage is decoupled from work and where women are freed from their domestic labour. However, it is easy to notice, that there is a disconnect between the initial demand, namely the compensation for housework and the subsequent recognition of the labour of women in the domestic realm as part and parcel of the productive system, and the long-term desire of abolishing wage labour altogether and overturning the capitalist enterprise. The process envisioned by the Marxist feminists, thus entailed a big transformative overhaul, and perhaps, because of this radical feature, the debate slowly died out.

In an interview, Mariarosa Dalla Costa, one of the key authors of the Wages for Housework movement claimed: "Through a limited welfare system, the state has helped women in carrying the double burden – though inadequately so (2014, p.637)." Admittedly, as political theorist Carole Pateman argues, the welfare state mainly caters to what she calls "women's issues" (1987, p.2). Women are indeed the major recipients of government benefits because they are more likely to be poor. Again, the author traces the origin of this disparity to the gender division of labour, according to which men have traditionally occupied the position of breadwinner, whereas women have been

[1] By this, Forrester implies that the main goal of the WfH movement was to bring forward a new perspective with the aim to expose women's reality. To quote the author: "WfH were attentive to what demands do qua demands—that is, even if they were not met." (Forrester, 2022, p. 4).

placed in a subordinate position. Although the welfare state and government benefits have provided people with a form of help to curb degrading poverty and ensure the basic social well-being of citizens, the welfare benefits are usually conditional on the question of whether one has worked enough or paid enough contributions. And because women are more likely to receive a lower income as well as to experience career interruptions, they can automatically expect less social protection. Moreover, the traditional welfare schemes provide that the benefit is paid to a household as a whole or to the head of a household, rather than to the single individual, creating a relationship of dependency between the partners.

In order to make up for the blind spots of the traditional welfare mechanisms and provide a viable alternative to the Wages for Housework perspective, we can turn our attention to basic income (BI), which could be seen as a means to remunerate domestic and reproductive labour and thus provide more material resources for those people who engage in this kinds of work. Philippe Van Parijs describes basic income as a source of guaranteed income assigned "(1) on an individual basis (2) without means testing and (3) without work requirement" (2013, p.174). According to some feminist scholars, introducing a basic income as a means to reimburse domestic labour, could be seen as an "emancipation fee" (Robeyns, 2000). Specifically, because it would serve as a strategy to acknowledge the unpaid labour carried out inside the house, it would entail a re-evaluation of such labour as well as a possible increase in (self)respect for those who engage in this type of work. As a consequence, the poorer partner, most often women, could achieve a higher bargaining power in the domestic sphere (Schulz, 2017). Furthermore, implementing a BI and ensuring that domestic work is regarded as meaningful and fulfilling as paid employment might promote gender equity, in the sense that both partners would feel more willing to dedicate time not only to their formal jobs but also to the realm of the private sphere, carrying out care activities in an equal manner, possibly reducing the gender division of labour (Miller et al., 2019).

The question regarding the remuneration of domestic labour is embedded in a more ample problem which our society is facing, namely the crisis of social reproduction (Fraser, 2016). Social reproduction is substantially the factor responsible for the maintenance and perpetuation of our societal organisation, and, historically, it has been assigned to women and confined to the private sphere. However, because an increasing number of women are taking part in the labour force, perhaps more because of necessity rather than because of one's choices and personal aspirations, we are witnessing the creation of a care gap. The consequences of this configuration are manifold. First of all, contributes to the creation of the so-called dual-earner model, which even though is nowadays highly celebrated in light of female emancipation and meritocracy, it nonetheless entails serious consequences for the wellbeing of our society. Women are indeed burdened with the so-called double shift, namely, after their day's job, they are still expected to shoulder most of the responsibilities in the house. Secondly, in order to try to obviate such crisis, care and domestic work are being commodified and outsourced, thus engendering deep forms of inequality which move along the gender, race, and class axes.

In light of these considerations, I believe that it is necessary to challenge our current system which is still highly based on a gender division of labour that in turn gives rise to inequalities and oppression. One way to try to achieve more equity is to remunerate domestic labour so that people, regardless of their gender, can have the opportunity to allocate more time to such practices. Nowadays, indeed women lack equal voice and are relegated to a lower starting position because they are expected to perform a type of labour that is left uncompensated, even with an increase in the dual-earner household model. As outlined above, the discussion is left open-ended in the sense that it does not confine the topic at hand to one specific solution. My goal will be to try to find such a solution. Whether it requires the formulation of a radical alternative to late capitalism, as Marxist feminism proposes or a more parsimonious reimbursement within the context of the current system, which fits the basic income logic remains to be seen.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTION

Although the debate surrounding remuneration for domestic labour slowly died out, I believe it is still an issue worth researching, also in light of the current crisis of social reproduction. To do so, I deem it important to bring back to the fore the radical theories put forward by Wages for Household theorists and confront them with the (possibly) more feasible alternative of a basic income. I believe this comparison is sensible in light of the fact that BI is usually thought of as the natural heir of the theories brought forward by WfH (Lombardozzi, 2020). By evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of both lines of thought, I will attempt to define which features and aspects could be, within the current societal context, more effective in remunerating domestic labour. Therefore, in this thesis I will attempt to answer the following question:

Could basic income be a viable means to remunerate domestic work or is a more transformative approach, as proposed by Marxist feminist theory, a better alternative both morally and politically to ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction?

1.3 ACADEMIC RELEVANCE

In light of the fact that our society is going through a crisis of social reproduction, I believe it is important to formulate new strategies with the aim to ameliorate such a problem. One possible way to do this is to change the conditions of those people with domestic responsibilities, and more specifically, to provide them with compensation for their work, which, again, is essential for the wellbeing of our society. Although of course there have been several studies which focused on the crisis of care and its possible solutions, none of them took into account the theories formulated by Marxist feminist scholars and compared them to basic income as a means to remunerate domestic and care work. As I outlined above, the analysis of Marxist feminists in the 1970s did not seem to be completely successful in presenting feasible and consistent solutions regarding how to best remunerate domestic labour mainly because of the discrepancy between the short-term demand, i.e., a wage for housework, and the long-term aim of completely eradicating the capitalist system. Given the outlined discrepancy, in order to ultimately find an effective and morally sound strategy to remunerate domestic labour, I believe it is important to acknowledge the problems that these arguments and theories have, without discarding or completely rejecting them. Hence my project of contrasting these demanding arguments with more potentially feasible and practicable theories of universal basic income to examine which strategy, or which elements could compensate domestic labour in a meaningful manner, in order to engender more equity. Therefore, in my thesis, I aim to contribute to the debate surrounding the crisis of social reproduction by systematically analysing and comparing two possible ways to remunerate domestic work.

1.4 SOCIETAL RELEVANCE

In order to maintain the wellbeing of a household, more hours of paid work are becoming necessary and at the same time, the capitalist regime is curtailing social provisions in favour of more privatisation. Because an increasing number of women, who traditionally took care of the maintenance and perpetuation of lives and social bonds, are progressively taking part in the labour force, we are witnessing a crisis of social reproduction. According to Lombardozzi,

> Social reproduction is the domain where lives are sustained and reproduced [. . .] in other words how workers and households – but also capitalists, as well as all kinds of institutions of religion, state and culture – subsist and survive through the relations of production of which they are part. (Lombardozzi, 2020, p.319)

Given this compelling definition, such a crisis is highly detrimental to our society because in absence of social reproduction there would be no social organisation or social cooperation. It is then in the interest of everyone involved to try to formulate adequate approaches in order to try to put an end to such a crisis and one possible way to achieve this is to remunerate domestic labour. Providing monetary compensation for the activities carried out in the domestic sphere would allow more individuals to take part in such practices, which have been traditionally assigned to women. Challenging the current societal organisation which sees a clear distinction between the activities of men who predominate in the public sphere and those of women who typically have to juggle between domestic work and sub-par jobs, would ideally foster more gender equity. More specifically, providing reimbursement for domestic work and thus recognising said type of labour as valuable and indispensable could prove to be a useful solution to ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction and thus guarantee the continuation of societal organisation.

1.5 LITERATURE

In order to talk about remuneration for housework, I believe it is necessary to start with The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community (1971), written by Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James. In this joint effort, the two authors gave a comprehensive analysis of the nuclear family under capitalism and how such an institution is part and parcel of the development of the capitalist system which exploits the wageless labour of women, and relegates them to the domestic realm. Furthermore, the authors place the focus on the refusal to work as a strategy to critique the current division of labour and more in general the economic system which permeates our society. The conclusion of the pamphlet is that the domestic work carried out by women needs to be compensated by the state. Another leading figure is Silvia Federici, who, in Wages Against Housework, expressed how the capitalist society successfully incorporated housework into the very essence of women, convincing them that ". . .it is a natural, unavoidable and even fulfilling activity to make [them] accept unwaged work" (1975, p.2). In her writings, Federici focused on the impossibility to struggle against housework by virtue of the fact that it is not recognised as a proper form of labour but rather is associated with femininity itself. The only way to reject this type of labour is to demand a wage for domestic work, not to dwell in it, but rather to use it as a tool for struggle and bargain (Federici, 2012). The three abovementioned authors, played a key role in shaping and influencing the feminist debate during the 1970s. Along with other activists and scholars, they created the collective Wages for Housework campaign in Italy in 1974, which subsequently spread in the UK, the US and Canada, with the creation of new branches dedicated to Black women (Black Women for Wages for Housework) and queer women (Wages due Lesbians).

Regarding the topic of basic income, I believe it is important to include in my literature the writings of Belgian political philosopher Philippe Van Parijs who extensively wrote on the subject. In Real Freedom for All: What (If Anything) Can Justify Capitalism? (2003), the author claims that a society can be considered just insofar as freedom is fairly distributed among all its members. In this sense, he justifies the introduction of an unconditional basic income as a means to protect fundamental individual rights and to ensure that each citizen has equal opportunities. Starting from the writings of Van Parijs, it is possible to find compelling feminist literature regarding basic income, although it is interesting to notice how most of the scholarship remains gender blind. To be sure, the debate surrounding feminism and basic income is exceptionally divisive and there is no explicit consensus as to how the introduction of such policy could affect women. In any case, I will make use of the writings by Carole Pateman, who compared the current welfare scheme to basic income, claiming that the latter could encourage a re-evaluation of "marriage, employment and citizenship" (Pateman, 2004, p.97). Another feminist author who supports basic income is Almaz Zelleke (2011), who sees its implementation as a basis for a feminist perspective on justice. Basic income, along with other government provisions, would compensate for unpaid domestic work without reinforcing the gendered distribution of labour, and without placing a premium on the public sphere.

Again, the demand for compensation for domestic labour can be seen as embedded in the current crisis of social reproduction. In order to deal with such a concept, I will make use of the writing of political philosopher Nancy Fraser, who sketched a compelling argument which posits that the gender division of labour and the relegation of women to the private sphere are partly the reasons why our society is currently going through a crisis of social reproduction. In this regard, Carole Pateman (1987) argues that part of the problem is also related to the strong division between the public and private spheres. As a consequence of this demarcation, our current model of citizenship strongly favours the male subject, who dominates the public sphere and penalises the rest of the population, placing it in a subordinated position. Other authors who extensively wrote on care work, and specifically on the crisis of social reproduction are Nancy Folbre and Julie Nelson (2000), who also outlined the consequences of the commodification and the outsourcing of care work.

1.6 STRUCTURE

I will structure my thesis as follows: in the second chapter, I will introduce the main problem, namely that the unequal division of domestic labour is impacting the wellbeing of those who primarily engage in domestic and care work, most often women, thus giving rise to a crisis of social justice peculiar to the domestic realm. More specifically, I argue that there is a need to challenge the economic and societal system which is keeping such a division in place and one of the possible ways to achieve this is to favour a more equitable and inclusive model which accounts for a re-evaluation of domestic and care labour. This is done by offering compensation for the activities carried out in the private sphere, in order for people, regardless of their gender, to be able to feel more inclined to allocate their time to such activities. In the third and fourth chapters, I will delineate two possible strategies which could prove to be useful to meaningfully remunerate domestic work. In the third chapter, I will give a comprehensive analysis of the theories brought forward by Marxist feminist scholars in the 1970s. It will become apparent that such theories are quite demanding and ambitious, therefore, in order to provide a meaningful alternative, in chapter four, I will focus my attention on the examination of the possibly more feasible and applicable strategies of basic income as a means to remunerate domestic labour. In chapter four I will pay special attention to the feminist perspective surrounding the said topic. In chapter five I will provide a comprehensive critical evaluation of the two abovementioned strategies, in an attempt to assess their benefits and downsides in order to ultimately determine which approach or which elements are morally and politically preferable to compensate for domestic work. Lastly, in chapter six I will draw the conclusions, answer my research question and make suggestions for future research.

2. THE CURRENT STATE OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As I stated in the introduction, because of the strict gender division of labour which still nowadays permeates our society, we are witnessing a crisis of social reproduction which is thought to hinder our social organisation as a whole. In this chapter, I will further expand on the problem at hand and clarify other key concepts which will be useful to answer my research question. This introductory chapter will indeed be the basis from which I will lay out the concept of social reproduction and domestic labour, which have been traditionally assigned to women, in contrast to economic reproduction, typically carried out by men. As I stated in the former chapter, more women are entering the workforce and thus gaining more financial independence; although this is undoubtedly a positive factor, it also bears several negative implications which can be detrimental to our society as a whole. A possible way to solve this crisis, instead of further commodifying and outsourcing domestic labour, two common practices which however engender deep levels of inequalities and oppression, is to challenge the current societal system which envisages a deep dichotomy between private and public and to foster more gender equity. To promote more gender equity, it could be useful to compensate for the activities which are carried out in the domestic sphere, in order to ensure that more individuals will engage in such practices. Bearing in mind these considerations, this chapter will serve as a preliminary basis to determine the appropriate conditions and parameters which should belong to a possible strategy which has the aim to remunerate domestic labour.

