

# The Political Economy of Non-Market Work

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DRAFT 18 Sept. 2000 – please do not quote without permission. Later versions will be available from the author. Comments most welcome. I thank Roland Pierik for his comments on an earlier incomplete version, and the Cambridge Political Economy Society Trust for providing me with some kind of “temporary participation income” allowing me to do plenty of non-market work. Due to repetitive strain injuries, large parts of this paper are produced using speech technology – please ignore phonetic mistakes.

## ***Prelude***

*Most people pay little attention to things they do not have to do themselves. Economists are no exception to that rule.*

Marga Bruyn Hundt (1996a:28)

*The adults in a family need time to feed and bath and listen to and comfort and teach their children. They need time to help their elders. And it won't do to try to return to the old system in which women's time was freed for all of these activities, because that was a time in which women couldn't do anything else.*

Mona Harrington (1999:96-97)

*[I]f we look at questions of race, class and gender, we notice that those who are least well off in society are disproportionately those who do the work of caring, and that the best off members of society often use their positions of superiority to pass caring work off to others.*

Joan Tronto (1993:113)

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Most social and economic policy proposals are formulated with the aim of reducing unemployment without worsening poverty, or to reduce unemployment and increase economic growth, or something similar along these lines. Few of the writings in social policy address the work that is performed outside the labour market, and that goes unpaid. The major *systematic and profound*<sup>1</sup> exceptions are feminist writers in social policy, political philosophy and economics (e.g. Daly 2000; Folbre 1994; Harrington 1999; Lewis 1998; MacDonald 1998; Sainsbury 1996; Okin 1989; Tronto 1993), but many of their analyses remain unheard or find too little resonance in the mainstream debates on social policy.

This paper intends to give an introduction to the political economy of non-market work, and so to contribute to filling a gap in the current theoretical discussion on social policy and welfare state design in general, and the basic income proposals and its rivals in particular. One could easily write a book on this topic, as so many aspects are important and relevant. Therefore this paper will inevitably make generalisations. It will also leave many (empirical) details unfilled, especially with regard to country-specific regulations and facts. I can only hope that the references will make up for that.

In section 2 the notion of “work” is discussed. I propose a definition of work, and discuss how market and non-market work can be put together in a simple taxonomy. Section 3 focuses on the nature of non-market work, and discusses some of the empirical findings. Section 4 builds on these descriptive analyses of non-market work to integrate them in a framework together with market work. Why is non-market work important? How are market and non-market work valued? And is there any reason to revalue non-market work? Section 5 shifts from the valuation of market and non-market work to its distribution. This section offers an alternative explanation for the gendered distribution of market and non-market work, and draws

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<sup>1</sup> I add “systematic and profound” because there is a fashionable trend among social scientists and philosophers to *mention* unpaid work (and gender issues, for that matter) without grasping the full consequences of its inclusion into social analysis.

normative conclusions. The one but last section builds on all the former and asks how effective a number of different social policy proposals (employment subsidies, stakeholding, basic income, participation income, sabbatical accounts and wages for housework) are in securing economic citizenship for all, including people specialised in non-market work. The last section concludes.

## 2. A DEFINITION OF WORK

What is work? There are 2 standard definitions of work, as used in economics. From a micro-economic perspective, work can be defined as those human activities generating earnings. In most micro-economic models, individuals allocated their time between paid work and leisure. If anything is said about unpaid work, it is subsumed under leisure. From a macro-economic perspective, work is often seen as those activities which contributed to economic production, measured by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

It is easy to see the shortcomings of those definitions. Those definitions are biased towards a) what is currently measured by national statistical agencies, and b) the economic activities done in the public sphere or on markets providing services to firms and households. If a mother brings her child to a child care centre, the nurses in this centre are working. If this mother (or the father) takes care of her own child at home, s/he is not working and labelled “unproductive”. Or, if a woman hires a professional cleaner to clean her house, then the cleaner works. If this woman cleans her house herself, most economic theories will not regard this as work. Hence, there are all kinds of inconsistencies and ambiguities surrounding the definition of work.

The first question we have to ask, then, is: what distinguishes work from non-work?

A first way to decide whether non-labour market activities are to be defined as work is by the so-called *third person criterion*, which was proposed by Margaret Reid (1934). The third person criterion states that if a third person can be paid to do the unpaid activity for a household member, then it is work. While for many kinds of unpaid household work (cooking, cleaning, ironing, looking after children, ...) this definition is helpful, for some other activities it poses questions. Consider the following three activities: studying, birthing/post-natal care, and care for a dying relative. While in all three examples some parts of the activity can be contracted out (hiring a private tutor, a post-natal nurse or a counsellor for help with the dying relative), all three also contain an element which either one can only do oneself (“thinking” in the first example, the labour at birthing in the second example), or which has such a strong inter-personal emotional aspect, that the value (or “utility”) of the service would decline considerably if it would be contracted out (the dying person might want to be comforted by a person she knows, rather than a professional counsellor). Hence, if we want a definition of work not so much out of interest for economic affairs, but to understand which activities our society could regard as work for social policy reasons, then we have to broaden our definition.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> For an economic analysis of unpaid work, see Bruyn-Hundt (1996a).

The definition suggested here is broader, and would include studying and the pure emotional labour of care for a dying person. Work --whether market work or non-market work-- can be defined by its *intentionality*. Work is then defined as any action undertaken with the intention to provide a good or service to another person or oneself. The three above mentioned examples which the third person criterion would put into the category of non-work now change categories. Studying is work as it is a service aimed at increasing the human capital and knowledge of a person (just as teaching hopes to reach that aim in other persons than oneself). Birthgiving and postnatal care are services for the child, first of all to help her being born and secondly to provide emotional and physical nurturing for the child. Caring for a dying relative or friend is also in such a large degree a personal “service” where it can matter a great deal who the caregiver is. What a dying person hopes to receive from her caregiver is love and tenderness, and it will be difficult to receive the same kind of love and tenderness from a nurse who is paid to do her job.

Of course, part of the burden of proof shifts to what we understand under the notion of *a service*; especially if we want to make a distinction between leisure activities and work this might prove problematic. Take the example of doing sports. For professional competitors this is work, as they sign a contract and receive a wage to do sport. A sportsperson who runs 10 kilometre on a sunny Sunday is probably just enjoying himself and does not consider this as a service, and hence not as work. But what if this sportsperson runs 10 kilometre because he is severely overweight and has to lose weight in order not to put his future health at risk? Under the definition suggested here, this would be work, as the intentionality of the sportsperson is to render him/herself the service of getting healthier. A private unpaid health service, indeed. Obviously there are several more related questions which pop up, but they spring the framework of this paper.

Now, if both market work and non-market work are caused by an intention to provide a good or service, what distinguishes these kinds of work then? The answer is simple: market work *generates financial resources*, which non-market work does not. Therefore market work could be named paid work while non-market work is unpaid work.

It is not quite clear whether one might prefer to use the terms (un)paid work over (non-) market work. The first term highlights one of its most essential characteristics, i.e. whether the work is paid or not. However, stressing the fact whether work is organised by a market or outside of markets could be equally important, as this might perhaps affect the nature of the work.<sup>3</sup> I will continue to use both names simultaneously and randomly.

The combination of the two criteria makes us conclude that not every activity that generates financial resources is work: robbery, theft, fraud, winning the lottery, or receiving an inheritance all financially enrich persons, but the persons involved had no intention at all to provide a good or service to another person in exchange for this money. The intentionality criterion also allows to distinguish non-market work from other non-remunerated activities, like sleeping or leisure.

The simple classification in figure 1 can help us to make distinctions between activities which, at first sight, are very similar. For example, a nurse in a residential home for elderly provides care as market work, whereas a daughter of a frail parent can provide (roughly) the

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<sup>3</sup> As I will argue for care work in 4.1.a.

same care as non-market work. A quite different example is this of the work which sex workers do: a prostitute providing paid sexual services to clients can engage in the same sexual activities with her lover. In the first case she is working; but in the latter case she has no intention to provide a service, but instead to express her erotic feelings and/or fulfil her own sexual needs.

Figure 1: criteria for market work, non-market work, and other activities.

	has the intention to provide a good or service to another person or oneself	does not have the intention to provide a good or service to another person or oneself
generates financial resources	market work or paid work	robbery, theft, fraud, winning the lottery, receiving an inheritance, ...
does not generate financial resources	non-market work or unpaid work	sleeping, leisure, ...