2.2 SOCIAL REPRODUCTION AND DOMESTIC LABOUR

Capitalist societies have since the beginning imposed a gender division of labour, demarcating between social reproduction and economic production, assigning the former to women and the latter to men. Social reproduction can be defined as:

> The activities and attitudes, behaviours and emotions, responsibilities and relationships directly involved in the maintenance of life on a daily basis, and intergenerationally. (Laslett & Brenner, 1989)

These activities include childbearing and socialisation of children, caring for the elderly and the infirm. More than that, social reproduction refers to the creation and continuation of the modes of production. Substantially, it entails not only the mere production but also the perpetuation of life and social bonds. Social reproduction is therefore the very foundation of our society: without it, there would be no social organisation. However, capitalism has confined the activities that fall under social reproduction to the private sphere, thus decoupling it from waged economic production. Reproductive labour was then made to coincide with natural dispositions of the heart, or with the traditional notion of womanhood[2], and was thus remunerated "in the coin of 'love' and 'virtue'" (Fraser, 2016, p. 102). On the other hand, economic production, namely all kinds of formal jobs which are remunerated with wages, is typically associated with men and is located in the public sphere. Keeping these considerations in mind, it is possible to already draw some conclusions regarding domestic labour and those individuals who primarily engage in such activities. First of all, because domestic labour is relegated to the private sphere, it is not recognised as a "true" form of labour, but rather as a predisposition of the (feminine) mind and as such it loses social importance. Secondly, in light of the fact that money is the primary medium of power, those who do not receive compensation, instantly find themselves in a subordinate position, thus having less bargaining power and less freedom to access different sets of opportunities. In other words, there is a devaluation of those who spend more time in the private sphere vis-à-vis those who operate in the public one.

Of course, in recent years we are witnessing an increase in the rate of women in the labour force. However, if we focus on a dual-earner household, although some women might decide to allocate a higher number of hours to their formal paid job, it does not necessarily follow that their husbands or partners will choose to spend more time in domestic labour in order to compensate (Hartmann, 1981; Folbre & Nelson, 2000). In fact, according to EIGE (2020), women are the primary caregivers in 55% of dual-earner households, whereas care and domestic labour are more equally shared only in 37% of such a domestic configuration. Combining one's paid labour and domestic work becomes even more strenuous for single mothers who, in case of need, can only partially rely on social

[2] I would like to clarify that I do not intend womanhood as a biological characteristic that is predetermined by one's brain and/or hormones. Rather, I believe that womanhood, just like gender, is a socially constructed experience which varies from individual to individual and is context-specific.

provisions. Social provisions are indeed becoming increasingly more means-tested; this means that the benefit that one is entitled to is conditional on one's income and capital. However, such a configuration might discourage individuals to find a job in order not to lose their welfare benefits, which are often more generous compared to market wages for low-paid jobs. For this reason, some single mothers are also more likely to fall into the so-called poverty trap (Bueskens, 2017). This implies that the opportunity cost of finding a job is too high because as soon as one starts working and receiving a wage, their benefits will be systematically reduced or withdrawn. As a consequence, some single mothers are maintained in a status of poverty and dependency on others, and this factor hinders their emancipation and freedom. It is then possible to notice that women, and especially poor women and women belonging to minority groups are the ones who bear the brunt of the aforementioned division between social reproduction and economic production.

In light of these considerations, sociologist Arlie Hochschild (2012) claims that working women are subject to the so-called second shift, namely, after their waged day's work, mothers have to perform the majority of the domestic labour at home, and although men are also at times involved in childcare and housework, women, as shown above, are the ones who shoulder this responsibility the most. The obvious consequence is that women are not only poorer than their male counterparts in the economic sense, but also, they have to bear the burdens of time poverty (Williams et al., 2016). This implies that women, after their formal paid job and after their unpaid domestic work are left with less discretionary time, a factor which, of course, has direct consequences on one's health and wellbeing[3] (Hyde, 2020). Correlated to this factor, is that women tend to earn much less than men because they have less access to workplace opportunities, especially in positions of authority and in professions which provide a higher economic return (Bishu & Alkadry, 2016).

Before I elaborate on the main consequences of this gender division of labour, I would like to further clarify what I mean by domestic and care work. Generally speaking, unpaid care work refers to all the activities performed typically by women to care for their families, such as childbearing and childrearing, cleaning, cooking, and caring for the elders. Specifically,

[3] For example, a recent study (Ranji et al., 2018) showed that almost one quarter of American women have postponed seeking medical care due to lack of time.

> The word "care" indicates that the services provided nurture other people. The word "work" indicates that these activities are costly in time and energy and are undertaken as obligations. (Elson, 2000)

I want to specify that the term "care" does not necessarily imply that the caretaker is wholeheartedly choosing to nurture the cared-for, but rather, this relationship might be the outcome of societal pressure or schemata, in turn based on constructs and traditions, which force certain categories of people to assume such a role (Elson, 2000). Moreover, we must not forget that paid domestic work can also refer to a type of labour that is part of the economic production and is thus remunerated. This work encompasses professions such as nursing and teaching as well as child and elderly care for other families. It is also important to bear in mind that the latter is mostly performed (and has historically been performed) by Black women and women coming from economically developing countries, who leave their families in order to work for wealthy families in the Global North (Lombardozzi, 2020). Conventionally, all those activities which involve care are paid less than other jobs which are usually performed by women at a similar skill level but that do not involve care. According to England et al. (2002), this might be because the abovementioned professions (namely, nursing, teaching, and housework) are often associated with the tasks carried out by mothers. The skills required are thus considered as part of the "natural composition" of a person (typically a woman) and are therefore deemed to be not worthy of a proper wage, or at least of a wage that is up-to-par with other types of work.

In any case, in this thesis, I will make use of the terms care work, domestic work and reproductive work interchangeably. With these terms I refer to the unpaid activities which are typically performed by women in the domestic realm, with the aim to maintain the social fabric, that is to say, with the aim to develop human capabilities and contribute to the perpetuation of social reproduction.

2.3 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES AND THE GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

Coming back to the concept of gender division of labour, which is one of the factors that contributes to the crisis of social reproduction, one of the main consequences of such dichotomisation is the strict demarcation between the public and the private sphere. Feminist political theorists such as Teresa Brennan and Carole Pateman (1979) trace back the basis of such division to Locke's Second Treatise of Government, in which the English author claims that political power must be separated from the power that a man has over his children and wife. Although Locke, in staunch critique towards Robert Filmer, argues against the patriarchal power embedded in the government, he nonetheless concedes that there are structural differences between men and women, according to which the latter is inevitably subjugated to the former. In fact, even though the author states that women do possess rationality and should be able to own private property, when, within the family, there is a clash of "different wills", the final decision ". . .naturally falls to the man's share, as the abler and the stronger" (Locke, 1980 p.44). The author thereby indicates, albeit indirectly, the existence of a public sphere dominated by equality and consent, where men are independent and free from domination by others, and that of a private sphere, where wives are "naturally" subjected to their husbands.

This separation, which indeed finds its basis in liberal theory, also gives rise to the dichotomies between the State and society and between non-domestic and domestic life (Okin, 2008). Although these distinctions are generally accepted and used in mainstream political theory, they have been questioned and challenged by feminist scholarship over the years. Carole Pateman and Ann Phillips (1987) go so far as to say that this separation represents the very basis of the feminist movement, which claimed since the very beginning that what happens in the private sphere is not detached from the relations and dynamics of societal power subject to moral scrutiny. In other words, feminists together with other radicals have for decades questioned the traditional view that the private and the public sphere are to be seen as airtight compartments, and have conversely suggested, as the old slogan goes, that "the personal is political". This means that our personal and private conditions are shaped and influenced by public factors such as laws, policies, and habits which are in turn based on a liberal-patriarchal ethos. This claim is connected to a broader critique that the feminist scholarship offered to mainstream political theory, namely, that the private sphere rarely enters the realm of political theory because it is considered to be the sphere of individuality and personal choice and is thus immune to critique. The problems with this account are manifold. Firstly, philosophers and thinkers tend to relegate women to the private sphere and at the same time do not recognise its importance given the role it plays in shaping and maintaining our political and social life (Benhabib, 1998; Davidoff, 1998). Secondly, because, as I claimed, it pertains to one's personal preferences and choices, the private sphere is not only immune to critique, but it is also usually immune from claims of justice and equality (Martin, 2013). This in turn creates opportunities for oppression and exploitation to the detriment of women.

However, if we begin to deconstruct the liberal tradition that sees the private sphere as generally characterised by independence, autonomy and freedom (especially intended as negative freedom, namely freedom from external constraints and limitations), then we can clearly see that such features do not equally pertain to all individuals. Rather, men have always benefitted from this system to a larger extent than women. Carole Pateman (1989) claims that citizenship is a category which fully pertains only to the male, free and independent subject, in the sense that typically our society has been construed in a way that mostly accommodates and privileges men and male lifestyle patterns. As a consequence, those individuals who do not correspond to the "typical" description of a citizen, are systematically penalised. Political theorist Almaz Zelleke (2011) observes that indeed most theories of justice and citizenship tend to be gender-blind, in the sense that they do not acknowledge that there are segments of society which find themselves downgraded by what she calls the androcentric model of citizenship. Therefore, academic literature, which plays a key role in shaping our understanding of society, tends to contribute to the reinforcement of the systemic discrimination of marginalised categories to the extent that it simply reproduces such stereotypes, including the premise that the private sphere is beyond critical study.

As a consequence, I believe it is important to challenge this current model of citizenship and one possible strategy to accomplish this is by adopting a feminist lens. Such a school of thought indeed appears to be in a strategic position to argue in favour of a more inclusive and emancipatory alternative. Of course, it is of paramount importance to acknowledge that there are different sub-categories of feminism and not all of them are necessarily devoted to the advancement of equal rights and justice for all[4]. However, it is also fair to say that feminists more than anyone can gauge the importance of gender relations and theorise a new model of citizenship which takes equity into account. The current androcentric model of citizenship is in fact not sustainable anymore. Over the past decades, feminists, as well as LGBTQI+ activists, have indeed been challenging the dominant constructions of gender roles and the notion of the heteronormative and traditional family, while at the same time offering new and more diverse models of domestic arrangements which certainly do not fit into the male-breadwinner/female-caregiver dichotomy.

[4] I am thinking for example about mainstream liberal feminism which typically focuses its analysis on middle-class, heterosexual, white women, glossing over the inequalities and oppressions that women belonging to minority groups must endure. In short, a considerable part of feminist literature does not fully consider the different intersections that are part of one's identity and as a consequence, fails to meaningfully promote a notion of justice which will ultimately equitably benefit everyone.

Political theorist Nancy Fraser (2000) notices that alongside the creation of these new families and bonds, a new mode of social reproduction, characterised by less stable employment and more uncertainties, is emerging. Indeed, even though more women are taking part in the labour force (more on this topic later in this chapter), they are nonetheless subject to more precarious contracts which are often part-time and provide lesser wages vis-à-vis men. This condition becomes even more evident when it comes to non-white and queer women, who typically suffer the most from discrimination in the workplace in particular and more generally in our society at large (Boyer et al., 2017). Therefore, one of the consequences of this new configuration, is that single mothers and women, or more generally individuals, who are in non-heteronormative relationships cannot rely on the breadwinner's wage and are thus subject to more precariousness.

As a consequence, because these types of domestic arrangements are on the rise, there is a need to call into question the androcentric model of citizenship and build a system which accommodates the needs of the new, more diverse families that are forming. This project should pay special attention to the conditions of and the relationship between formal jobs and domestic/care labour, with the aim to protect individuals from precariousness and uncertainties and at the same time allow for a re-evaluation of social reproduction. Social reproduction indeed should not remain confined to the private sphere, nor should it be made to coincide with a specific gender. Therefore, as Fraser (2000) also suggests, this new, more inclusive system can only be premised on gender equity. What then does gender equity entail in general terms?

In order to understand what this concept presupposes, I believe it is important to demarcate between the notions of gender equity and gender equality. These two terms are indeed often used interchangeably, but they contain within themselves two different meanings. Gender equality is a term that has been part of our mainstream vocabulary for a fair number of decades and it is usually the most used term when we are referring to the promotion of equal rights as well as equal access to resources and opportunities. Essentially, gender equality entails that individuals should not be discriminated against on the basis of their gender and that people are entitled to the same rights. Equality is therefore a gender-neutral term (Bailyn, 2003) and it assumes that women, in order to empower themselves and break free from their subordinated position, can and should follow the same models and patterns of life as men. This notion, however, by urging women to modify their life patterns in order to mirror that of the breadwinners only further perpetuates the current androcentric model, thereby rendering it the ideal paradigm to follow. Again, as argued above, this concept implies a separation between the workplace and one's private life and is thus closely linked to the kind of performance one can carry out in the workplace, i.e., give full priority to one's formal paid work (Bailyn, 2003).

The main problem with the concept of gender equality is that it assumes the life patterns and experiences of men and women to be equal and the same, thus failing to account for the constraints and limitations that certain swatches of our society need to face. Let me further explain this. Even though equal opportunities are in theory provided to everyone regardless of their gender, perhaps through social provisions or quotas which aim to guarantee fair and equal representation, it does not necessarily follow that everyone will be able to get access to said opportunities in the same way. In fact, coming back to the central topic of this thesis, there exist groups of people, namely, people with care responsibilities, which are simply not able to emancipate or free themselves from a subordinate condition because they do not and often cannot meet the requirements prescribed by the androcentric model. For example, it becomes more difficult for them to dedicate their time to a full-time job precisely because they are burdened with other time- and energy-consuming tasks that need to be carried out in the private sphere, be it taking care of children or elderly people in one's family, but also merely maintaining household cleanliness and providing food.

Bearing in mind these considerations, the canon for emancipation and freedom cannot be based on a model that solely privileges one specific category. In short, simply providing the same opportunities or resources to everyone regardless of their background is not enough. It is on the other hand highly important to recognise and acknowledge the different circumstances in which different specific groups dwell and the different challenges that these different segments of society face, and allocate opportunities and resources accordingly. This concept is relatively similar to John Rawls' notion of fair equality of opportunity. According to Rawls (1999), not only should social positions be formally open to everyone in an equal way, but every individual should have a fair opportunity to access such social positions. In very simple terms, this is the definition of equity.

Consequently, I believe that instead of focusing on gender equality, we should instead start to address our attention to the notion of gender equity. Equity, indeed, requires that the historical wrongs that have been put marginalised groups (be it racial, religious, and sexual minorities, as well as physically and cognitively impaired people) in a subordinate position vis-à-vis the dominant groups should be corrected. In this case, one way to aim to achieve equity is to allow for more interaction between the public and the private sphere and to give more recognition and value to the activities which are carried out in the latter. Therefore, and this is the main argument that I would like to make in this thesis, instead of exclusively encouraging women's entry into the labour force, it might be useful to motivate more individuals regardless of their gender to take part in care practices and domestic work. As a consequence, if the androcentric model of social value is challenged, i.e., if those activities that are carried out in the public sphere are depleted of their current central value, individuals could feel more incentivised to allocate more time to the private sphere, thus generating a deeper level of gender equity.

2.4 CURRENT SOLUTIONS TO THE CRISIS OF SOCIAL REPRODUCTION

On these premises, the aspiration for more feminist theorising with the aim to challenge the current state of affairs gains even more importance when we acknowledge the fact that social reproduction is at risk (Folbre, 2006; Fraser, 2016). I already briefly elaborated on why this is the case in the previous section, however, I believe it is important to further expound on this subject. One of the reasons why social reproduction is at stake is because an increasing number of women are taking part in the labour force and as a consequence are forced to allocate fewer hours to care work[5].

Of course, more and more women are entering the workforce, giving rise to the so-called dual-earner model. Although this can be seen as a gateway to economic emancipation and empowerment (Taneja et al., 2012), several feminist scholars argue that this phenomenon is merely a reflection of the fact that, in order to support the wellbeing of a household, an increasing number of working hours is required (Fraser, 2016). It is in fact argued that women began entering the workforce (which as I have already mentioned, is in turn subject to a gender division of labour) not purely out of choice, but rather because the wage provided by one's husbands was no longer sufficient to guarantee a decent standard of life (Lombardozzi, 2020). Therefore, because the traditional caregivers tend to allocate, and on some occasions are forced to allocate, fewer hours to

[5] Not only that, generally speaking, work obligations nowadays tend to spread beyond the working day, meaning that workers are expected to actively check their emails or be reachable by phone or email even once their job is done for the day (Huws, 2019). On top of that, work is becoming more flexible and unpredictable, and working hours have been intensified.

reproductive labour, the very basis which keeps our society thriving, namely social reproduction, is slowly being dismantled by our society itself (Fraser, 2016).

2.4.1 Commodification of Care and Domestic Labour

Indeed, on top of the fact that traditional care workers have more or less willingly been leaving the domestic realm, we are witnessing a globalised tendency, dictated by a neoliberal model, to reduce and withdraw investments in the welfare state in favour of the construction of a privatised system of care and domestic services. This is ultimately giving rise to a process of commodification of care and domestic labour, thus rendering it a marketable good (Schwiter & Steiner, 2020). This means that several activities which involve care and domestic labour are gradually shifting from the family to the market. For example, private nurseries are becoming increasingly more prominent as well as care facilities for the elderly; not only that, those who can afford it might decide to hire professional domestic help to take care of the cleanliness of one's houses. Of course, this commodification of care and domestic labour has important consequences not only for the wellbeing of the caregiver but also for that of the cared-for. Some authors (Folbre & Nelson, 2000) argue that the main obvious benefit is that it would reduce the pressure of the double shift in the sense that women could more freely choose to allocate fewer hours to domestic labour and focus more on their formal paid job. Surely, the commodification of domestic labour provides more options for mothers and wives who, up until recently, did not have many outside alternatives and had to consistently engage in such activities[6]. Not only that, the shift from the family to the market could have beneficial outcomes for the cared-for, too. In the best possible scenario, children would indeed attend care facilities run by dedicated professionals who are trained to take care of them and contribute to their growth and wellbeing. Moreover, elderly people in need of help might feel more independent and in control in the hands of a trained "outsider" rather than with a relative (Folbre & Nelson, 2000).

But it is also important not to forget that commodifying domestic labour comes with important drawbacks. Elder abuse in care facilities is a daily occurrence, with two in three staff members reporting they have, to some degree, committed abuse before, be it physical, psychological, or

[6] Recall in fact that care work does not always entail that the relationship between the carer and the cared-for is completely consensual: sometimes carers are forced to take up such role.

financial[7] (WHO, 2021). Moreover, child care workers typically receive very moderate wages; this entails high rates of turnover which in turn implies that children do not have enough time to develop strong long-term relationships with their caregivers (Serje & Bertram, 2018). Furthermore, because care work is subject to market logic, there is a tendency to cut costs in order to minimise competition. As a consequence, the quality of private care might not be as good as one might think. One last drawback is that, even though the commodification of care work might be able to relieve some stress on the primary carer, it is also true that the opportunity to pay the fees of nurseries and elderly care facilities is a luxury that not everybody can afford. The implications of this factor differ and are dependent on one's marital status, class, race, physical ability and all the other factors that makeup one's identity. Middle-class, white, married women would of course benefit the most, however, the conditions of queer women and/or Black women, are likely to remain the same or even get worse as they generally tend to earn less and are thus less likely to afford the costs of private nurseries (Bayliss et al., 2017). Likewise, the pressure is of course higher on poorer families and single-parent households, which have to either rely on care-sharing economies, for example by sharing nannies or by instituting home-based kindergartens (Lombardozzi, 2020), or on the social security system which is, as I argued above, becoming increasingly more means-tested and conditional on paid labour. The situation is clearly better for wealthier families which own more financial means to be able to pay the fees of nurseries and elderly care institutions or to employ a domestic helper. Clearly, these disparities, reinforce and open the gates to even deeper forms of social inequalities and exclusion.

2.4.2 Outsourcing of Care and Domestic Labour

Another strategy that is used in order to try to put an end to the crisis of social reproduction, is to outsource domestic labour to migrant workers from the Global South or Post-Soviet states. These workers, usually, but not always women, leave their families in their home countries in order to care for the children or the elderly of well-off families in the Global North. In turn, these workers usually hire other, even poorer women from other countries or their country of origin, who will have to take care of their children. Arlie Hochschild calls these intranational connections "global care chains", which are "a series of personal links between people across the globe based on the paid or unpaid work of caring" (Hochschild, 2015, p.250). Care services provided at a transnational level engender

[7] More specifically, the World Health Organisation (2022, second paragraph) reports that a whopping "64.2% of staff reported perpetrating some form of abuse in the past year" and that "rates of abuse of older people have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic".

yet another layer of the division of labour: that between the Global North and the Global South which is underpinned by the structural divisions not only of gender but also of race and class (Yeates, 2004). In fact, according to Evelyn Nakano Glenn (1992), there exists a racial division of reproductive labour since wealthy women have been purchasing the services of women of colour for a low wage. Again, if the former were able to partially free themselves from reproductive labour (thanks to the neoliberal push which encourages the entry of women into the labour force) the burden is now shouldered by the latter group.

It goes without saying that such hierarchy reinforces already existing inequalities, both on a race/class axis, but also on a gender axis as it reinforces the "feminisation" of domestic labour, which indeed remains a task largely performed by women. Outsourcing domestic labour comes with other impactful implications. First of all, domestic labour, even when it is embedded in the market, is a highly informal setup, in the sense that there are not a lot of regulations and as a consequence, workers find themselves in a vulnerable position. More specifically, the employer's house, which is an isolated and private space, becomes the domestic worker's workplace, and sometimes it becomes their residence, too. This of course creates a relation of dependency between the employer and the employee, who is inevitably subordinated (Doyle & Timonen, 2009). Furthermore, and this is a concept which can be applied to human migration in general, many developing countries are going through the problem of human capital flight, also known as brain drain. This occurs when educated people leave their home countries, in order to migrate to the Global North to find employment and other socio-economic opportunities, as a result of "push factors"[8] which makes life in their mother country less appealing. Nowadays, other than a brain drain, developing countries are also experiencing a care drain (Folbre & Nelson, 2000). Of course, this has egregious consequences for everyone involved: from the family left behind, to the women who make the decision to leave.

2.5 THREE DESIDERATA FOR THE REMUNERATION OF DOMESTIC LABOUR

In the last section, by presenting the consequences of the crisis of social reproduction, my aim was to demonstrate that there is a strong need to ameliorate such a crisis and challenge the gender division of labour. But how is it possible to obviate this issue? In order to meaningfully and adequately address this problem, I believe it is important to focus the attention on those individuals who actively engage in unpaid domestic and care work and come up with strategies that will allow

[8] Push factors include, among others, political and economic instability, health risks, and oppression.

them to receive adequate compensation for the role that they play in our society. As I argued above, not only is domestic labour often taken for granted and treated as a free and unlimited resource available at any time but also, because they are generally not remunerated, domestic and care workers do not get the recognition they deserve. The strategies used to compensate for domestic and care work should therefore take into account the new model of social reproduction described above and they should therefore be premised on gender equity. Far from focusing on strategies which encourage female employment, I claim that people, regardless of their gender, should feel more incentivised to take part in care work. This is to say that there should be a re-evaluation of the notions of a public and private sphere, which should not be thought of as two separate compartments, but rather should be seen as deeply connected, and equally accessible to everyone.

As I explained in the introduction, in this thesis I will focus my analysis first on the theories brought forward by scholars and activists who gave rise to the Wages for Housework movement in the 1970s, and secondly on the more recent strategy of basic income as a way to remunerate domestic labour. The former is usually considered to be the precursor of the latter, therefore, I believe it is sensible to compare them with the aim of determining which elements of each perspective can provide a meaningful approach to remunerate domestic labour, taking into account all the aforementioned elements. Hence, let me present again my research question,

> Could basic income be a viable means to remunerate domestic work or is a more transformative approach, as proposed by Marxist feminist theory, a better alternative both morally and politically to ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction?

In order to provide an answer to my research question, I will take into account three main desiderata for a solution.

1. Gender equity: the preferred perspective should foster gender equity and thus challenge the current androcentric model of citizenship. This implies that there should be a substantive re-evaluation of the division between the public and private spheres, which should not be seen as airtight compartments, but rather as two realms that are interrelated and are accessible by everyone regardless of their gender.

2. Applicability: the preferred strategy to remunerate domestic and care labour should be implementable in today's day and age. This means that the chosen approach should of course be effective and adequate, but it should also be feasible enough to be recognised as a legitimate demand to remunerate domestic work. Needless to say, if the proposed approach appears to be too demanding, it would be easily discarded or ignored.
3. Effect on minority groups: I believe that in the process of trying to formulate a meaningful approach in order to remunerate domestic and care labour we should not limit ourselves to a specific class or ethnicity, but rather, it is important to be mindful of the different intersecting traits which make up our identities. In other words, the chosen approach should not be class- and/or colour blind, but rather, it should account for the needs and challenges of everyone involved. Consequently, the preferred solution should foster equity for all, not just for the privileged ones.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

Our societal order has been throughout the decades decoupling social reproduction from economic production, traditionally assigning such activities respectively to women and men. The former, in Fraser's words, have been remunerated "in the coin of 'love' and 'virtue'" (2016, p.102), whereas the latter has been able to enjoy a cash wage, thus acquiring more power and independence. As a consequence, women have been placed in a subordinate position vis-à-vis men. Nowadays, as a result of societal changes which privilege typically male lifestyles and life patterns, and also because more hours are needed in order to materially support a household, an increasing number of women are entering the workforce. However, because they are still the most involved in reproductive labour, women are subject to the so-called double shift, which is undoubtedly a strenuous condition to endure, even depending on one's identity traits. Not only that, because individuals tend to allocate less time to the private realm, we are witnessing a crisis of social reproduction, the very factor which allows our society to exist as it is. In order to obviate this crisis, domestic work is being commodified and outsourced, two practices that are opening the gates to deep forms of inequality and oppression which have been expanding worldwide. As a consequence, there is a need to challenge the gender division of labour and allow for more people to participate in the domestic realm. Our current model of citizenship which privileges male, independent, and well-off subjects is indeed no longer sustainable as new domestic bonds and arrangements, which do not rely on the caretaker/breadwinner dichotomy, are on the rise. One possible strategy to hinder the gender division of labour could be to remunerate domestic and care work and offer a re-evaluation of the strict dichotomy between the private and public spheres. In the last section of this chapter, I claimed that such a strategy should have three main desiderata: it should foster gender equity and thus challenge the androcentric model of citizenship, it should be applicable in today's day and age, and it should have positive implication for individuals belonging to minority groups. In light of these considerations, in the next chapter, I will outline and evaluate the theories brought forward by the Marxist feminists as a possible means to remunerate domestic labour and ultimately challenge the gender division of labour.