Obviously, any classification has some borderline cases. A parent who is reading with his or her child could be seen as working, or alternatively as sharing some leisure activities with the child. Note that it is a popular argument that when people perform non-market work which they really enjoy, it should be regarded as leisure. However, this criterion cannot hold. Whether parents love reading aloud for their child or not does not matter for its classification as work or non work: a businessman who loves to sell computers is also working.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, if a businessman has excellent and very enjoyable lunches and dinners with his clients, this is work. This is a crucial point for the political-economic discussion of the status and treatment of unpaid work in welfare states. Because the classical counterargument will be: if women (or men) *voluntary choose* to “stay at home” and *enjoy* being at home, why would we have to take this into account as work (and, give them perhaps some kind of insurance or rights for this work)? Often this counterargument is supplemented with a (conservative) moral appreciation of the work that women do at home, pointing at their alleged moral superiority in doing this kind of work, and affirming that this kind of work is crucial for society – but there is no need for the political or economic system to consider this as work, so the argument might (and often does) go.<sup>5</sup> This argument can be refuted on two grounds: a substantive one, and a formal/logical one. The first one will be further developed in section 3. Formally and logically, it is also possible to see the inconsistency in this kind of reasoning. The argument against considering unpaid work as work, but instead as leisure, is based on a combination of two empirical claims: the unpaid workers would *voluntary choose* this work, and they would *like to do it*. First, these empirically claims do not hold in general: depressions are regularly observed among housewives, some homemakers are *involuntary* unemployed; and as I will argue in 5.2. and have argued in Robeyns (2001), the idea of *voluntary choice* is not without

<sup>4</sup> In fact, under that criterion few researchers or professors would be working.

<sup>5</sup> See Harrington (1999) of the moral rhetoric behind women’s work at home.

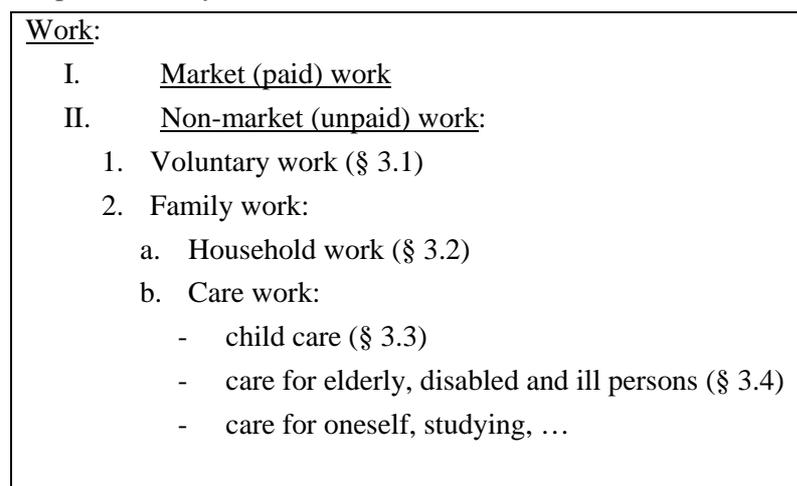
problems in the current context. But even if these empirical claims would hold for all unpaid workers, the logical of the argument is flawed. Voluntary choice of the “occupation” and the fact whether one likes it or not do not make an activity “work” or “non-work”. For example, many scholars and professors have voluntarily chosen to be a scholar or a professor, and they do like this work. The same logic would make us conclude that as they chose it voluntarily and they like it, it is not work.

The argument against recognising unpaid work as work seems to stem from an opposition against the idea that once it has the status of work, it automatically has to be remunerated. However, this is a different issue. It is one thing to argue that household and care labour indeed are work, but another to claim that *therefore* it should be financially rewarded.

Now, it is useful and necessary to make some further distinctions between different kinds of non-market work. The first major difference is between non-market work which takes place in the family or the household versus non-market work in the community or the broader society. The most common name for this latter kind of work is *voluntary work*. It could be all kinds of work, ranging from voluntary political activities, involvement in churches or NGO’s, to voluntary community care for handicapped or the frail elderly, or volunteering in activities in the school of one’s child.

The non-market work taking place in the family can also be quite diverse. The major distinction here seems to be between household work (cooking, cleaning, shopping, car or bicycle repair, gardening,...) and care work. Again, care work can be very diverse.<sup>6</sup> Care work could be child care, but it could also be caring for ill relatives, or (the increasingly important) caring for frail elderly, whether partner, parent or another person. Figure 2 summarises:

Figure 2: a simple taxonomy of work.



Given those definitions and distinctions, the next question which arises is what we know about the nature, characteristics, distribution and valuation of those different kinds of work. That will be the focus in the next section.

<sup>6</sup> Definitions of care in the relevant literatures differ substantially. For example, Daly and Lewis (1998) study paid and unpaid care for humans together, while Tronto (1993:103) defines care much wider, including those activities that “maintain, continue and repair our ‘world’”.

### 3. NON-MARKET WORK IN THEORIES AND REALITIES

Non-market work is an umbrella term for all kinds of unpaid work, most notably voluntary work, household work and care work. In this section, I will present some general empirical facts about these kinds of work, and discuss how theories in the social sciences and philosophy have analysed them. Note however that the description of empirical facts will remain rather unspecified and perhaps somewhat overgeneralised or oversimplified, as many studies point at the differences in the empirical description of unpaid work between countries (and welfare states), regions, groups of people with different skill-levels, age groups, ethnic groups, and so on.

#### 3.1 Voluntary work

Voluntary work is a wide range of unpaid working activities aimed at improving some aspects of the quality of life for a group of people or a community. Some kinds of voluntary work are indisputable contributing to some people's quality of life, like volunteers working with homeless people or street children. However, not everybody will agree about the desirability of every kind of voluntary work. For example, the volunteers of the Animal Liberation Front (ALF) no doubt believed that they are doing important and good work by defending the interests of animals, whereas other people have the opinion that they disrupt social order and disturb economic activities of companies who carry out animal testing. Different conceptions of the good life imply that not everybody will agree on the desirability of all kinds of voluntary work. But leaving this minority of contested cases aside, in general voluntary work is seen as a positive contribution to society, strengthening social cohesion and supporting the weakest people or those in acute need. Furthermore, a less documented but equally important characteristic of voluntary work is its value for the volunteer him or herself. Not only does the volunteer have absolute freedom to choose to do the kind of work she likes, it might also give her a great sense of self-fulfilling and of being "useful". Moreover, volunteer work can increase the human capital (marketable skills) of the volunteer and the social capital of the community, and can give the volunteer a specific kind of lived-through knowledge which is complementary to the kind of knowledge gained in the formal educational system.<sup>7</sup>

The distinction between paid market work and voluntary work, and between care work and voluntary work can sometimes be thin and vague. For example: a person could care for his or her frail parent at home (care work) or this could be done by a volunteer or a professional nurse in a hospital or a residential care (voluntary respectively market work). From the point of view of social policies, this is not without importance, as in some welfare states people claiming unemployment benefits have to apply for specific permission (or are simply not allowed) to perform voluntary work, and/or can only do this for a limited number of hours.

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<sup>7</sup> On a personal note: I have always claimed that the voluntary summer work which I have done with disadvantaged children has thought me a kind of "knowledge" and experiences which have had a profound impact on my beliefs, on the kind of research which I want to conduct and on my opinion on the usefulness and sense of reality in the research of other scholars. In my experience, many volunteers feel that their work has had a long lasting impact on their thinking and lives, even though sometimes in very subtle ways.

### 3.2 Household work

Household work is work done within the household, which is necessary for a smooth functioning of the household and for securing the well-being of its members. It includes cooking, doing dishes, washing, shopping, ironing, managing financial resources, car or bicycle repair, house maintenance, gardening, and so on. It also entails all the planning that has to be done before the actual activity of household work can happen, and all other organisational and logistic support, like gathering information on prices and qualities of durable consumer goods, finding and contacting local authorities or service people (plumber, carpenter, ...) and so on.

In most of the literature, caring for other members of the household is seen as part of household work, but in this paper family care work and household work will –at least conceptually- be distinguished. The reasons are twofold. First, household work is impersonal, in the sense that it can be done by any person, without (substantially) affecting the quality of the work (Himmelweit 1995). It doesn't really matter whether the father, mother, or a hired cleaner does the vacuum cleaning. Care work, on the contrary, is to a considerable extent interpersonal, emotional and psychological work, where it might matter (a lot) who will give the care. Most frail and bedridden parents prefer to be taking care by relatives or friends, and not by a strange nurse, although in exceptional cases this could be the reverse. The second major distinction is that as care always involves people, the urgency of the work will sometimes be great. If one's bike has a flat tyre, one can always walk, take a bus or train, or rent/borrow another bike; similarly, dust can easily be in the house for somewhat longer than desired. Hungry or crying children, on the other hand, need immediate attention, which is even more the case with sick people.

What do empirical studies learn us about the realities of household work? There are (at least!) two myths surrounding household work. The first myth is that the gender division of household work, both within the family and on a societal level, has become *much* more egalitarian in recent years. Many people, including many academics, take it for granted that it is only a question of a little bit of time before husband and wife will share domestic duties equally. Many implicitly conclude that the gender division of labour is a problem of the past. All of this is simply not true. I will discuss those empirical facts together with the division of unpaid family care work in section 3.5., as many statistics and empirical studies on the gender division of household work and care labour are aggregated.

The second myth regarding household work is the idea that the total amount of household work in contemporary families is only a fraction of what it once was. Jean Gardiner (1997, ch. 8) has reviewed the empirical studies on the evolution of the total amount of household work done in (mostly British) households. These studies showed that many families did not substitute market services for their own household labour, with the exception of well paid double career households. If households can afford to buy services, the household work which is traditionally performed by men appears more likely to be substituted than typical female household tasks. Moreover, whereas many people believe that technological innovations *substantially* decreased the time that women had to work in the household, Gardiner argues

that the effect of the decrease in fertility rate and women's labour market participation on the time spend on household work was much larger than the impact of technology. It is also quite likely that a number of societal developments have created additional household work, so that it might not always be clear whether total time spend on household decreased or not. For example, the amount of time needed for comparison of prices and qualities of (durable) consumer goods and services has increased substantially. Finally, much of unpaid work in families is related to children, and this work is only to a limited extend affected by technological change or a wider supply of services on the market.

### 3.3 Child care

Child care is the full-time care for pre-school children, or the after school and vacation care for children attending school. Child care can be performed as non-market work (at home, or in the home of relatives or friends) or can be provided on the market, or by the (local) government. The precise nature of this work depends to some extent on the age and specific character of the children involved. Generally speaking it is the "supervision of behaviour, management of social relations and, in the case of young children, the frequent intrusion of physical care" (Gardiner 1997:183). This can include waking up at night to comfort and feed a baby, breast feeding, bottle feeding, changing nappies, bathing the child, getting her dressed, supervising them playing, giving them opportunities to play with friends, solving disputes between brothers and sisters, teaching them how to solve disputes on their own, bringing them to school, taking the child from school, listening to the child's stories and worries, bringing them to after school activities, reading aloud, playing games, playing the same game over and over and over, taking the child to the doctor, and much more. I could go on for a while, but I guess the point is clear: child care requires almost permanent attention, and according to the previous definitions this is work. Serious work, sometimes hard work or tiring work. This does not mean that it cannot be –and indeed often is– very joyful work, but it remains work.

There are 2 main reasons why it is conceptually interesting to distinguish child care from household work. Firstly, caring for children can be enormously intrinsically rewarding, and a source of deep joy. Children can be very cheerful and loving, and quite often they have a very surprising view on everyday events. Nevertheless, there are a good reasons to assume that the benefits (love, pleasure, joy,...) outweigh the costs (stress, tiredness, possible social isolation, not having (sufficient) time for one's own projects or paid work, ...) if one does a limited number of hours of child care, whereas the reverse happens if one has to take care of children constantly or for a substantial number of hours. Obviously these human interactions are hardly relevant in the case of household work.

Secondly, the gender division of unpaid family labour points at different evolutions in the amount of time that men and women spend on household work versus the time one spends on child care. This will be discussed in 3.4.

### 3.4 Care for elderly, ill and disabled people

Care for elderly, ill or disabled people is quite different from child care. Firstly, in many (but not all) cases, this work will be mentally exhausting and can be very stressful. It is emotionally and psychologically very difficult to see one's beloved spouse or parent going downhill, or to cope with a serious illness like cancer. For example, anybody who has experienced a parent developing dementia knows the enormous stress, despair and anxieties with which care givers have to cope.<sup>8</sup> Consider the following quote (Harrington 1999:38):

Here is a story you could hear, with variations, in communities of all kinds across the [USA]. A young neighbour of mine [...] left a lucrative Silicon Valley job and returned to Massachusetts to help her stroke-weakened but fiercely independent father continue living at home-- only to enter a nightmarish saga of limited, episodic support for the elderly outside the nursing home system. Taking on most of the needed care herself, she found that her tasks included doing three or four loads of laundry a day as her father became incontinent, arguing with him to submit to showers and diapering changes, pureeing his food when his dentures no longer fit and he refused to get new ones, and waiting to let in various home care givers [...]. [After his death, she] was left physically and emotionally exhausted-- and professionally derailed for several years as the irregular hours of needed care compromised her job opportunities.

In short, while child care has many enjoyable and intrinsically rewarding aspects, care for the frail elderly or seriously ill is often much less pleasant and can even be very traumatic. The psychological dimension of elderly care is in any case totally different, as the care givers knows she is trying to make the life of a sick or old person as comfortable as possible, acknowledging that the end of the care might be the death of the person. In the case of child care, one enjoys the growing up of the child, witnesses how she learns to understand the world around her, slowly developing faculties which will make her an independent adult. In that sense, child care is enormously rewarding, as the care giver is aware that her time and energy investments are put into a person who will enjoy the benefits of the care for the rest of his or her life. Hence, whereas child care helps a young human being to start flourishing in society, elderly care helps an older person to cope with the difficulties of a life she has had and which is now slowly and gradually coming to an end.

The second distinguished element of care for the ill, disabled and elderly is its uncertain and often unexpected character. While a pregnant woman (and her partner) have about nine months (or more) to consider the changes which will happen to their life, a stroke or detection of cancer can change the life of a care giver at once. Moreover, in many cases it will be very difficult or impossible to predict how long a sick person will be in need of care. This insecurity puts an enormous stress on the care givers, who do not know how long they will be needed to give this care, how much emotional pain they will have to cope with, and when they will be able to concentrate again on their personal projects (like studying or a paid job).

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<sup>8</sup> Perhaps autobiographical novels are the best texts to understand this. For a beautiful novel of a young man who takes care of his incontinent and very demanding grandfather and his seriously demented grandmother (in Dutch), see Luuk Gruwez (1998).

Mary Daly and Jane Lewis (1998:6) note that “care is not like other work or labour because it is often initiated and provided under conditions of social and/or familial responsibility”. I agree, and perhaps we should add that this is even more the case with care for sick, disabled and elderly than for child care. People taking care for children would much rather formulate that in terms of ‘choice’, as in most cases the birth of the child was a conscious choice, whereas care taking for frail elderly might be much more framed in terms of ‘duty’ or ‘family responsibility’.

An important point is that the demand for elderly care has been growing steadily in the last decades, and will continue to grow. Not only do more people get older, but the declined fertility rate also increases the probability that a typical adult child will have to take care of her frail parents, or do a more substantial share of this work, as she will have less siblings with whom to share the work.

### **3.5 The size and distribution of non-market work**

When focussing on the quantitative aspects of non-market work, the first striking observation is its size. Roughly speaking, half of the labour in industrialised countries is spent on unpaid work, and the other half on paid work. (Goldschmidt-Clermont & Pagnossin-Aligisakis 1996:107). One should be cautious to draw conclusions based on the available statistics, specially with making cross national comparisons (Idem). Keeping that caveat in mind, the available statistics reveal substantial cross national differences, with the Danish people spending about 68% of their time on market work and 32 % on the market work, whereas the Dutch are on the other extreme with 35 % of their time devoted to paid labour. In an attempt to estimate the value of non-market production, Goldschmidt-Clermont and Pagnossin-Aligisakis (1996) found a wide range of values, ranging from 33 to 84% of GDP, depending on the value metric and methodology used. Ironmonger (1996) calculated based on 1994 data for Australia that the value of the labour input in unpaid work was 48 to 64% of GDP, but that the inclusion of capital goods used in the household production increases this value to 98% of GDP.

What kind of non-market work absorbs most of the workers’ time? Meal preparation, shopping, laundry and cleaning take up most time, followed by child care. Voluntary community work ranges from less than 5% of non-market work in half of the study’s selected industrialised countries to 11% in the Netherlands (Goldschmidt-Clermont & Pagnossin-Aligisakis 1996; Ironmonger 1996).

How is non-market work distributed in society? Not surprisingly, gender is the most important social category along which non-market work is divided. Studies for all industrialised countries show that women do more unpaid household and care work than men. *At the societal level*, aggregate data for both developing and industrialised countries indicate that women do about 66 % of non-market work (UNDP 1995:89). This share is to a great extent the mirror site of the much smaller female share in paid labour. But the symmetry is not perfect, because while in some countries (Australia, Canada, Germany, Great Britain and Israel) men and women worked the same number of total hours, in other countries women worked more than men. This gender gap could be less than 30 minutes a day, like in the US,

or could increase to more than one hour and a half a day, like in Bulgaria or Italy (Goldschmidt-Clermont & Pagnossin-Aligisakis 1996:127). Denmark is an exception, where men work on average 9 minutes a day longer than women. In short, at the societal level, “the gendered division of paid work is no longer as striking as the unequal division of unpaid work”, as Daly and Lewis (1998:2) point out.