3. MARXIST FEMINISM AND WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

After discussing the main problem at hand, namely that there is a need to challenge the current mode of social reproduction and re-evaluate the importance of domestic labour, I will now turn the attention to the debate regarding wages for housework as developed by a group of Marxist feminist academics during the 1970s. Before delving into the core subject, I will start with the accounts (or lack thereof) that Marx gave of gender and the family. This is indeed the starting point of the Marxist feminist theorists who criticised the German author for misinterpreting the role that women within the domestic realm played in perpetuating and maintaining the capitalist system and social reproduction. This type of labour which is indeed essential to the entire society needed to be compensated with wages on par with any other type of job. The aim of the Marxist feminists, however, was not to glorify the role of the housewives, rather they believe that providing women with a wage for their labour, and therefore recognising their labour (just like men's labour was recognised), could represent a means to ultimately struggle against their subordinated position as housewives and emancipate themselves. Needless to say, this demand appears to be rather convoluted as there is a disconnect between the short-term goal, namely, receiving a wage, and the long-term goal, which is to completely reform our society in favour of a post-capitalist future.

3.2 MARXISM AND THE FAMILY

To start my analysis of the current debate surrounding reproductive labour, I believe it is important to go back to the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, who focused on defining and analysing the concept of productive labour. In the Communist Manifesto (2019), the authors explain how the bourgeois class, through the exploitation of the proletariat, has equated a person's worth to exchange value, namely how much one is able to earn. In Theories of Surplus Value (1963), the authors describe productive labour as the kind of labour applied by the worker in the production of a certain commodity, thereby producing surplus value. The surplus value can be interpreted as the unpaid or surplus labour that the capitalist class appropriates from the proletariat during the working day. This profit in turn will be re-invested to generate more revenue and capital accumulation. Therefore, using Marx's words "Only labour which is directly transformed into capital is productive" (1963, p.86). By contrast, Marx also describes the concept of unproductive labour, which is not exchanged with capital, but rather with profit. These two definitions are not static, rather, they are contingent, in the sense that what might be considered to be productive from the perspective of a certain social class, might be considered unproductive from the perspective of another.

According to Marxian economist Ernest Mandel (2002), the concept of labour can be split into two distinct parts, what he calls necessary labour, namely the activities and practices that individuals need to sustain themselves, and surplus labour, which is the bit that is used to sustain the ruling class. From these two kinds of labour, there are two different outcomes, namely necessary products and surplus products. When the capitalist class appropriates the surplus product in monetary form, it becomes surplus value, which can in turn be invested, thus generating more revenue. In order to be exchanged in the market, "every commodity must have both a use value and an exchange value" (2002, p.7). In fact, a product that is being produced for the purpose of being sold and not with the aim of being directly consumed must have an exchange value and a use value, otherwise, it would not be sold. However, as Mandel posits, certain products are devoid of exchange value as they are not bought and sold within the market; these products are those which are produced and consumed directly on farms or by wealthy classes, and those which pertain to the labour within the house, such as food, or clean sheets, or mended socks.

In The German Ideology (1967), Marx posits that the family was the first "social relationship", in the sense that it stemmed from the necessity of men to reproduce in order to "propagate their kind". Moreover, to cite Marx and Engels:

> . . . men must be in a position to live in order to be able to "make history". But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, a habitation, clothing and many other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. (Marx & Engels, 1976, p.7)

However, in their staunch critique of the capitalist modes of production, Marx and Engels posit that the family as an institution has lost its "sentimental veil", and was reduced to mere monetary relations by the bourgeois society (2019). Just like every other institution, the family was also part and parcel of the capitalist enterprise and as such it helped maintain and perpetuate the capitalist ideology, i.e. it reinvigorated the concept of private property, which was passed down from father to son, it socialised children in thinking that exploitation and inequality were inevitable and thus had to be accepted, and it engendered generational poverty, which always guaranteed a steady supply of low-skilled workers. Therefore, it is possible to say that Marx and Engels (perhaps even more than Marx) undoubtedly focused a considerable amount of attention on the family and its relation to the capitalist society, however, it can also be said that their analysis does not truly take into consideration the role of the woman within the family, in relation to men.

3.3 ESSENTIALISING WOMEN

Admittedly, as Italian Marxist-feminist theorist Silvia Federici argues, Marxism, though it was able to provide useful tools that were later used by feminist academics to tackle issues regarding gender, only indirectly touched upon the subject of gender in and of itself. Indeed, in analysing Marxist literature, Federici notices that women, within the context of the capitalist society, are essentially depicted as private property, owned by their husbands or fathers, as exploited victims who simply do not have the necessary means to lift themselves out of their subordinate position. Nowhere in his work does Marx refer to the fact that women were the very actors who not only provided the Capital with actual, physical bodies which were then employed in labour power since their early years but also, contributed to their maintenance by providing them with nourishing food, clean and tidy spaces and clothing as well as several other practices which perpetuate social reproduction

(Federici, 2018; James, 2012). This way, Marx does not properly acknowledge that the preservation of the capitalist system was, in part, to be attributed to women and their supposedly unique procreative capacity.

In fact, I argue that the existence of living human beings is necessary for, but evidently not limited to, the production of surplus value. Practically speaking, not only do individuals need to be aware of well-established societal norms, which need to be followed religiously in order to participate in our society, but also, in order to engage in this community, individuals need to be raised, cared for, nourished, so they can grow healthy and strong and take part in a profit-oriented culture, where they have a tacit obligation to actively contribute by generating profit. Therefore, social reproduction, meaning the mere, physical reproduction of the labour force in and of itself and its rearing and upbringing, must be considered as part and parcel of the wellbeing and maintenance of the capitalist order that pervades us. This form of labour, however, because it is not directly conducive to the production of concrete, tangible goods and/or services, is carried out by individuals who do not receive a concrete, monetary retribution in the form of wages.

Because of both mere biological implications and, perhaps more importantly, because of the social/cultural reasons which gave rise to specific gender relations that permeate our society, women have traditionally been relied on when it comes to engaging in reproductive labour. Hence, being a mother and a wife was made to coincide with the true essence of women. This division of labour between men and women was deeply investigated by Engels in his quest to define the origins of the familial structure and the consequences of such a scheme. The monogamous marriage represented for the author the "subjugation of one sex by the other" (2010, p.123). In fact, the bourgeoisie family was characterised by deep inequalities within the couple: the wife was indeed described as a domestic slave at the service of her husband. This way, male supremacy was reinforced. Moreover, Engels claims that working-class women could find their liberation by participating in the labour force. This way, women could emancipate themselves from men and become economically independent, thus joining their male counterparts in the proletarian revolution (Engels, 2010). However, this assumption which sees the emancipation of women as engendered by their entry into the labour force is founded on untenable premises (Fox, 1982). This view implies that women are considered to be oppressed and exploited within the framework of capitalism, just like the rest of the workers are oppressed and exploited by it. This entails that women are not considered to be oppressed by virtue of the fact that they are women. Feminist economist Heidi Hartmann thus concludes that

> Though aware of the deplorable situation of women in their time, the early Marxists failed to focus on the differences between men's and women's experiences under capitalism. (Hartmann, 1979, p.3)

3.4 THE EMERGENCE OF MARXIST FEMINISM

During the late 1960s, new grassroots movements made up of marginalised categories such as queer people, Black and Indigenous people, as well as workers and students rose up and gained relevance in the political and social sphere. These groups demanded a complete re-evaluation of the current system through individual and collective actions with the overarching goal of increasing awareness of the inequalities perpetuated by the established power and obtaining new rights and protections for the minorities. The aim of this movement was to not only resist and combat capitalism and the patriarchy but also oppose those Marxist or socialist men who were not willing to take seriously the condition that women were experiencing, i.e. being considered inferior because they did not take part in commodity production. Because of this new focus on gender(ed) issues, men from the New Left groups were in fact accusing women of creating divisions within the working class, thus hindering class struggle (Hartmann, 1979; Toupin, 2018).

However, feminist movements grew strong and started to occupy themselves with issues pertaining to grievances that were peculiar to women, such as their sexuality, reproductive rights, de facto and de jure inequalities as well as family life and domesticity. All these issues, which before the late 1960s were considered to be personal, and to be dealt with within the family – if one was lucky enough to be able to talk about such topics – suddenly became public and political. Granted, these inequalities and unjust relationships had already been analysed by first-wave feminists who concerned themselves with political rights in general and more specifically with the right to vote, in order to be able to put forward preferences and opinions which could become subject to political consideration. But, if in the past the solution to women's oppression was to be found in political rights, in this case, the attention was diverted to achieving socio-economic equality. The relationship and disparities between men and women were affecting entire communities, which saw women as constantly oppressed and subjugated by men. Feminist activists were also joined by other radicals in their quest to seek possible explanations for the alienation of women. These explanations were to be found "outside the existing explanatory system" (Toupin, 2018, p. 22); more than that, the entire system put in place by the dominant class, and from which men comprehensively benefitted, was to be completely eradicated and swept away.

The debate surrounding reproductive labour started to arise following the period when women began to be confronted with their entrance into the mainstream labour force, coupled with their everyday physical and emotional efforts as wives and mothers, a condition that still saw them as financially and materially dependent on men. After the entry of women into the workforce, having a job, no matter how awful and spiteful, and being able to enjoy the pay checks that came with it, indeed represented one of the first ways for women to lift themselves from their subjugated condition in relation to men and to finally leave the house where they were confined. This way, however, as Selma James claimed, women found themselves with two jobs: "a woman's first job is to reproduce other people's labour power, and her second one is to reproduce and sell her own[9]" (2012, p.54). One of the main attempts of this debate, therefore, was to demonstrate and delineate how women have been contributing to the workforce, even though in an indirect way, well before their access to factories, offices, and academia.

3.5 ON REPRODUCTIVE LABOUR

In order to better understand the debate regarding wages for housework, I believe it is important to present an overview of four seminal essays which can be considered the precursors of the subsequent academic products. All four texts, despite being rooted in Marxism, manage to simultaneously provide a critique of Marxism itself.

In the essay The Political Economy of Women's Liberation (1969), computer scientist and labour activist Margaret Benston tries to find a demarcation between men and women and provocatively posits that women are responsible for the production of the abovementioned use-value within the family, whereas men have the responsibility to participate in commodity production and thus to generate exchange value. However, because women are not paid for this work and because value in a capitalist society is quantified by money, women find themselves in a subordinate position vis-à-vis men. Moreover, Benston notices that equal access to the workplace as a condition for women's liberation seems not to be enough, and therefore women will have to continue performing their

[9] This concept of course refers to what Arlie Hochschild called the second shift.

tasks as mothers and wives within the context of the family besides their day job. In order to solve these problems, the author argues that it is society and the state which should take care of children and housework; this would in fact be the only way in which the disparities between men and women would be gone.

In The Main Enemy (1980), originally published in 1970, French feminist Christine Delphy argues that housework was not considered part and parcel of the labour market by Marx because it is performed inside the family, within the context of marriage. If in the Grundrisse (1972) Marx claims that labour under the capitalist system appears as repulsive and produces alienation, domestic labour and the woman's condition in the context of marriage are neither oppressive nor alienating. This is because the reproductive (and domestic) labour of women is not placed within the realm of productive work, but rather, childbearing and childrearing are regarded as natural activities. Such "innate behaviours" do not have exchange value, nor do they generate surplus value. Moreover, women are not excluded by the "field of exchange" not because of the nature of their production, as Benston posited, rather they are excluded by virtue of the fact that they are women. To quote the author: "It is women as economic agents who are excluded from the (exchange) market, and not their production" (1980, p. 26). Delphy provides the example of women who work in the context of family production, such as agriculture, crafts and small business without receiving remuneration. The appropriation of women's labour, by their husbands or fathers, is the cause of their oppression and it is a factor which is common to all women. Of course, women do have the ability to engage in paid labour outside the house, but they are not absolved from familial obligations.

But the debate around wages for housework gained momentum in 1971, with the meeting of Mariarosa Dalla Costa and Selma James, two Marxist feminists who co-authored and published Women and the Subversion of the Community, which became one of the cornerstones of feminist literature. Mariarosa Dalla Costa, associate professor at Padua University, was part of the extra-parliamentary group Potere Operaio, a movement informed by Italian autonomia (autonomy) and operaismo (workerism), a radical neo-Marxist political theory which is defined by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri as such:

> Operaismo builds on Marx's claim that capital reacts to the struggles of the working class; the working class is active and capital reactive . . . Operaismo takes this as its fundamental axiom: the struggles of

> the working class precede and prefigure the successive re-structurations of capital. (2002, third paragraph)

By making use of strategies such as refusal to work, mass passivity, and non-collaboration, adherents to this strand of Marxism sought to politicise labour with the intent to refuse it (Tronti, 2020). This element of refusal will subsequently be applied to housework. Operaismo, was in turn influenced by US Trotskyism, which inspired the theories of Selma James, whose ideas were also shaped by the Black Liberation movement and the postcolonial thought of her husband C. L. R. James.