*On the household level*, the importance of gender as a central category along which the distribution is shaped, is confirmed by cross-sectional and longitudinal studies of household surveys. These studies indeed confirm that while women increased their labour market participation and decreased the work they did at home, men’s increase in unpaid work did not compensate women’s decrease. The result is that in some sense, women could increase their labour market participation only at the expense of less leisure, and more stress. But gender is not the only relevant category; race and class can in some contexts also be important. While a married upper class woman will on average still do more unpaid household and care work than her male partner (especially if she has children), she might have the financial opportunity to pay a woman from a lower class to clean her house, and to pay the services of an expensive high quality residential home to take care of her frail parent. Especially in the USA, the race dimension of who does care seems to be important, while it seems that in both the USA and Europe many paid household workers (esp. cleaners) are immigrants or ‘illegal’ immigrants (Tronto 1993; Harrington 1999).

More detailed and micro-level studies are useful to understand in greater detail the processes behind and the characteristics of the division of labour. These studies reveal that in general full-time housewives do about as much (or sometimes slightly less) total work than their employed husbands. But employed wives do more unpaid work, and more work in total, than their husbands. The role of children is pivotal. Folbre (1994:97) reports that when couples get a child, women’s total hours of work increases dramatically but men’s remains more or less the same. And other studies have shown that couples who share more or less equally paid and unpaid work create a much more traditional gender division of labour after they have children.

While, historically seen, the gender division of labour has become more egalitarian for new generations of couples, the change has arguably been quite small. McMahon (1999:11-37) has argued extensively that despite a disproportionate attention of the popular media for the so-called new fathers, men’s share in household and unpaid work increases only marginally, and it is still mainly ‘helping out’ their wives instead of bearing responsibilities. This somewhat pessimistic conclusion on the degree of equal sharing of unpaid work can be found in most academic works on the subject. It is often argued that while there is now a broad subscription to the values and ideology of gender equality, and a commitment to equal intimate relationships, in reality couples can not or do not live up to these principles (Gill 1998, Komter 1990, McMahon 1999).

## 4. MARKET WORK AND NON-MARKET WORK: TOWARDS AN INTEGRATED ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Why should we be concerned with non-market work?

Most writings on economic and social policy, labour issues or social justice, pay little or no attention to unpaid work. Feminist economists have long argued that economic analysis and policy proposals are failing since they theorise and study economic issues while neglecting non-market work (e.g. Folbre 1994; Picchio 1996). Feminist philosophers (e.g. Okin 1989) have argued along quite similar lines that many analyses in social justice do not (sufficiently) take non-market work into account. Nevertheless, despite this growing criticism, most work on economic and social policy remains biased against including unpaid work in their analyses. And if unpaid work is included at all, it is quite often mentioned in a somewhat superficial way, or added in a separate paragraph. It is clear that this will not do. In Picchio's (1996:90) words: "Domestic work cannot just be added to other types of work simply broadening the definition of work. The problem is not breadth but depth. Domestic work is hidden because it sustains other types of work."

People sceptical of the need to *fully integrate* unpaid work in our analysis might start doubting their scepticism by the quantitative data presented in paragraph 3.4., showing the quantitative importance of unpaid household work and care work. In what follows, I want to discuss three other arguments: the intrinsic importance of unpaid work, the vital support that it provides for market work (and for the economic and social public institutions in general), and its role in equal opportunity policies.

#### a. the intrinsic importance of non-market work

Try for a moment to imagine a world without unpaid work. People would still feed and shelter themselves, as this is in their own interest of physical survival. But what about children, the sick, disabled and elderly? How would they be fed, nurtured, comforted and sheltered? What if tomorrow mothers (and fathers) go on strike, refusing to do any more care and household work? In theory, some of the unpaid work could be bought on the market; but children have no purchasing power at all, and most sick, disabled and elderly will not have sufficient purchasing power, even not for low quality care. Even if they had, would market care be a perfect substitute for unpaid work? Most of us will intuitively say "no", and I believe there are some theoretical arguments supporting the claim that *not all* market care will be of the same quality as unpaid care. While the market (or community or state) can provide some of the care work services, it will never be a perfect substitute. Firstly, care work is not impersonal, like other kinds of work (Himmelweit 1995). It does matter for the quality of the care *who* would do this work. Most frail elderly prefer, say, meals cooked by their children and visits and entertainment by their grandchildren over being taken care of by a community care agency or a private care provided by the market. Similarly, it is not good for children to constantly have different childminders: market child care is better when the turnover of the child nurses is low. And babies under the age of one fare best when they are taking care by just a couple of

care takers, with whom they will be able to relate. If care is provided as market work, there is no guarantee for the quality, and the relational and emotional involvement in the care work -- which may be crucial for its quality -- might be insufficient.<sup>9</sup> Of course, this does not mean that *all* market care is low quality; if market care is paid sufficiently, for example by being generously subsidised (as is the case for child care in Belgium) then market care can be a perfect substitute *for part of* the domestic care. Literature reviews on the quality of child care (Dex and Joshi 1999:652-653; Singer 1993) found that while for baby's under the age of one the results are inconclusive, for children from the age of one upwards, market child care can be a positive experience, provided that it is *quality* child care (which tends to be more the case in Europe than in the USA) and that the number of hours remain limited. Thus, market child care can be a perfect substitute for a number of hours per day, but it is quite unlikely that this will be the case for 24 hours per day.

### **b. the instrumental importance of non-market work**

The second reason why we should take unpaid work seriously, is the vital role that it plays for market work and the proper functioning of the economic and social public institutions. There is a forceful intrinsic argument to be made on the effects that unpaid work has on society. Unpaid work is clearly a case of *positive externalities*. Household work is in fact, as Oakley (1995) demonstrated, part of health care provisioning. Freshly cooked food, proper clothes, a clean surface and home, a dust free environment and a safe place where one can relax and sleep are essential necessities for healthy people. Household work can in similar terms be seen as an investment in human capital or social capital. Child care is necessary for the production of the next generation of workers, and good quality childcare would encourage youngsters to gradually learn to take responsibilities and plan their own life, instead of getting onto paths of drugs, crimes and other problematic behaviour. For elderly care and care for the sick and handicapped, it is more difficult to see externalities which can be materialised. But moral externalities do play a role here. We do not want to leave the weakest on their own, slowly dying (because that is precisely what many of them would do without care). Furthermore, in the case of some of them, like aggressive mentally ill patients, society might have to be protected from them.

Hence, good quality household work and child care are investments in the human capital of workers, both the current labour force as well as the next generation. Now, current full-time jobs are implicitly defined under the assumption that the worker is freed from care responsibilities. This was indeed the most frequent case a century ago, when the dominant concept of the family was the "bread winner model", with the husband earning an income for his family, while the wife was responsible for the running of the household. Despite that most households no longer fit this model (and some of them never did), it is still the implicit underlying model of some welfare states (e.g. Germany) while in other welfare states it remains in an adapted form (the so-called 1 1/2 breadwinner model). More importantly, it is

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<sup>9</sup> To be sure, neither is there a guarantee for the quality of care when it is provided as non-market care, but the main incentives to perform the care work are different: profit-seeking or the earning of a wage on the market, versus altruism or a sense of responsibility and duty at home.

the underlying assumption of full-time jobs on the labour market, and of some other social institutions, like schools that are closing at 3.00 PM. The structure of most full-time jobs assumes that the care responsibilities which the employee might have, are taken over by somebody else.

From this perspective, it is quite ironic that many analyses treat unpaid labour as leisure or disregarded it at all. We would do more justice to reality by acknowledging that market work is dependent on non-market work. In a certain sense it could even be argued that market work is parasitic on non-market work. This is the case in a static framework, where full-time employees with children or dependant elderly can only devoted their energy and time to their work because somebody else is taking care of their dependence. And it is even more so for analyses of the behaviour and well-being of people over their lifetime, as nobody would be able to become a productive adult without the child care and other unpaid work they had enjoyed as children.

### **c. the role of unpaid work in equal opportunity policies**

Most liberal states, including the members of the European Union, Canada and the USA, are committed to the principle of equal opportunities. Now, anyone looking at the issue of equal opportunities between women and men will quickly realise that one cannot address gender equality ( --no matter how one would define it, except in a pure libertarian way perhaps--) without facing the gender distribution of paid and unpaid work, the valuation of unpaid work and the degree in which work at home and on the labour market can be combined. This will be elaborated in greater detail below.

## **4.2 How is market and non-market work valued?**

Which valuation do workers receive for the work they do? It seems to make sense to distinguish between two different kinds of valuation: financial and material valuation on the one hand, and emotional and psychological valuation on the other hand.

### **a. financial of material valuation of work**

For market work, the most tangible material aspect is its wage. In addition, there can be all kinds of direct benefits (company car, meal vouchers or subsidised lunches, paid vacations, and so on) and long term benefits or insurances (health insurance, pension rights, unemployment insurance, and so on).

For non-market work, there are currently few financial rewards. Obviously there is no wage or direct unconditional benefits attached to this kind of work. Sometimes there is a compensation or selective benefit, e.g. through career interruption premia (e.g. in Belgium), maternity or paternity benefits, or indirectly through the tax system (e.g. joint marital taxation). Some work-related long term benefits or insurances cover the employed worker's spouse, like health insurance. But not all care givers are married to an employed worker. Some welfare states give pension rights to care givers. But these benefits are all well below

the wages that paid workers receive, and in some countries (e.g. in Belgium) they are well below the average levels of unemployment benefits.

Most of these facts are well known. Less known, and perhaps much more importance, are the opportunity costs attached to non-market work. Taking care for children, ill or elderly generates a substantial costs for the care taker, both in terms of the immediate forgone earnings, as well as in terms of the reduced lifetime earnings due to this career interruption. Dex and Joshi (1999:650) claimed, based on data for 1980, that "the relative lifetime earnings forgone by a typical mother who goes to have a second child were put at 58% for Great Britain, 49% for West Germany and 17% for Sweden". In fact, many economists believe that child care is the key to understand material gender inequalities. For example, Victor Fuchs (1992) argues that the main cause for gender inequality is women's greater preference for children. Similarly, most theories in social justice consider child care as a purely private matter, and the decision to have children as a private choice, of which the consequences are to be born by the individuals themselves. As Anderson (1999) has argued, most influential social justice theorists regard the choice for children as an expensive taste, for which no compensation is required. In 4.3. I will dispute these views, and propose an alternative perspective on these matters.

## **b. emotional and psychological valuation of work**

Obviously money is not the only reason why people perform paid work, nor is the lack of financial reward the only aspect of non-market work's valuation. Both market and non-market work can provide social and psychological benefits, like self-respect, the structuring of one's life, social contacts, self realisation, and so on. And both can induce social and non-material burdens, such as stress, reduced autonomy, boredom, and so on. It is, in general terms at least, impossible to say that either market or non-market work provides more emotional or psychological benefits and less burdens. While studies on stress and psychological deprivation among unemployed people (e.g. Schokkaert and Van Ootegem 1990) or studies on the frequency of depressions among housewives show how devastating it could be for some people not to have a paid job, other studies indicate that *some* housewives found their paid work less diverse than the range of working activities they could do at home (Leigh and Butter, 1994:12).

In conclusion: on the individual level it is impossible to list in general terms the emotional and psychological valuation of market and non-market work. However, at the societal level I believe it is fair to say that the importance of non-market work, especially care work, is undervalued compared to the value society attaches to paid work. All too often, unpaid work is regarded as leisure, or at best as a kind of activity too easy to be called "work" -- either theoretically or in the mind of the man in the street.

## **4.3 Should non-market work be revalued?**

According to Daly and Lewis (1998:13), "the work of caring, paid and unpaid, is very unequally shared between men and women. It is also woefully undervalued." The claim that

we need to revalue care and unpaid work is in recent years been put forward by many scholars coming from a wide perspective, most notably by feminists (e.g. Folbre 1994; Tronto 1993) but also by some communitarians (references??) and liberals (e.g. Harrington 1999).

This begs two questions: why is unpaid work in general and unpaid care work in particular undervalued, and why should we revalue it?

First, the undervaluation of unpaid work. There are several possible explanations for this undervaluation. One possible explanation could be the low wage that similar kinds of work on the market receive. Professional cleaners, nurses, and child miners all receive relatively low wages. One could of course argue that this is a fact of life, given that wages are determined by supply and demand on the market. But this begs another question: why is the willingness to pay for market substitutes of household chores and care work so low? Demand and supply curves are not exogenous entities, falling out of heaven, but shift when people's willingness to pay shifts, which is on its turn highly influenced by all kinds of psychological and ideological factors. Gender ideology seems to play an important role here.

Consider the following two observations. First, professions which were male dominated 50 years and which are female dominated now (teachers, clerks/secretaries, to some extent doctors) saw a substantial decline in their professional status and in their relative wage. Second, the market based substitutes for typical male household chores (maintenance, car repair) are much better paid than the market substitutes of typical female household work (cleaning, laundry, meals, child care).

There are many ways to try to explain these observations. Some would argue that discrimination against the workers of those jobs (women, blacks, lower class people) might explain a lot, combined with gender and race segregation. Others would argue that gender socialisation leads to processes among girls and young women curtailing their beliefs of what is possible and what is not. Even object-relations psychology offers an explanation: as infants feel a rage at being powerless over their care takers, and as the need to be taking care continues (be it in other forms) over one's life, care takers are treated with disdain. "The rage and fear directed toward care givers is transformed into a general disgust with those will provide care" (Tronto 1993:123).

Moreover, there is enough anecdotal evidence that people would do not perform care work, or would do not bear caring responsibilities for the smooth running of the household, underestimate this kind of work. The immediate effect is a lack of respect for the unpaid care giver or household worker, but another effect is that the willingness to pay for these services on the market will be low. In economic terms, the perception bias regarding the real nature of care and household work creates a downward shift of the demand curve for these services on the market, reducing the equilibrium wage.

Should non-market work then be revalued? There are both intrinsic and instrumental reasons to revalue non-market work. Voluntary work has public good properties, in other words, it can lead to a higher well-being for all, even for those who do not pay any price. Care work and household work have, as argued above, positive externalities. Obviously, a revaluation would increase the respect for those workers and thus would positively affect their well-being. The case of the elderly care is particularly urgent here. We have to ask ourselves who is going to take care of the increasing number of frail dependent elderly. Is this in part societies' responsibility, or the moral duty of the adult children? What about old people would do not

have children? Or who had been deserted by their children? Or whose children live hundred kilometres away from them, perhaps in another country? And what about the divisions of burdens (financially, but also psychologically) of elderly care between the children?

There are also instrumental reasons to revalue unpaid household work. If the continued existence of Western society requires a trend break in the current demographic trends, care work will have to be much more rewarded.<sup>10</sup> Fertility rates all over Europe are below replacement rate, and the reasons are obvious: for too many women, the opportunity costs are way too high. Women who have to choose between an interesting and challenging job and a lot of personal freedom on the one hand, or children (perhaps combined with a part-time job) on the other hand, increasingly choose for their job, and not to have children. That, of course, is part of a much more complicated and larger picture, where the freedom that women have conquered this century plays a crucial role. The *division* of unpaid work also plays an important role here. I will try to argue in what follows that a solution to several of these macro-societal problems requires a revaluation combined with a redistribution of unpaid work, and that this is also one of the major blocks preventing a further move towards full gender equality in our societies.

## **5. THE DIVISION OF MARKET AND NON-MARKET WORK RECONSIDERED**

### **5.1 The gender division of labour: does it really matter?**

Given the different rewards and risks attached to market and non-market work, we could ask the question whether the division of market and non-market work is something we should be concerned with. I believe we should. I have argued elsewhere (Robeyns 2000b, 2001), and will repeat here, that the current gender division of labour is ethically problematic. Moreover, despite that it affects both genders, on average it disadvantages women and advantages men. Now, not everybody shares my claim that there is something normatively wrong with the gender division of labour. One of the main reasons is that scholars differ in their explanatory account of the gender division of labour. For example, most liberals and especially libertarians<sup>11</sup> assume that in the family husband and wife jointly and freely decide on who does which work, based on their (perceived) skills and preferences. The gender division of labour is then the result of the harmonic co-operation between them, in the interest of the household as a whole. In this explanatory account, it just happens to be the case that women are more interested in caring for others and household management. Hence, women are in no way coerced to do more non-market work, and therefore we should respect their choices. For most liberals, there is thus no reason to worry about the unequal gender division of labour –

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<sup>10</sup> Note that revaluing care work does not only mean changing the structures of financial incentives, which has anyhow very limited effects on fertility rates (Ackerman & Alstott 1999:60 note 34; ). Rather, revaluing could also mean reducing its opportunity cost by making the combination of care and full time employment or 'large' part time employment easier.

<sup>11</sup> Including Philippe Van Parijs' (1995) *Real Libertarianism* – see Robeyns (2001) for a feminist critique and Van Parijs (2001) for a reply.

and that is indeed exactly what they do, they don't really seem to care. However, I hope to show in what follows that this normative conclusion is highly conditional on the explanatory account which they rely on, and that a different explanation for the gender division of labour will also lead to different normative conclusions.<sup>12</sup>

## 5.2 the contours of an alternative explanation of the gender division of labour

In economics and sociology, several different explanatory theories of the gender division of labour co-exist. The alternative explanation which will be presented here, starts from Sen's (1990) conceptualisation of households as "co-operative conflicts" and Folbre's (1994) theory of group-dependent structures of constraints.