In Women and the Subversion of the Community (1971), James and Dalla Costa argue that the basic weakness of women, a factor which also tied them together, lay in the fact that they were not provided with a salary for their housework. Since the beginning of the capitalist mode of production, which encompassed every aspect of society, including the more intimate and personal domestic realm, women were confined and isolated from the rest of the world and denied their autonomy because of their assumed inferior ability to efficiently participate in social life. In this isolated condition, women were subordinated to men and stripped of their independence, their creative capacity and their sexual life (1971). More specifically, to quote Dalla Costa and James:

> Women on the other hand have been isolated in the home, forced to carry out work that is considered unskilled, the work of giving birth to, raising, disciplining, and servicing the worker for production. Their role in the cycle of social production remained invisible because only the product of their labour, the labourer, was visible there. They themselves were thereby trapped within pre-capitalist working conditions and never paid a wage. (Dalla Costa & James, 1971, p. 6)

In addition to that, the authors claimed that the confinement of women to their households was part of the implications of the division of labour underlying the capitalist system. Women were in fact constrained in the domestic realm so men could be transformed into wage slaves, able to earn money and engage in the production of surplus value. However, Dalla Costa and James clearly stated that because the family is a site of social production, housework carried out by women was not external to the working class as it was a form of productive labour, part and parcel of the development of the capitalist system, which needed to be remunerated with wages.

Although the demand was to compensate domestic labour, the aim of the authors was not to reinforce the stereotype of the woman-as-housewife, on the contrary, they wished to "break the whole structure of domestic work . . . rejecting [their] role as housewives and the home as the ghetto of [their] existence" (1971, p. 12). Women had to finally free themselves from their position of care-takers and unionise with other women in places of struggle, outside the domestic realm. But the first step to gaining such independence was to have their labour inside the household recognised as such and therefore compensated. Earning a wage for one's work meant gaining opportunities to resist work itself. The household thus becomes a place for subversion and refusing to work and joining other women would become an effective way to finally "destroy the role of housewife" (1971, p.13).

As mentioned before, Silvia Federici also greatly contributed to the debate on paid housework. In her writings, and specifically in Wages Against Housework (1975), she posits that housework differs from any other type of labour, in the sense that every worker is exploited and manipulated by the capitalist class, but at least the efforts and time spent in labour, as well as the very identity of the worker is recognised in the form of a weekly or monthly wage. Although the author argues that salary is only a half-decent compensation because it actually conceals the unpaid work that is represented by profit which is then accumulated by the dominant classes, it nevertheless entails that the salaried worker is part of a social contract, however dreadful it might be: "you work not because you like it, or because or comes naturally to you, but because it is the only condition under which you are allowed to live (1975, p. 2)". On the other hand, those individuals who engage in housework, not only are required to perform labour without receiving a due wage but also being involved in domestic labour was often equated to a disposition of the heart or an aspiration, something that is inherent to "female" physical characteristics and embedded in their essence as women. Housework then corresponds to femininity. Because such configuration of the woman has been depicted as something so natural and innate, it was very easy to push housework outside of the capitalist enterprise and deny women their remuneration. Just like Dalla Costa and James, Federici argued that receiving a wage for domestic work would have represented a means to reject this kind of labour and thus obtain more bargaining power (Federici, 2012).

By adding a feminist dimension to the classical Marxist theories involving class struggle, authors like Benston, James, Dalla Costa and Federici paved the way for the discussion around capitalism and patriarchy and the relation that these two concepts have to women and their contribution to society. The debate surrounding the hidden production carried out by women within the household, had a very concrete and clear aim: demanding a salary and thus official recognition of said labour, as conducive to surplus value production. According to Federici (1975), the struggle that women were willing to go through in order to achieve proper wages for housework, would have given them not only a different social power but also, it would have provided them with the opportunity to challenge the very domination of the capital.

3.6 DEMANDS AND ISSUES

In 1972, Federici, along with other feminist activists and academics, founded Wages for Housework (WfH), a grassroot network which mainly focused on campaigning for the recognition and compensation of care work and domestic labour, thus far seen as a natural “act of love” (Federici, 1975, p. 3). Housework, because “functional to capital” (Dalla Costa and James, 1971, p.16) needed to be considered as labour in and of itself. Because WfH was rooted in radical Marxist strands such as operaismo and autonomia, demanding and obtaining a wage to remunerate housework was part of a more extensive desire to question and resist labour as such (Tronti, 2020). The aim of the Marxist feminists was therefore to provide new perspectives on capitalist production but also, more generally, on the meaning of labour within a capitalist society. In Caliban and the Witch (2021), Federici claims that within the capitalist society, women’s bodies served the same purpose as the wage for male workers. It represented the primary means for their exploitation as well as their resistance. It is not by chance that Dalla Costa and James (1971) focus their analysis on the wage as an instrument of leverage and bargaining. Receiving a wage for one’s work, even though it served as the very mechanism which integrated workers into capitalist production, could also enable people to struggle against it with the end goal of refusing it (Negri, 1991; Weeks, 2011). If housework were to be recognised as a proper form of labour and thus worthy of a wage, women could have the means to refuse it, thus rejecting the essentialist myth of “labour of love” (Federici, 1975, p.2), and abolish the central role of the housewife within the household realm (Dalla Costa and James, 1971). In turn, this would have also rejected the imperative of heteronormativity within and outside the familial context. This aim was mainly advocated by those groups which formed around Wages for Housework, namely Wages due Lesbians and Black Women for Wages for Housework, which challenged the dominant narrative offered by white, heterosexual women (Hall, 1975).

Receiving a wage for housework did not have the goal to glorify or sanctify housework. Even though as I have outlined, domestic labour was deemed to be socially productive, the aim of the Marxist feminists was not to bring forward a moral claim, on the contrary, as Cox and Federici argued “It is only from the capitalist viewpoint that being productive is a moral virtue, if not a moral imperative” (Federici, 2012). Therefore, WfH is not merely a demand for a lump of money, but it is most importantly a political perspective. It served as a tool to enhance the reflection of the condition of women within society, while at the same time demystifying domestic labour which needed to be perceived as productive as any other type of job, rather than a mere “act of love”. Moreover, WfH served as a provocation to organise collective action, and as a means to imagine a new, desirable post-capitalist future devoid of waged labour (Weeks, 2011).

However, it is possible to notice that there is a strong disconnect between the demand for retribution for one’s work with the ultimate aim to refuse it, and the long-term goal to completely eradicate an economic system, especially because this long-term aim was never truly made explicit by the activists. As author Kathi Weeks claimed: “It is one thing to refuse waged work, but quite another to contest the institution of the family and the modes of labour it organises and imbues with meaning” (Weeks, 2011, p.124). Generally speaking, the short-term demand of receiving compensation for one’s labour inside the house was tied to and embedded into a broader ultimate goal of a socialist revolution. This factor represents a weakness, in the sense that the transformative perspectives of WfH were considerably demanding and rather untenable and thus run the risk of being easily ignored and delegitimised, which, as a matter of fact, is precisely what happened. Linked to this aspect, another problem with the way the campaign was carried out was that the activists were not open to engaging in a dialogue and thus coming to an agreement with higher institutions. It is interesting to notice how advocates from WfH demanded monetary compensation from the state without truly recognising its legitimacy or being willing to compromise with it. The claims were indeed advanced with the aim to provoke antagonistic sentiments: “We want our wages and we’re not waiting!” (Fortunati, 1975, p.19).

Another issue with the movement and the academic writings surrounding it is that the authors assumed that the only factor which brings women together is domestic and reproductive labour, thus treating the global female population as a monolith, without accounting for intersecting traits and complex gender identity formations. This aspect was deeply problematised by several scholars

(Roberts, 1997). One of the most prominent criticism was provided by Angela Davis, who in Women, Race, and Class (1983), took issue with the suggestion put forward by the abovementioned theorists, in the sense that they did not properly account for the different relation that Black women have with the domestic realm. The author, in fact, claims that Black women in the US and former colonies have for decades received a salary for their domestic labour as maids, cleaning ladies and housekeepers, coming close to being a surrogate for the children and husbands of wealthy white women. Davis posits that within the context of the workforce, albeit degrading and oppressive, women and men coming from the same class and therefore, from the same oppressed background, had the opportunity to join forces and unionise against the capital (1983). Therefore, the only place where women can effectively resist class struggle is not at home, by themselves, with a meagre salary as a consolation prize, but rather, in the dynamic and busy workplace surrounded by other people, characterised by the same grievances and oppression. Receiving a monetary compensation, according to Davis would only result in reinforcing the role of the woman-as-housewife as in Lenin's words:

> . . .petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades (the woman), chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. (Lenin in Davis,1983, p. 251)

In light of these shortcomings then, it becomes evident that the manner in which these demands were presented, instead of providing a concrete solution to the problem of unpaid domestic labour, further entrenched the trope of woman-as-housewife. Even though, as I highlighted above, the proponents of the movement argued that receiving a wage for one's labour (thus including domestic labour) was the first step to being able to refuse said labour, I believe there is a need to explore other strategies according to which domestic work could be recognized and remunerated. Specifically, there is a need to find a model or a scheme which can challenge such a strict gender division of labour, without perpetuating the traditional assumption that sees housework as something belonging to women's essence and nature. One possible alternative to account for such shortcomings could be to turn our attention to the strategy of basic income, which is the topic on which I am going to focus on in the next chapter.

3.7 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I outlined the debate surrounding domestic and reproductive labour, as conceived by several Marxist feminist theorists. After a general overview of Marxist literature about the role of the family within capitalism, I outlined the main tenets of the movement Wages for Housework, which, while building on Marxism, also sought to provide a critique of the way such school of thought accounted for (or rather, lacked to account for) the condition of women and their oppression both in the public and in the private sphere. Subsequently, I presented the demands brought forward by the movement and highlighted the critical points and shortcomings. Specifically, I emphasised both the ambitious and rather demanding nature of the perspectives put forward by WfH and the presence of a disconnect between the short- and long-term goals of the demands. Moreover, I pointed out the tendency of activists and scholars to reduce complex, multifaceted identities to the very broad category of "woman". Throughout the chapter, the value and importance of the WfH movement were never called into question, however, there is a need to explore different, more feasible and adequate possibilities to remunerate domestic labour. In light of these shortcomings then, the following chapter will be dedicated to mapping the debate surrounding basic income and to analysing its characteristics, in order to evaluate whether such a perspective could appropriately remunerate domestic labour, without further entrenching the gender division of labour.

4. BASIC INCOME AND DOMESTIC LABOUR

4.1 INTRODUCTION

After analysing the theories brought forward by Marxist feminist scholars regarding domestic labour and its remunerations, I will now turn the focus to basic income. In this chapter, I will analyse the different characteristics of basic income and evaluate whether it could be a meaningful manner to compensate those individuals who engage in care and domestic work and thus ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction. Again, the choice to turn to basic income was dictated by the fact that such a perspective is often considered the natural successor of the theories formulated by the Wages for Housework movement. Although it is often treated as a mere demand for idleness and laziness, I believe that basic income could serve as a way to relax the relation between income and labour and it could accommodate the necessities of the new domestic arrangements that are arising. This would ensure that individuals will have more opportunities at their disposal when it comes to waged work, marriage and childbearing.

4.2 A BIT OF HISTORY

In order to trace the origins of the idea of basic income, one can go as far as prehistoric hunting-gathering societies. Such groups used to treat the land as "commons", meaning that although the land was not owned by anybody, people had the opportunity to access it and use it in order to sustain themselves (Widerquist & McCall, 2018). This concept is similar to the meaning that Philippe Van Parijs gives to basic income (on which I will elaborate later), i.e., a means which gives unconditional access to the resources that one needs in order to survive (2003). However, because for obvious reasons, these hunting-gathering communities did not have a cash economy and because BI, according to modern definitions, is given as a cash grant (see, among others, Van Parijs, 2003, Miller et al., 2019), such communities did not have a proper BI. A few millennia later, the Athenian polis, used to distribute a small cash grant to Athenian citizens by making use of the revenues of city-owned mines. However, as it is widely known, citizens were only a small portion of society: women, slaves, and free non-citizens males were not considered as such. This cash grant was in fact only targeted toward the elite; therefore, it is not possible to describe it as basic income (Widerquist & McCall, 2018).

More or less inclusive and efficient practices of compensation and redistribution have always made their appearance throughout history, however, these general considerations aside, I believe that in order to talk about the origins of basic income, it is important to analyse the work of two different authors who brought forward different prototypical models of such a strategy.

In Agrarian Justice, a pamphlet written by political theorist and revolutionary Thomas Paine in 1797, the author delineates a comprehensive plan with the aim to fund not only old-age pensions and disability support but also grants for young adults. Although Paine defended the prototypical institution of the welfare state, it is important to highlight that he never truly challenged the notion of property rights or that of laissez-faire, rather, his pamphlet was rooted in the concept of natural rights, according to which no person is naturally superior to another, and therefore, every individual is equally entitled to the common property of the land (Paine, 2000). However, land property (not a bad thing per se, according to the author), which was a direct result of the additional value of cultivation, left millions of people in abject poverty without truly indemnifying them. In order to amend this infringement of natural rights, Paine proposed the creation of a system according to which land owners owed the demos a "ground rent", paid with a tax on inheritance, to be redistributed to the landless. The author remarks that access to this fund is not to be considered as a form of charity, but rather, as a right that every person has. Not only the social condition of the poorest would be alleviated, but also, land owners would gain substantial benefits: there would probably be less class violence and the poorest would not resent the rich and their increasing wealth as it would result in a subsequent increase in the national fund. Although this theory slightly resembles a basic income scheme, it is not possible to identify it as such. The cash grant was indeed provided una tantum to a specific segment of society (the landless) upon turning 21 and a small pension was distributed to every person of the age of 50 and over.