Sen (1990) has argued that households can best be modelled as co-operative conflicts: by forming a household, all members can gain, but a conflict will arise over the distribution of those gains over the different household members. How can the gender division of labour be modelled from this perspective? Spouses don't maximise their own welfare independent of others, but instead a two steps collective decision process takes place. Initially they take a decision whereby the welfare of their collective is considered. In this first stage it is decided that the household as a whole needs more labour input for care and household work, for example because of the setting up of a home together, the birth of a child, or because a parent falls ill. So in the first stage a couple increases their joined or aggregate demand for total household and care work. In the second stage it is decided whether they will share this extra household and care work, or whether one of them will specialise in paid work while the other will specialise in household and care work. Folbre's (1994) "structures of constraint" can become very helpful to understand how in the second stage decisions are made. Her theory claims that in order to understand how the costs of social reproduction are divided in society, we have to look at how different groups are constrained differently, or what the structures of groups-specific constraints on decisions are.

The combination of (at least) nine *gender related constraints* on choices, and especially their interaction and mutual intensification can explain why so many women perform so much household- and care work. It is crucial to see these structures on the constraints in a dynamic perspective, and how they, during the course of a lifetime, step by step shape the constraints on choices, and reinforce one another. Although these nine gender related constraints are not meant to be exhaustive, they can quite possibly account for a large share of the explanation of the gender division of labour.

Firstly, children are from a very young age in a different way confronted with images and ideas on the desirable roles of their own gender. Small children see their mothers taking more care of household work, whereas their father is the absent person, whose position and status in society is determined by activities in the public sphere. If children are raised with these examples of their own gender, and identify themselves with it, then small boys grow up with

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<sup>12</sup> The following two sections are to a great extent based on Robeyns (2000b) and some parts of the argument can be found in Robeyns (2001).

the idea that their realisation as adults will take place outside the home, whereas girls see that for them this will (partly) take place through care labour.

Chodorow (1978) developed a theory of the reproduction of mothering that provides support for this first gender related constraint. She summarises her theory as follows (1978:7):

Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother. These capacities and needs are built into and grow out of the mother-daughter relationship itself. By contrast, women as mothers (and men as not-mothers) produce sons whose nurturing capacities and needs have been systematically curtailed and repressed. This prepares men for their less affective later family role, and for primary participation in the impersonal extra-familial world of work and public life. The sexual and familial division of labour in which women mother and are more involved in interpersonal, affective relationships than men produces in daughters and sons a division of psychological capacities which leads them to reproduce this sexual and familial division of labour.

A second gender related constraint are the role patterns following out of socialisation, and the confirmation of these role patterns through the media, movies, television and so on. These representations of gender roles and gender stereotypes are weaker than some decades back, but recent research still shows their existence (e.g. Van Zoonen 1994).

Thirdly, due to the other expectations boys and girls have regarding the importance of care labour in their life, they will take this into account when choosing a study or profession. Girls will more often choose for subjects related to the care sector, or for professions that are easier combined with care labour. This hypothesis is consistent with the empirical fact that girls do not study fewer years than boys, but they choose other subjects and professions, which are considered more 'soft' and have a lower income generating capacity.

Fourth, there is a group of labour market conditions leading to the fact that *ceteris paribus* women earn less than their husbands. Major elements here are labour market segregation and discrimination. Although there is a general tendency to believe that gender discrimination has almost virtually disappeared, recent evidence shows its persistence (Darity and Mason 1998; Neumark, Bank and van Nort 1996; Neumark and McLennan 1995; Wenneras and Wold 1997). This recent research analyses discriminations using new techniques like audit analysis or multivariate analysis on micro-data including productivity variables. These techniques to a great extent rule out the possibility for different interpretations of the observed differences in hiring decisions and wage determination – which often lied at the basis for the denial of gender discrimination in the past. For example, Wenneras and Wold (1997) showed that, other things being equal, the weighted academic output of female candidates had to be 2,5 times those of male candidates, if they wanted to be awarded a post-doctoral grant in the biomedical sciences in Sweden.

Fifth, a husband is on average about 3 years older than his wife, which implies, through the seniority rule in the wage formation, that wives earn less than their husbands. Phipps and Burton (1995) find a significant negative effect of this age difference on the labour market participation of wives. They argue that age differences are likely to affect attitudes and hence the bargaining position of wife and husband.

Sixth, empirical studies (Steil 1997: 48-50) show that the majority of men and women, including double-career couples, continue to view the husband as primary responsible for the financial security of the family. Women's wages are seen as secondary wages, even when she earns the same or more than her husband. As a consequence, a wife is not entitled to see her career as primary, and to exempt herself from household work. This has quite likely something to do with dominant gender identities: in general a masculine identity is much more based on self reliance and manifestation in the public sphere, whereas a feminine identity is much more constructed based upon being connected to others and care.

Seventh, many men and women find it convenient and attractive to stick to the existing gender division of labour. It is a habit and it is easier, as past generations give examples how a household balance between labour and care can be found and as many elements in the organisation of society encourage such a division of labour. Looking for more egalitarian household organisations requires much more thoughts and negotiations by the couple and is therefore a more difficult route to go.

Eight, as Ferber and Young (1997) argue, resistance to change is all the greater because men have a stake in preserving the traditions and the status quo within the family, as many see little to gain by doing a larger share of the household work. According to some authors, like McMahon (1999), the gender division of labour cannot be understood if one is not willing to acknowledge the privileged position that men have which makes them defend their interest in the current gender division of labour. Qualitative research (e.g. Komter 1990) shows that many women do want their husband/partner to do more household and care work, and struggle to get this division changed, but find it very difficult and encounter much resistance from their husbands. Empirical evidence (Steil 1997) suggests that if the wife's paid work increases, her share of the care and household work does not decrease proportionally. Furthermore, husbands do not perform more household work when their labour market commitments decrease. Steil (1997:52-53) cites studies showing that even if a husband is unemployed, he does less household work than a wife working 40 hours on the labour market. She concludes that there is growing evidence that the allocation of domestic responsibilities is more a matter of internalised gender expectations than conscious choice.

Finally, several important social institutions depend upon and take the gender division of labour for granted, and so reinforce this division. Most importantly, the labour market is organised around the assumption that employees do not have caring responsibilities. In some countries, like in Germany, the social organisation of the school system assumes that every child has a care taker who can pick him or her from school in the beginning of the afternoon. Thus, in case a couple has children it is often claimed that this excludes the possibility that both husband and wife have a career. In liberal environments, those claims are almost always followed by the addition that it does not have to be the husband who is pursuing his career while his wife is doing the household management. It is easy to see that such a claim is what Okin (1989) calls a false gender neutral claim. Women who have a demanding career often still bear household responsibilities, while many men working at the same level, have supporting wives (Okin 1995:138). Given gender roles, historical patterns and tradition, it is possible for a man to find a wife who will support his career by exempting him from childcare and household management. However, given the same gender roles, historical patterns and traditions, there is hardly any chance for an ambitious women to find a man who will support

her career and become a houseman. In this example, two constraints affect women differently than men. First, the number of male partners willing to sign for the household role is very limited, while this is not the case for female partners. Second, the labour market is arranged around the assumption that for many jobs, one is child-care and family commitments free, which in our gender structured society limits women more than men.

Bringing these nine elements together makes us conclude that *from a household point of view, and in the short run*, it could be a rational choice for husband and wife to introduce gender specific labour specialisation. At the moment they want to or have to decide that one of the partners works less or withdraws from the labour market, the choice is often rather obvious, and the framework and context in which this choice is made might strongly influence this choice. In other words, gender related structures and constraints convert this choice from an individual autonomous choice under perfect information into a collective decision under socially constructed (and gender related) constraints with imperfect information and risks.

How is this explanation affected by introducing a dynamic perspective? Once a profound division of market- and non-market work is created, it will become difficult to change the gender division of labour, as man's bargaining power has increased and also because of the increasing specialisation of specific types of work. Of course, if children become adults and leave the household, mothers will have to put less time and energy in caring activities and household management and might spend more time on leisure or try to work (more) on the labour market. But there is little evidence that at that stage in their life cycle, partners will fundamentally reconsider their division of labour, except when external events (like serious illness) forces them.

Is this theory implying that the gender division of labour is a deterministic process, and that a couple has no individual decision power or agency to make this decision by themselves? Of course not. Firstly, not all constraints will affect all individuals, or not to the same extent. Constraints will vary over individuals, but also over class, race, religions, and other social groups. For example, children from feminist parents will be socialised differently then those from conservative families. Depending on the country where one lives, or the employer for whom one works, the combination of paid and care work might be easy or difficult, and so on. Secondly, if both partners are aware of how gender related constraints might (have) shape(d) their preferences and identity, and provide the context for their choices, they can reflect on these constraints. But it doesn't promise to be an easy task. Men might discover that employers make it very difficult for them to engage substantially in caring activities, or that this will come at a substantial financial cost. Women will perhaps discover that they might have to cope with a male culture on the labour market, experience a lack of role models and mentors, or encounter discrimination and prejudices over their capacities to take up public roles.