In response to Paine's pamphlet, and as a condemnation of exploitative landlords, English revolutionary Thomas Spence wrote in 1797 The Rights of Infants. In this essay he explains that Paine's plan is unsatisfactory: one of the main causes of poverty was to be found in private land ownership, a factor which was not questioned by Paine. The solution was then to abolish taxes and re-appropriate the natural commons such as land, and collectively cultivate it, according to a system of common property. Common property, according to the author, is an anti-individualistic form of possession, which rejected all forms of exclusions entailed by privatisation (Spence, 1797). This means that everyone was entitled to be an equal owner of the commons. Wealth coming from the cultivation of the common land was then to be redistributed as a form of a regular and unconditional social dividend "[...] among all the living souls in the parish, whether male or female; married or single; legitimate or illegitimate; from a day old to the extremest age" (Spence, 1797, p.51). According to the author, this system is better able to give rise to democracy and universal suffrage, as well as to engender more civic engagement. Moreover, Spence's proposals entail a better-educated demos and social and ideological advantages such as less dependence and more happiness (King & Marangos, 2006). The social dividend advocated by Spence can therefore be considered as the true basic income ante litteram: it is periodic, distributed on an individual basis, and it is given without any specific means-testing[10]. This is in line with the definition given by the Basic Income Earth Network (BIEN): "a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means test or work requirement" (Birnbaum, 2016).

[10]Because it is not a means-tested scheme it implies that one's eligibility is not conditional on one's income and capital.

Other than these authors, different academics referenced the idea of BI without never naming it. Bertrand Russel (1918) and Virginia Woolf (2016) both praise the idea of providing the citizens with a cash grant taken from tax revenues. Different economists, such as James Meade and Juliet Rhys Williams and Robert Solow, also praised the idea of a "social dividend", as well as an ever-diverse array of political figures, from Martin Luther King Jr. to Richard Nixon.

4.3 MODERN DEFINITIONS OF BASIC INCOME

One of the most prominent scholars who concerned himself with basic income is without a doubt political philosopher Philippe Van Parijs, who describes BI as a "very simple real utopia", echoing Thomas More's booklet. Far from being an abstract and unattainable desideratum, BI is described as a feasible alternative that has the opportunity to engender more freedom and equality (Van Parijs, 2013). Generally, the current scholarship defines BI as a minimum income that is guaranteed to all members of society, with the unique characteristic of not being conditional. In the programme brought forward by proponents of BI, three aspects are mainly highlighted:

1. The income is periodically paid to individuals, rather than households (individual);
2. The income is provided to everyone, without any specific means-testing; this means that individuals are entitled to the benefit irrespective of one's earnings and other sources of income (universal);
3. The income is given to every citizen, without requiring them to be on the lookout for a job, nor having to accept one (unconditional).

These factors demarcate the traditional welfare system from the more utopic (but not completely unattainable) BI scheme. Under a traditional welfare state scheme, benefits, which are conditional on one's earnings, and in some cases on one's savings, are paid to each household as a whole, or delivered to the head of the household, and the payment of the benefit is withdrawn as soon as the recipient takes up a job. A BI also differs from a negative income tax in the sense that, in the words of Van Parijs, "the former operates ex ante, whereas the latter operates ex post" (1992, p.3). Though when we think about a negative income tax the third condition is satisfied (namely, people are not required to work), this system of taxation usually operates at the household level, and, for obvious reasons, it is determined on the basis of one's income.

If a basic income is granted, every single adult member of society would receive a regular equal payment, which is to be added to one's income (Van Parijs, 1995). Although the actual amount is a contested topic, in the sense that different authors argue for different levels of basic income, I argue that a BI should be sufficient enough to pay for one's basic needs and it should be guaranteed to each citizen, regardless of their age, gender, income, and occupation. Children's grants would be given to their parents or guardians. This benefit would be funded by taxation; several authors (Van Parijs, 2004; Zelleke, 2018; Torry, 2019) argue that BI would be truly effective under a progressive taxation scheme. In fact, one of the main arguments against BI is that it would make the rich even richer by virtue of the fact that it is guaranteed to everyone. However, this argument does not hold true under a progressive tax system. On the contrary, comparatively richer people will contribute more to the funding of BI than poorer people. Wealthy citizens would therefore be net payers and not net beneficiaries. As mentioned above, a basic income is thought to engender more freedom, not only in the sense of fundamental personal liberties, i.e. negative freedom, but it would also provide people, all people, with more equal access to opportunities and choices, thus guaranteeing more independence.

But what would be the concrete benefits of introducing a BI? First of all, it would improve the conditions of the low-paid worker, who would benefit from an increased bargaining power. Indeed, if there is a guaranteed income to fall back on, people would have more power to negotiate with their employer and thus require better wages and more humane and inclusive working conditions. Tied to this factor, because basic income is not means-tested and it is not linked to one's income, it would also do a better job at lifting people out of the poverty trap. Within the framework of a means-testing system, people are normally discouraged to find a job as they would systematically lose their benefits. In other words, the opportunity costs of finding a job are too great and the financial revenue is too little compared to the social benefits that one can receive from the government; this creates a vicious cycle and many people are kept in poverty. Paradoxically, a basic income, which is thought to engender anti-work sentiments as well as laziness, appears, in reality, to be more work-friendly than the current social security system. Moreover, I believe that a basic income is necessary for a society which inevitably engenders deep forms of inequality and insecurity; a society which excludes people from full participation cannot be considered a good society. Rather, a good society should provide the demos with adequate means of subsistence, and, as I argued in the second chapter, it should allocate opportunities and resources according to one's challenges and needs. A BI, because it is provided universally, irrespective of one's income, is thus expected to increase self-respect. Lastly, before coming to the main topic of my discussion, and in part linked to it, a basic income would decouple income from labour. Michael Howard (as cited in Zelleke, 2019) points out that in an era where automation is gaining momentum, it is important to account for all those jobs that will be displaced by artificial intelligence. If nearly half the jobs in the US will truly be replaced by robots within the next few years (Frey & Osborne, 2017), a guaranteed BI would represent a good, if not a necessary strategy to prevent people from falling below the poverty line as a result of losing their jobs.

Of course, I am aware that there are several obstacles to the implementation of such a scheme. One of the main arguments against BI is that it would institutionalise freeriding. Many people might not indeed be willing to support fellow citizens who do not reciprocate and contribute with their fair share (White, 2003). This is what Van Parijs (1991) describes as the exploitation of "Crazies," people who work and pay taxes, by "Lazies," namely those who claim the benefits without working or even being willing to work. Freeriding is indeed possibly one of the most notorious objections to BI. Some authors have argued that such a policy would ". . .inspire a segment of the able population . . .to abjure work for a life of idle fun" (Anderson, 2001, p.76). To counter this argument, one of the approaches used to justify the introduction of a BI is to rethink both the value of work and that of productive leisure activities. Feminist economist Alisa McKay (2007) observes in fact that activities which are not remunerated, such being a volunteer or a student, can nonetheless be considered productive not only for the single individual, who will derive enjoyment from them but also for society at large. So far, only paid employment has been associated with authentic work, and engaging in work is considered the primary means for one to achieve the status of contributor to our society, thus worthy of full citizenship and benefits.

However, as I have explained on several occasions throughout this thesis, the "invisible" activities that ensure the perpetuation of social reproduction which are carried out in the private sphere ought to be considered vital for the wellbeing of the entire society as they positively contribute to it. Though social reproduction might not be strictly productive, in the sense that it does not produce a tangible outcome, it is nonetheless responsible for human and societal survival. However, all the activities which are contained within the definition of care or domestic work, because they are part of the private sphere, have not been considered worthy of a wage. In the words of André Gorz:

> [...] "work" became the name of an activity fundamentally different from the activities of subsistence, reproduction, maintenance and care performed within the household. This is not so much because "work" is a paid activity, but because it is done in the public domain and appears there as a measurable, exchangeable and interchangeable performance, as a performance which possesses a use-value for others, not simply for the members of the household community carrying it out; for others in general, without distinction or restriction, not for a particular, private person. (Gorz, 2013)

Coming back to our Crazies and Lazies, it is interesting to notice how the debate on BI is centred on freeriding on unemployment, whereas the massive scale of freeriding by male partners which occurs in the domestic realm has always been glossed over. Again, I would argue that this sorry state of affairs is due to the fact that our current model of citizenship disproportionally favours the free and independent man, placing everyone else in subordinate positions. But being able to access a BI as a "democratic right, or a political birthright" (Pateman, 2004, p. 94) could help us rethink the relationship between the private and the public sphere, as well as between income and employment. Indeed, it is argued that a BI would benefit women, or domestic workers of any gender, as it recognises and remunerates their activities within the private sphere. However, before analysing the possible benefits and drawbacks, I believe it is important to spend some words on the current system of social security (at least, as it exists in a large number of countries) and specifically examine how its structure affects domestic workers.

4.4 DRAWBACKS OF THE WELFARE STATE

Admittedly, although it is important to recognise the merits of the welfare state, we must also account for its flaws. Generally speaking, social security schemes tend to privilege independent adult men, thus giving rise to and maintaining the androcentric model of citizenship, while penalising everyone else (Zelleke, 2011). Some scholars, such as Jane Jenson (1986) and Ann Orloff (1996) have indeed highlighted the harmful consequences of how the welfare state promotes sex segregation and gender inequality. Specifically, Orloff (1996) observes that the welfare state represents the passage from private to public patriarchy. In fact, the literature emphasises that one of the main problems inherent to the welfare state is that it is closely tied with the traditional labour market. Bearing this in mind, it can also be argued that the welfare scheme is the very tool that supports the labour market. Indeed, because this system is so tied to the labour market, and because the main beneficiaries of this structure have traditionally been men, it can be said that the welfare state generates and perpetuates gender inequalities. These social security programmes, which are always conditional on some kind of reciprocation from the citizens, are indeed a result of a society which has been prioritising the norms of the market sphere while ignoring the needs of the private one.

Feminist political theorist Carole Pateman concerned herself with exposing and highlighting the major drawbacks of the welfare state which structure is claimed to be inherently patriarchal (Pateman, 1987). Admittedly, the relation between women and the welfare state is of a complicated nature. Because generally speaking women tend to be poorer than their male counterparts, they are the primary recipients of benefits provided by the state; not only that, the welfare state represents one of the main sources of employment for women, whether in education or in the public health sector (76.7% of the UK NHS staff are women (NHS, 2021)). Women are at the forefront even when it comes to negotiating with welfare state personnel and social workers. However, quite paradoxically, the share of women in high-ranking administrative positions or in policy-making within the context of the welfare state dramatically declines. Pateman suggests that welfare state policies, deeply rooted in a patriarchal configuration, have contributed to the corroboration of the free labour that women perform within the house, be it through care work with their children or their elderly, or with domestic labour, extensively treated in the previous chapter.

Again, much like Federici, James and Dalla Costa argued, according to Pateman these activities have been disguised as part of women's "natural" duty within the private sphere. Not only that, as highlighted above, the welfare state has also contributed to the division of labour. Women are indeed generally expected to provide welfare in the public sphere (where they often carry out a subpar role relative to high-ranking administrative jobs, whether as teachers or nurses) and to provide care within the private sphere (as loving mothers and wives). Men, on the other hand, are expected to be the breadwinners, gaining the upper hand both in the public sphere as accomplished and successful workers, and within the private sphere, as heads of families. Because men and women have such different roles and positions within the welfare states, it cannot be argued that they hold the same citizenship status. In order to conceptualise a strategy to solve this disparity, Pateman argues, the oppositions between paid and unpaid work, as well as those between independence and dependence must be overcome. The author indeed points to the direction of a social provision which is able to guarantee a social income to all members of society (1987). To use the words of the author:

> . . . a basic income would encourage critical reassessment of the mutually reinforcing structures of marriage, employment and citizenship, and to open the possibility that these institutions could be re-made in a new, more democratic form. (Pateman, 2004, p.97)

4.5 WOMEN AND BASIC INCOME: BLESSINGS AND CHALLENGES

Although recently an increasing number of feminist scholars focused on providing a gender perspective on basic income, political scientist Ingrid Robeyns (2000) argues that most of the relevant literature remains gender blind. As a consequence, it is unclear which possible effects a basic income would have on women and whether or not its implementation is truly desirable. The author claims that BI can be seen as “hush money” or as an “emancipation fee”. Several feminist scholars (Bergmann, 2008; Orloff, 2013) indeed believe that BI would decrease the opportunities for women in the workplace thereby reinforcing their role as caregivers and perpetuating the gender division of labour and labour market segregation. Admittedly, if the structure of our society remains patriarchal in nature, a BI would probably do very little in fostering gender equity, as it is uncertain whether or not men would truly spend more time in domestic labour, as mentioned above. Thanks to the flexibility that a BI would provide, men could obtain more leisure time but it does not necessarily follow that they will allocate such time to caregiving. Primary earners could freeride on the domestic labour of their partners and, as a consequence, gender stereotypes would indeed be reinforced.

However, it is interesting to notice that, according to these unconvinced views, the road to gender equity and emancipation for women is to be seen as strongly connected to paid work and labour market activities. It appears that only through such activities an individual can fully realise themselves and reach economic and social independence. According to this logic, in order to achieve such independence, women should abandon the private sphere as well as their traditional roles as domestic workers and caregivers and enter the workforce, thus becoming “citizen-workers”[11]. This is what Nancy Fraser calls the universal breadwinner model, a scheme which is currently supported by most US liberals and feminists. It is a system that “aims to achieve gender equity principally by promoting women’s employment” (Fraser, 1997, p.51). Indeed, by reforming the workplace and rendering it more accepting and welcoming towards women, said women would be brought “up to par” with men, at least within the context of the labour market, thus turning into breadwinners themselves. Because women would be freed from their caregiving responsibilities in order to prioritise their full-time jobs, domestic labour would then be commodified and performed by specialised employees, who will most likely be disadvantaged women belonging to racial minorities. But this model, which systematically prioritises the public sphere as the only place where an individual is able to flourish, would not be useful to bring about more gender equity as it simply provides a way for women to better fit into male schemata without challenging the rampant androcentrism.