This alternative explanation should thus *not* be read as a universally straightforward applicable theory. Instead, despite the universal claim that it makes on the importance of the structures of the constraints on the choices we make, and especially on its gendered nature, we will always have to pay attention to the specific social, cultural and institutional context.

### 5.3 What's wrong with the gender division of labour?

An evaluation of the gender division of labour can take the following two forms. First, a normative analysis could be outcome-based, by analysing how the gender division of labour affects men's and women's well-being. In fact, the normative judgement one will derive from an outcome-based analysis will be more or less independent from the explanatory account. Hence, this outcome-based evaluation holds independent of the alternative account that I have presented, and could also be formulated for the standard liberal account that is based on differences in preferences and autonomous choices. In other words, independent of the explanation of the gender division of labour that one subscribes to, an outcome based evaluation will reveal that in general it predominantly disadvantages women and advantages men.

Second, an evaluation could also be done from a procedural perspective. In that case the normative analysis will look at the way in which the gender division of labour has come into being. Here, the evaluation is dependent on the choice of the explanatory theory. While it is a very difficult to argue that the gender division of labour is unjust from a procedural perspective if one subscribes to the standard liberal account, I will argue that this becomes possible based on the alternative explanation which was presented above.

#### a. an outcome-based evaluation

*First*, specialisation in unpaid labour results in serious socio-economic risks. The most serious risk is probably the risk at divorce. Empirical studies all show that economic dependence on the husband can have disadvantageous consequences in the case of marital breakdown. In the USA, most studies estimate that women's standard of living declines between 13 and 35% after divorce, while men's standard of living increases by 11 to 13% (Peterson 1996:529). Jarvis and Jenkins (1999) studied the financial consequences of divorce or separation in the UK, and found that the mean net income after divorce increased for men with 2%, whereas for women and children it decreased dramatically with 14 resp. 18%.

But even if the household stays intact, there are material risks and consequences attached to the gender division of labour. If women will not use their (full) potential on the labour market, then their human capital will start depreciating. As a consequence, their total expected income over the lifetime cycle will decrease. If the woman quits the labour market completely, she will not only lose her labour income, but also some non-pecuniary advantages. These can be social interaction, contact with a network of colleagues, a place to demonstrate your competence and hence increase your self-respect and self esteem, and so on. Depending on the welfare system, a woman working at home having a part-time job will also have smaller - if any- personal pension rights. Even if both partners would pool their incomes (which is not what sociological studies show us to happen in all households), then this may still affect the decision making power and have some psychological effects. One's share of household earnings could quite likely affect one's perceived and real entitlements to spending those earnings on personal goods and services. I am afraid that the example of the male breadwinner who feels entitled to buy himself a nice car is not too far-fetched.

*Second*, the gender division of labour has an impact on gender differences in power. In general, we can define gender differences in power as a general tendency in society that men have more power than women. As men occupy most of the powerful or influential jobs (politicians, bankers, religious leaders, publishers, investors, directors, professors, media makers, ...), they can claim more resources, influence public policy, determine public agenda setting and set social norms. Those men are typically also better integrated in networks of other men who can provide them with information, jobs and rare and cheap services and goods. Women are more likely to have less command over money, resources, (influential) jobs, networks of powerful people, and so on. Women are also much more likely to bear either the day-to-day responsibility or at least the final responsibility for dependants. The gender division of labour is thus one of those factors that help men gain their power, and prevents women from getting an equal distribution of power.

*Third*, some authors, like Mill (1869) Nussbaum (1999) and Okin (1989, 1995) also discuss the role that the unequal division of labour within families has on public justice. They argue that families have to form the moral characters of children, and prepare them to be just democratic citizens. However, “families in which females are unequal to males serve those goals badly; for they raise males who are used to a feudal hierarchy within the household and who will therefore have a difficult time tolerating political equality outside the household. A more equal division of power between males and females, by contrast, better serves these larger human interests” (Nussbaum 1999:272).

*Fourth*, the gender division of the labour has an impact on *all* women through the process of statistical discrimination. Statistical discrimination is a form of indirect discrimination based on the fact that a person belongs to a group that has certain characteristics. These characteristics are used as proxies for the average productivity of that group. Now, women on average get one or two children and take maternity leave. They also work less hours on the labour market than men, and bear more responsibility for the household and the care of elderly and children. They have more career interruptions and are more absent on the workplace. Some women quit their jobs and stay at home to take care of their children. For all these reasons, many employers assume that women are on average less productive than men. Furthermore, it is rational for an employer to think of an individual woman that she will share these characteristics of her group, as he has no information on her future commitments.

Hence, an employer discriminates a woman (by not hiring her or giving her a lower wage) because the employer has no exact information on her productivity and therefore his *perception* of the average productivity of all women will count. A woman who does not want children, or wants to make a career or has a husband who takes half of the household responsibilities, will still bear the consequences of the fact that other women are more “child and household oriented” – which is *perceived* as a good indicator for lower productivity. Thus, statistical discrimination violates the basic principle of equal treatment for all individuals, which makes it a real challenge for theorists of justice to find strategies to end statistical discrimination and integrate them in their theories.

In conclusion, independent of *how* the gender division of labour arises, an outcome based evaluation will point at the fact that this division plays at the material and political (broadly defined) disadvantage of women.

## **b. a procedural evaluation**

Most liberal egalitarians implicitly justify the gender division of labour on procedural grounds: men and women are formally equal, and as long as they are not coerced to do or abstain from certain acts, we have to respect their choices as these reflect their free will and preferences. How these preferences are shaped, and which group-dependent constraints frame those choices, is normally not analysed; instead it is *assumed* that individuals are autonomous and thus can make genuine choices. However, if one accepts the explanation of the gender division of labour, which was presented above, then it will be difficult to hold to the concept of free and autonomous choice. Trying to understand how certain choices are made, and how the constraints on those choices are themselves socially produced, can be crucial for our moral claims regarding choices. In its most general formulation, the theory presented above implies that the constraints on choices are gender dependent and different for men and women. These constraints can be very diverse, ranging from different investments in earnings-generating education, discrimination, gender roles, moral beliefs, social norms, traditions, characteristics of social institutions like the labour market, the welfare state arrangements or the educational system, and so on. Okin (1994:42) has summarised the importance of those constraints clearly:

No matter how formally equal women are, so long as the social structures that depend upon a gendered division of labour are still in place, so long as women continue to bear a disproportionate responsibility for domestic work, raising children, and caring for the sick and elderly, and so long as this work is privatised, undervalued, and unpaid or underpaid, [...] women will remain systematically disadvantaged.

Hence, gender related constraints affect the gender division of labour, and this division affects men's and women's well-being differently. The outcome based evaluation has shown that women tend to lose and men tend to gain with this division. This does not mean that there are no gender related constraints imposed on men. On the contrary, they exist as well, and there are indications that men deviating from their gender roles are penalised. For example, a recent study by Albrecht, Edin, Sundström and Vroman (1999) suggest that the significant negative effect on subsequent wages after career interruption is stronger for men than for women. As the authors suggest, employers assume a correlation between men's leave-taking behaviour and their degree of career commitment, and penalise those men who take a significant parental leave. For women, this is different. Due to financial incentives and tradition, almost all mothers take parental leave, so this can not signal anything to the employers. Hence, we can expect that if all fathers would take a significant parental leave, then this aspect of their gender role might change.

Although gender related constraints affect men as well, feminists argue that gender related constraints are generally advantaging men, and disadvantaging women. The socio-economic studies cited above confirm that specialisation in unpaid work increases the financial risk and might worsen women's bargaining position at home. Furthermore, over the last century, women have organised themselves to change those gender related constraints, like gender roles and social norms, and they have fought discrimination. We hardly see any men who argue that gender related constraints play at their disadvantage. If men would have felt

systematically disadvantaged or constrained by the expectations gender roles put on them, they would long have organised themselves to fight against it. The fact that in society men hardly ask a change of the gender roles, is a serious indication that they know they have more to gain than to lose with the current gender division of labour.

Another indication why gender related constraints in general and social norms in particular are at the disadvantage of women is that people who are not doing a substantial part of household work, or bear no responsibility for it, tend to underestimate this work. The results of a project in Iceland (Einarsdóttir 1998) and occasional evidence from the media suggest that men taking parental leave or becoming househusband are surprised to see how demanding household work is, and start valuing the work much more once they (had to) do it for a while by themselves. Sticking to traditional gender roles will probably imply that household work will continue to be underestimated and undervalued by men who don't do it, or who are only 'helping out'.