Another model of citizenship presented by Fraser, which echoes the Marxist feminist theories analysed in the previous chapter is the caregiver-parity model which “aims to promote gender equity principally by supporting informal care work” (Fraser, 1997, p.55). According to this view, which is typically supported by Western European feminists and social democrats, housework should be considered equal to formal paid labour. This model does not question the gender division of labour, rather, it focuses on monetary compensation for care work as a way to increase its status. This model is supported by those scholars who propose the so-called caregiver income (Abelda et al., 2004). This type of compensation, which would be accompanied by other workplace and societal reforms, unlike BI is conditional on engaging in unpaid domestic labour activities, and it thus satisfies the principle of reciprocity. However, I believe that it might not be useful to equate a formal job with domestic or care work because the latter does not stop after eight hours, but it usually represents a continuum. In any case, this model is also criticised by Fraser: in fact, it does not challenge the traditional androcentric view on citizenship and it only further commodifies care work.

Fraser gives support to a third model, the universal caregiver model. The author claims that in order to achieve a greater level of gender equity the focus shouldn’t be on how to render women more

[11] As a matter of fact, this pattern is confirmed by Eurostat (2020), according to which the employment rate for women has gone from 67 per cent in 2008 to 78 per cent in 2018.

equal to men, but rather "... to make women's current life patterns the norm for everyone" (Fraser, 1997, p.61). The solution indeed does not reside in strongly demarcating between care work and paid labour, but rather in providing both breadwinners and caregivers with the opportunities to engage in both kinds of labour. This would entail that men should start alternating between domestic labour and formal work, just like most women do. Consequently, once these two roles are seen as equally important and valuable for one's personal development, the burdens carried by women would be shared and gender equity would be promoted. This kind of model would be supported by the introduction of a basic income. A basic income would indeed provide more flexibility and independence from the labour market; thus, individuals would feel more inclined to choose between a mix of domestic work and formal work according to their needs.

The most ground breaking innovation that BI would bring is that it substantially re-evaluates the role and importance of non-market work (Parker, 1991; Casassas et al, 2019). As I argued above, the traditional social security programmes are based on means-testing and paid labour, and as a result, they tend to be disproportionally biased towards the male breadwinners, thus excluding the second earners (typically women) who engage more frequently in unpaid housework. This way, echoing the Marxist feminist theories discussed in the previous chapter, if domestic and reproductive labour are not compensated with a wage, they are consequently not considered as productive and the people who are involved in caregiving are placed in a subordinate position as their productive role within society is denied.

However, all those activities that are carried out within the private sphere, although they are not embedded in the logic of our market-based economy, do make a positive contribution to society as a whole and therefore are entitled to remuneration. Not only that, such activities can be equally fulfilling and empowering and can foster self-respect (Jecker, 1994)[12]. Therefore, I believe it is useful to analyse and come up with ways in which we can challenge the predominant view that paid labour is the only legitimate way to gain a decent or even minimal standard of life. With the introduction of a basic income, and thus with more freedom to perform other types of valuable activities, the

[12] Other than providing more opportunities to participate in care activities, a BI would also ensure that people are able to participate in numerous other activities. I am thinking for example about political engagement in deliberative fora. One of the main arguments against democratic deliberation is that citizens simply cannot participate in deliberative spaces because of their work incumbencies. However, if a BI is guaranteed, people would have more freedom to allocate their time to these kinds of activities, which are ultimately beneficial for the society as a whole (see, among others, Cohen, 2007; Gutmann & Thompson, 2004).

traditional idea of the good life would cease to be so tightly connected to paid labour. BI would thus serve as a tool to re-shape the role of labour and imagine a post-work society in which activities and social relations as we know them today acquire a completely different meaning. As Alisa McKay and Jo VanEvery argue a basic income would represent “an implicit recognition that all citizens contribute to society in a variety of ways”, even by performing activities that “may or may not have monetary value or even be measurable (though their effects are evident)” (2000, p.283).

Because BI is individual, the secondary earner, or the unpaid caregiver, will be indeed provided with a personal income which is completely independent from that of their partner’s or the size and/or composition of their household. This way, not only women, who are indeed typically the secondary earners, would acquire more bargaining power and obtain more freedom to determine their life choices, but also familial structures would be rethought and possibly reshaped. This is especially true if we think about a basic income for children. If a grant completely or even partially covers the cost of one’s upbringing, parents and especially the primary caregiver (usually mothers), could be granted the opportunity to choose whether to allocate more or less time to care activities or in their job, thus acquiring more freedom of choice (Groot & van der Veen, 2000). Because basic income is universal, namely, guaranteed regardless of one’s income, it could play a fundamental role in securing the economic independence of those whose income fluctuates throughout the year. Because it is guaranteed to everyone, people do not need to calculate their eligibility for social security and do not need to report what kind of activities they perform. In order to receive it, individuals just need to show proof of residence[13]. As a consequence, a BI, would prevent people from falling into the rigmaroles of the bureaucratic welfare state. Lastly, unlike the traditional social security systems, a BI, by being unconditional, namely, because of the fact that it is paid regardless of whether or not one is employed in a formal job, would begin to recognise the existence and the societal role played by “non-formal workers”. Domestic workers and caregivers as well as volunteers, students, political activists, etc, would thus be provided with a financial base that would support them and would allow them to be more independent. Moreover, because BI is not a means-tested form of redistribution, individuals, if they choose to do so, would not be discouraged to work even in low-waged or part-time jobs because their benefits would not be withdrawn.

[13] Of course, this opens up a completely different debate on how homeless people or those individuals without a fixed residence would be able to obtain their basic income. However, this is not the focus of this thesis.

Already, it seems that basic income could represent a more meaningful and adequate strategy to remunerate domestic labour. Not only does it appear to be less demanding, and thus more easily implementable than the Marxist feminist theories I outlined in the previous chapter[14], but it also appears to be more efficient in questioning the androcentric model of citizenship and thus fostering a higher degree of gender equity. A basic income would indeed support what Fraser calls the universal caregiver model, according to which care practices carried out in the domestic sphere are to be considered equally important and valuable for the personal development of everyone, regardless of their gender.

4.6 CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I outlined the concept of basic income. I first provided a historical overview where I highlighted the theories of Thomas Paine and Thomas Spence who can be considered the forerunners of BI. I then gave a comprehensive explanation of what is meant by basic income today, specifically referring to the theories of political philosopher Philippe Van Parijs. Subsequently, I laid out some arguments according to which a BI would be beneficial for our society and in particular I argued that such a strategy would be beneficial to compensate domestic and care work. I then made a comparison between traditional social security schemes, which are still based on an androcentric model of citizenship and basic income, which in turn promotes what Nancy Fraser calls the universal caregiver model. Already from this chapter, it is possible to notice that a basic income could prove to be more efficient than the theories developed by the Marxist feminist academics in remunerating domestic labour. Nevertheless, in the next chapter, I will present a critical evaluation in which I will confront the two approaches according to the three desiderata outlined in the second chapter, namely gender equity, applicability, and attention to minorities.

[14] In the sense that a basic income does not imply a big societal overhaul.

5 CRITICAL EVALUATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

So far, I have delineated two possible strategies which could be useful to remunerate domestic and care work with the ultimate aim to address the crisis of social reproduction. In this chapter, I will provide a critical evaluation in which I confront both strategies in light of the three desiderata I outlined in the second chapter. Before delving into the critical evaluation and the comparison of the theories brought forward by Marxist feminist academics and the basic income scheme, let me highlight once again the three desiderata for a possible strategy to remunerate domestic and care labour.

1. The preferred strategy should foster gender equity. This entails that the androcentric model of citizenship which is nowadays permeating our society should be challenged in favour of a system that allows for more interaction between the public and the private sphere.
2. The preferred strategy should be applicable in today's day and age. Of course, the chosen approach should be effective and fruitful, but it should not be too demanding, otherwise, it might run the risk of being ignored and delegitimised.
3. The preferred strategy should not be class- and/or colour-blind. This means that in selecting the preferred solution, it is important to be mindful of the effect that such a solution would have on individuals belonging to minority groups, be it racial or sexual.

5.2 GENDER EQUITY

When it comes to the promotion of gender equity, I believe that the political perspective formulated by the Marxist feminist theorists presents some weaknesses. I ended the third chapter with the following quote by Lenin in Angela Davis' Women, Race, and Class:

> . . .petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades (the woman), chains her to the kitchen and to the nursery, and wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-racking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. (Lenin in Davis,1983, p. 251)

In light of this quote, it is easy to wonder whether the proposed approach is truly a means to end or limit the gender division of labour and empower women or if, vice versa, it further solidifies domestic work as an activity that should be carried out by women in the private sphere. It is true that with the introduction of a wage for housework, the role and importance of domestic workers would be better recognised as a cardinal contribution to society, however, to what extent could this strategy meaningfully challenge the current androcentric model of citizenship and foster gender equity? I believe that the model in question would not substantially modify the condition of women or of those who engage in reproductive work, mainly because merely guaranteeing money to housewives does not challenge the traditional dichotomy of man-as-breadwinner and woman-as-housewife, but it conversely reinforces it. Linked to this shortcoming is that the proposed model does not truly question the strict division between the public and the private spheres, but rather it still envisions them as two separate, watertight compartments, respectively pertaining to men and women. In light of this consideration, all those activities which make up social reproduction would still predominantly be ascribed to women, who, on top of that, would still need to bear the burden of the double shift with all the detrimental implications that come with it. Generally speaking, then, the theories brought forward by the Marxist feminist scholars do not seem to provide a meaningful alternative to challenge the androcentric model of citizenship, nor do they promote gender equity, but rather they reinforce the gender division of labour.

In order to achieve justice and gender equity, it is not enough to simply include housework in the wage system, and thus expand and consolidate such a system[15]. What is truly needed is a thorough re-evaluation of our societal schemata. More specifically, the aim of gender equity presupposes a reassessment of the importance of both the private sphere and those activities which are typically carried out by women in such a sphere, which is typically seen as subordinated to the public one. Indeed, if we divert our attention to the private sphere and if we start to acknowledge that social reproduction is indispensable and fundamental for the flourishing of our society, then it is also possible to expand the traditional theories of justice (which are currently mainly related to the public sphere) to the domestic realm as well. Only then can we claim that justice truly applies to everyone. By challenging the androcentric model of relationship, which puts a premium on the public sphere, it becomes more possible to achieve gender equity.

In the previous chapter, I laid out how the introduction of a basic income could be useful to support what Fraser refers to as the universal caregiver model. Instead of requiring women to assimilate to men's life patterns, this model posits that ". . . women's current life patterns [should become] the norm for everyone" (Fraser, 1997, p.61). This entails that social reproduction practices carried out

[15] And thus, perpetuate the exploitative and oppressive nature that characterises such a system.

in the private realm should be considered equally meaningful and important for one's flourishing as those activities performed in the public sphere. Thus, everyone regardless of their gender should be able to choose to alternate between domestic labour and formal work, so that the burdens of each sphere can be shared more equally[16]. Because, unlike the Marxist feminist perspective, a basic income would decouple formal work from income, with the introduction of such a policy, families would feel less reliant upon the wage system and formal work, and individuals would feel more inclined to even just consider to allocate more time in activities tied to social reproduction without having to compromise their financial wellbeing. Far from extending the wage system to domestic labour, a basic income would provide people with the opportunity to imagine a post-work future where paid employment is no longer the chief way to access a decent living standard. With a substantive re-evaluation of the private sphere and with a consequent re-assessment of the importance of paid labour, a basic income could ensure not only that the burdens between traditional breadwinners and caregivers are more equally shared, but it could also meaningfully address the crisis of social reproduction because more individuals would feel inclined to engage in care and domestic labour. This is to say then, that compared to a simple wage for housework which further solidifies the gender division of labour, a basic income has the potential to truly foster more gender equity.

To be sure, I am not suggesting that basic income should be seen as a panacea for the eradication of the gender division of labour; it should indeed be accompanied by other reforms and policies which foster gender equity, such as more flexibility in the workplace. By the same token, a basic income as a standalone policy would not guarantee that men will suddenly allocate more time in the domestic sphere, however, it is true that their cost of doing so would greatly be lessened. In any case, because it is universal and unconditional, a basic income recognises the positive contribution that domestic labour brings to society, it departs from the androcentric model of citizenship and it extends our current notion of justice to the private sphere, thus allowing everyone to truly benefit from it. In the second chapter, I argued that certain categories of people simply lack the means to emancipate themselves because they do not meet the requirements prescribed by the androcentric model. Once this model is called into question, namely, once the male lifestyle and life patterns are no longer the canon, the path to emancipation would no longer take place in the public sphere and a larger number of individuals would be able to free themselves from their subordinated condition.

[16] Here I am specifically referring to free-riding in the context of the family.

Specifically, those individuals who choose to defy the androcentric life patterns and allocate less time to the public sphere, would not be penalised or left in abject poverty because they would have a safety net to fall back on.

When it comes to the first desideratum then, basic income seems to perform better than the Marxist feminist perspectives on domestic labour. Not only does it provide an alternative to the androcentric model of citizenship, which was never truly questioned by the Marxist feminist scholars, but it also allows more individuals regardless of their gender to take part in the domestic sphere, which could ultimately prove to be a morally and politically sound strategy to curb the crisis of social reproduction.

5.3 APPLICABILITY

Regarding the applicability of each strategy, I believe we can once again refer to the work of philosopher Nancy Fraser. Fraser (2003) claims that there are two main approaches to account for inequitable outcomes which originate from our current social arrangements, namely transformative and affirmative remedies. Affirmative remedies, such as mainstream multiculturalism, aim to correct inequitable outcomes without structurally modifying the current system. On the other hand, transformative remedies, e.g. deconstruction, as the name suggests aim to transform the current framework which gives rise to injustice. Both these approaches, however, present some problematic traits. Affirmative strategies tend to essentialise group identities and tend to be ineffective in the long run; transformative strategies on the other hand, even though might appear to be more efficient in addressing issues of maldistribution and misrecognition, are certainly more demanding and thus more difficult to enforce.

Given this dichotomy, I believe it is possible to identify the strategies proposed by Marxist feminist scholars as a transformative remedy. Recall in fact that the short-term goal of receiving a wage for the labour performed in the domestic realm was embedded in a more radical long-term goal which implied rejecting said labour and striving for a post-capitalist future in which the wage system is abolished. The true end goal of the WfH movement was then a complete societal overhaul, which substantially implied a socialist revolution. The disconnect between the short- and long-term goals, as well as the ambitiousness of the programme truly compromised the credibility of the demands brought forward by the WfH movement. Because of its demanding nature, which sought to entirely alter the framework that originated the disparities between men and women, the strategy was highly misunderstood, especially by those outside of the WfH movement. Furthermore, let us not forget that the scholars and activists who concerned themselves with this debate were not willing to compromise with the state and its institutions or to meet the other party halfway, and rather saw them as illegitimate. This is the main risk that transformative remedies run: although they have the potential to be truly efficient in eradicating structural issues, they are nonetheless rather difficult to implement and enforce, and easy to discredit and ignore. By presenting such a demanding perspective, the WfH movement failed to provide a feasible and applicable means to remunerate domestic labour.

In order to obviate the issues that both the transformative and the affirmative strategies present, Fraser proposes a "via media" between affirmation and transformation, namely what she refers to as "nonreformist reform". This novel approach calls for

> Reforms that appear to be affirmative in the abstract [which] can have transformative effects in some contexts, provided they are radically and consistently pursued. (Fraser, 2003, p. 78)

Such a strategy essentially combines the feasibility of the affirmative approach, while providing an effective and meaningful manner to correct for inequitable outcomes. As a matter of fact, to exemplify the concept of nonreformist reform, Fraser uses the strategy of basic income. A basic income scheme in fact would still operate within the context of our current framework, namely capitalism; in fact, private property and the free market would not be directly challenged. However, although at first, this strategy appears to be of an affirmative nature, if it is accompanied by other reforms, such as more policies which foster gender equity, (and thus challenge the androcentric model of citizenship) a basic income could ". . .alter the balance of power within heterosexual households, helping to spark changes in the gender division of labour" (Fraser, 2003, p.7). A BI would indeed combine the feasibility of an affirmative policy with the radicality of a transformative one. For example, with the introduction of a basic income, individuals would obtain more bargaining power which can be used over time to implement more radical and momentous reforms, such as fewer working hours and more adequate work conditions. Therefore, the proposal of basic income, not only seems to be more practically feasible than the Marxist feminist theories, but it can also be seen as instrumental to the abolishment, or at least, to the limitation of the gender division of labour, and consequently, it would help to ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction.

Thus, in light of these considerations, if the Marxist feminist theorists sought to propose a complete and immediate societal transformation in favour of a post-capitalist future, basic income could represent a means through which the set of possibilities for future reform can be gradually developed and broadened, with the ultimate aim of meaningfully challenge the gender division of labour. When it comes to applicability then, the Marxist feminist theories, because of their transformative nature, seem to be rather politically untenable; the nonreformist reform characteristic of basic income on the other hand, not only could be more easily implemented, but it could also prove to be notably efficient in questioning the current gender division of labour. In conclusion, even in this case, a basic income proves to be a morally and politically better alternative to remunerate domestic labour and thus ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction.

5.4 EFFECT ON MINORITY GROUPS

The debate surrounding wages for housework in the 1970s always remained fairly class- and colour-blind, as well as Western-centric. In the third chapter, I observed how women were frequently perceived almost as a class of individuals who shared the exact same experiences and needs, even though this was clearly not the case. There was in fact almost a tendency to essentialise the role that women covered inside the house; as Dalla Costa and James stated: "the role of the working-class housewife. . . is the determinant for the position of all other women" (1973, p. 19). In other words, the movement never truly accounted for racial and class minorities. The activists and academics failed to recognise that after all, domestic labour had been outsourced for decades to a large number of women belonging to minority groups. Although white, middle-class women were finally partially able to free themselves from housework responsibilities and seek employment outside the house, several Black women, as well as immigrant and poor women had to take over as a result and were required to shoulder the burden of domestic labour[17]. And although their work was compensated with a wage, it did not help them to liberate themselves from the oppressive dynamics of the androcentric model of citizenship. It is also worth noticing that in some cases, spending time with one's family was an unaffordable luxury for waged domestic workers (Beal, 2008). Conceptualising housewives as a class does not account for the intersecting traits that make up women's different identities and instead it runs the risk of reifying gender categories. What

[17] This is again a representation of the double burden: women who were hired as maids had to care for the family which they worked for and for their own once their shift was over.

would then be the implications of the introduction of a wage for housework specifically for minority groups? Guaranteeing a simple wage for housewives would not account for the subordinate position of people who belong to racial minorities or for people who live in abject poverty. Once again, women who belong to racial minorities have for decades worked as waged domestic workers and they still nonetheless find themselves in a relatively subordinate position. This is to say that what is truly needed is a policy that challenges our current social hierarchies and once again, basic income could prove to be efficient in such a task.

Although the literature surrounding basic income is often colour-blind, it is possible to notice that such a strategy could have more positive consequences for people belonging to racial and sexual minority groups. Due to the fact that the basic income scheme is not means-tested, this strategy has the radical potential to challenge what Pateman refers to as the patriarchal welfare state. Indeed, although I recognise the importance of social provisions and benefits that the welfare state provides, it is also true that such an institution might run the risk of creating a negative relation of dependency vis-à-vis its beneficiaries. This becomes especially true in the case of racial minorities and marginalised communities which find themselves in a subordinate position in relation to the welfare state. Such communities might indeed perceive social provision schemes as invasive and stigmatising, contributing to their marginalisation and thus hindering their empowerment. Receiving a government benefit also entails that individuals need to register and go through time- and energy-consuming bureaucratic procedures with highly inflexible rules and regulations. However, given the fact that basic income is not a means-tested scheme and that it is delivered to every single citizen, it would certainly be less intrusive than the traditional welfare state. The implementation of a basic income scheme would meaningfully limit the stigmatisation and discrimination that comes with being a passive recipient and could conversely empower minority groups. Obtaining a stipend that is disconnected from work can also open up new possibilities for community engagement. This factor has the potential to empower marginalised communities and consequently support the formation and continuation of social bonds and relationships thus positively contributing to the perpetuation of social reproduction. A BI would also prove to be especially beneficial for women who belong to minority groups. Women in marginalised communities are arguably the ones who experience the most dependence, both on the welfare state and on their husbands and/or families (Nakano Glenn, 1985). Because the basic income scheme is individual, women might be better able to escape this condition of double dependency and have the freedom to conduct their lives as they wish and make fulfilling choices on their own terms.

Furthermore, in light of the fact that a BI is a nonreformist reform, such a scheme has the potential to address and re-evaluate traditions and preferences that are socially constructed. For example, unlike the current welfare system (and unlike the debate surrounding wages for housework) which assumes the heteronormative family as the norm, a basic income would probably be highly beneficial for what we can refer to as chosen families or queer families. In the second chapter, I briefly elaborated on how new forms of domestic arrangements and family bonds, which are not rooted in the strict dichotomy of breadwinner and caregiver, are on the rise and need to be accounted for. Under the current economic system, which guarantees a higher amount of wages to men, these chosen families appear to be more fragile due to financial uncertainties that come with not being able to rely on the breadwinner's wage. Because it is individual and universally guaranteed irrespective of one's earnings and capital, a basic income would provide a safety net to fall back on to non-heteronormative families, which again, might face a higher number of uncertainties vis-à-vis "traditional" families.

Once again, basic income seems to perform better than the Marxist feminist perspective. The theories developed by the Marxist feminist academics tend to treat the global female population as a monolith, without truly accounting for the different intersecting traits that make up one's identity. These theorists failed to recognise that Black and immigrant women have been employed as domestic workers for centuries and even though they did receive a wage, this factor did not truly help them reach a higher status. Receiving a wage simpliciter does not adequately contribute to lifting people out of their subordinate position. A basic income on the other hand, although it does not directly address structural issues such as racism, sexism and homophobia, does provide individuals, and especially those who belong to minority groups, more material freedom to choose how to live their lives on their own terms, without having to be tied to the directives of the welfare state. This allows people to make more independent choices and thus gain more autonomy. At the same time, because a BI would be guaranteed to every single citizen, even those families who do not rely on a breadwinner's wage would be provided with a safety net to fall back on.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

Taking these factors into account, I believe it is possible to conclude that the introduction of a basic income, compared to the theories brought forward by the Marxist feminists, could prove to be an adequate and meaningful strategy to remunerate domestic labour with the ultimate aim of ameliorating the crisis of social reproduction. First, a basic income, which is not a simple wage targeted at housewives, when accompanied by other reforms, has the radical potential to meaningfully challenge the current gender division of labour and the androcentric model of citizenship. Because it would foster more participation in the private sphere and a re-assessment of the value and meaning of work, it would incentivise more people to take part in domestic and care work and the burdens of the domestic realm would be shared more equally. Second, I argued that the Marxist feminist theories, because of their transformative nature would prove to be quite demanding and difficult to implement. On the other hand, a basic income would probably be easier to enforce, as it does not require a complete societal overhaul, but it would still be useful to provide a gradual reassessment of the current gender division of labour. Third, the proposals by the Wages for Housework movement prove to be rather class- and colour blind, thus failing to account for the inequalities to which minorities are exposed. On the contrary, as I argued, a basic income scheme would prove to be highly beneficial for marginalised communities because it is not an intrusive means-tested scheme and it expands the freedom that people have in making meaningful choices.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have attempted to formulate a possible strategy to compensate domestic labour and those individuals who engage in such activities in order to try to ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction. Once again, let me repeat my research question:

> Could basic income be a viable means to remunerate domestic work or is a more transformative approach, as proposed by Marxist feminist theory, a better alternative both morally and politically to ameliorate the crisis of social reproduction?

My conclusion, as I have already mentioned in the previous chapter, is that in today's day and age, the more adequate perspective to remunerate domestic labour seems to be basic income, and more specifically, a basic income that is supported by other policies and dispositions which foster workplace flexibility and gender equity. Because in the long run it presupposes a re-evaluation of non-market labour, and because it allows more people to take part in practices and activities related to the private sphere, a BI would provide a good alternative to or at least a re-evaluation of the androcentric model of citizenship. Because of this reason, and because it presupposes a reassessment of the current gender division of labour, a basic income could have the ability to foster more gender equity. Furthermore, because BI is not a transformative strategy, it is true that structural problems which engender inequalities are not directly addressed, however, as I argued before, because it is understood as a nonreformist reform, a BI has the power to pave the way for more radical transformations that could ultimately address deeper issues. Lastly, a basic income would have a meaningful effect on individuals belonging to minority groups. If a simply wage targeted at housewives would probably do very little in addressing racism, homophobia, and sexism, and would thus have very little significant effects on minorities, a basic income, could represent a less intrusive and stigmatising strategy to ensure the wellbeing of everyone. Social provisions and benefits run the risk of creating a relation of dependency and thus further perpetuating the subordinate position of minorities. However, because BI is universal, it is guaranteed to everyone almost as a political birth right.

In light of these considerations, I believe that introducing a basic income scheme with the aim to compensate for domestic labour could be a useful and effective strategy to start to hinder the crisis of social reproduction which our society is experiencing.

6.2 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although in this thesis I tried to contribute to the debate regarding the crisis of social reproduction by shedding some light on one possible means to try to curb such a crisis, there is of course scope for future research. In this section, I want to briefly expand on three suggestions and possible related future research.

Firstly, although I concluded that a basic income would be a more efficient strategy to remunerate domestic income than the Marxist feminist theories, it is important to take into account that most of the literature used in this thesis is based on and produced in the Global North. This means that knowledge and theory around a possible implementation of basic income in the Global South, although with some exceptions, still needs to be developed. One consequence of this shortcoming is that there is a lot of scope for future work on the possible implications of a basic income and more specifically, basic income as a means to remunerate domestic labour in economically developing countries.

The second shortcoming of my research is that I only analysed two possible approaches to remunerate domestic labour. I started with the theories developed by Marxist feminist academics as they were the ones who originated the debate, or at least brought the issue of unpaid housework to public attention, and contrasted them with the strategy of basic income. Once again, I chose to compare the Marxist feminist theories with basic income because the latter is often considered to be the natural successor of the former. In any case, it could be interesting to instead turn the attention to the proposal of universal basic services, which could prove to be another appealing approach to remunerate domestic work. Such an approach, instead of granting money, provides people with free basic services such as shelter, healthcare, education, and sustenance, as a means to guarantee a minimum living standard. In what ways could such a scheme influence the crisis of social reproduction? Would the androcentric model of citizenship be challenged then? Would it be easily implementable?

Lastly, another very interesting approach which certainly deserves to be analysed is the role that technology and artificial intelligence play and could potentially play in domestic work and social reproduction. Automation of labour is an ever-expanding field of research and nowadays care bots are a reality which is slowly gaining momentum. But what are the benefits and drawbacks of this not-so-futuristic aspiration? How would care bots change the way we think about domestic and care work? Could automation of domestic work be a viable strategy to try to curb the crisis of social reproduction?

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