Research on the division of labour in lesbian couples is very revealing on how gender related constraints influence the division of labour. Empirical research shows that lesbian couples are far more egalitarian than heterosexual couples (Dunne 1998a, 1998b). This can be explained because the division of labour in those couples is less guided by gender roles. Moreover, in the public sphere the male gender role of fully committed employees is not expected from those women, so that both mothers can combine paid work with family commitments.

In conclusion, the explanatory account which focuses on the constraints on choices, and their gendered character, allow us to draw quite different normative conclusions than the dominant liberal or libertarian account. But as long as liberals continue to believe that households are fully harmonic institutions, and that the gender division of labour results from preferences and choices which we should respect at face value, they will have a perfect excuse for a continuing neglect of the gender division of labour in their theories of justice, and in the related social policy proposals.

#### **5.4 Which conclusions can we draw?**

The conclusions which I would draw from this analysis can be summarised in one phrase: we need not only to revalue *but also* to redistribute non-market work. The difficulty lies in the fact that we don't know exactly what the dynamics are between the process of revaluation and that of redistribution. If we revalue non-market work without redistributing it, the redistribution might become less equal (as argued in Robeyns 2000a). The available empirical evidence provides some support for this, as it is especially women who use the financial allowances created by the welfare state for care work, like parental leave or career interruption premia. If we try to redistribute paid and unpaid work without shifting their relative societal valuations, both financial and psychological, we might simply fail. Men have a stake in the distribution as she is, and evidence shows that it is much more difficult to convince men to do more care work when the financial rewards are low.

The upshot, then, is that we should try to find ways to revalue and redistribute non-market work. Welfare state redesigns, including the basic income proposal, do not only have to be judged on their ability to create formal jobs and reduce unemployment, enhance economic

growth and provide incentives to start businesses and so on – the dimensions which are most widely discussed. In what follows I will look at some proposals from the perspective of how it impacts on the valuation and redistribution of unpaid work.

## **6. HOW TO SECURE ECONOMIC CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL?**

### **6.1 A view on the current political debate on “work”**

Many western countries are in the process of reforming their tax systems, social security regulations, welfare provisions, labour market policy, social policy and (to a lesser extent) family policy. In Europe, the focus is primarily on reducing unemployment and boosting the performance of the economies (success stories such as the Netherlands excluded), often with the explicit concern to eliminate negative incentives to take up jobs. At the same time most governments try to get people "off welfare and into work", especially in the USA.

It is clear that the dominant ideology is one in which getting into paid work should be the major aim of citizens. Lessenich (2000) refers to the situation as one in which "social justice eventually is being redefined, referring not to some kind of income equity (or even equality), but to the overall goal of equal employability, the political meta-value to which each individual and every social institution inevitably has to submit and subscribe". The existence of this strong work ethic and the obsession of governments with getting people into jobs is not without paradoxes. As Claus Offe (2000) writes, "it is precisely at the point in time when the option of every adult getting a permanent job that pays a decent wage has definitely become a matter of the past that this empirically obsolete vision of "normality" is even more firmly entrenched at the normative level."

At the same time, this work ethic goes hand in hand with a gender and family ideology that doesn't really regard unpaid work as real, serious, valuable work, but as a private choice and thus as a private responsibility. Moreover, the dominant social ethic and gender ideologies assign this responsibilities primarily to women, not to men (Harrington 1999:17). Add to this picture the labour market institutions which require flexibility *from* the employee instead of offering flexibility *for* the employee, and the picture starts getting gloomier and gloomier. In such a context, I am not surprised when a pharmacist told me that the medicine which he sells most are "tranquillisers for young mothers who are on the verge of a nervous breakdown". This fits with studies showing that young double career parents are the most stressed people these days. The prevailing paid work ideology may stress that unemployment leads to social exclusion and depressed people, but that should not blind us for the fact that the employed people with a heavy unpaid work load are overworked and that a single focus on unemployment and paid work will not solve the insufficient supply, the undervaluation and unjust distribution of unpaid work.

So let us turn to the social policy proposals and analyse their contributions to ease those tensions. The proposals that will be analysed are low-wage employment subsidies, basic income, participation income, basic stock or stakeholding, sabbatical accounts, and wages for housework. For each of those proposals, I want to ask the following questions:

1. What is their (implicit) notion of society and the underlying ideology regarding work and income?
2. What is the (implicit) underlying ideology regarding gender roles and the family?
3. Does it revalue unpaid work? Child care? Elderly and sick care? Volunteers' work? Household work?
4. Are there incentives to redistribute market and non-market work between men and women, and perhaps also over other social categories?

## 6.2 Low-wage employment subsidies

One of the most widely discussed proposals on low-wage subsidies is Phelps (1997). Phelps' proposal starts from the observation that a group of low-wage workers is not able to gain a decent income based on their own labour efforts. To solve this problem, he proposes to restore the opportunity for low-wage earners to self-sufficiency and promote private business by subsidising (through a specific scheme) those lowest wages. Similar schemes have been proposed in Europe, all with the underlying aim to make paid work for the lowest skilled more rewarding through governmental wage subsidies.

From the perspective of unpaid work, however, these proposals have little to offer. The reason is that these proposals reduce "work" to "labour market work", and are based on an underlying conception of society where the country's collective project is business (Phelps 2000). The implicit underlying gender ideology is the male breadwinner model. As Ackerman and Alstott (1999:209) argue, "Phelps wants to reinforce men's connection to the workplace and women's economic reliance on men". He is thereby "invoking outdated gender roles". As far as I could see, Phelps is not revaluing child care work, nor elderly or sick care work, nor household work. He is also not proposing any way to redistribute market and non-market work. In principle, one could add additional proposals to a low-wage employment subsidy scheme, but these proposals themselves are only reaffirming the prevailing idea that non-market work is not really work and does not need any social or economic policy to support and/or redistribute it.

## 6.3 Basic income

The basic income proposal (e.g Van Parijs ed. 1992, 1995; Groot & van der Veen eds. 2000) radically decouples income from work: every citizen, independent of her willingness to perform work on the labour market or at home, receives a monthly (or weekly) income. A basic income can be endorsed on many different societal ideologies, and the way to phrase it appears to be crucial for its political feasibility.<sup>13</sup> But in all cases there is an argument that a minimal income should be given to all citizen's, independent of their contribution to the formal paid economy.

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<sup>13</sup> See Groot & van der Veen (2000) for an interesting account of the debate in the Netherlands. Their analysis makes clear that the way the case for a basic income is presented, influences its political chances and could jeopardise further public discussions on the proposal.

What is its underlying gender and family ideology? Basic income proposals are individualistic in nature, and thus do break with household-based entitlements, which is a central element of many actual tax systems and welfare state provisions. From a financial point of view, a basic income could be said to revalue *all* non-market work – just as it, on the same logic, revalues surfing in Malibu, dealing drugs or shouting in the streets that God is alive and Jesus will return to earth very soon. Moreover, depending on the modifications in the proposals, a basic income will be given to all adults, but not to children. If we want to financially revalue child care, I see only two options. Either the proposal should combine a basic income for adults with *generous* child care benefits. Those benefits should not only reflect the material needs of children, but equally well the immaterial needs which they have, and for the youngest of them that is 24 hour a day care. Generous child benefits should not be seen as a contribution to their parents for nappies, milk and heating, but as a benefit which the child can use to “buy” quality child care – be it a parent, both parents, a relative or a child minder on the market. Or, alternatively, the same effect can be reached through a basic income for all, including children. Again, we should consider carefully before making a basic income for children age-related (where younger children get less), as this would deny the immaterial needs of care which the youngest citizens have.

Furthermore, despite the optimism of some (e.g Jordan 1992:172; Standing 1992:59, among others), I do not think that basic income will provide any incentives to redistribute market and non-market work (Robeyns 2000a, 2001). Van Parijs (2001) acknowledges this, and I believe he is right when he asserts that “it will not suffice to preach a “change of mind”. Hard thinking will be needed about institutional designs that would drastically reduce or even abolish gender-biased specialisation.” Furthermore, the libertarian case for a basic income does not (always) recognise the gender related nature of the constraints on choices. In part this is an empirical question, in part it has to do with the need to bring a extremely wide variety of knowledge into the basic income literature, which is mainly economic from orientation. In any case, although this springs both the framework of this paper and the capacities of my brain, I believe that a basic income will not be politically sellable if the proposal does not consider its (undesirable) gender effects, and does not enlarge its proposal with those “institutional designs” to redistribute market and non-market work.

## **6.2 Basic stock or stakeholding**

As far as the perspective of unpaid work is concerned, the stakeholding proposal (Ackerman & Alstott 1999) is identical to the basic income proposal. The stakeholding framework does not provide a financial revaluation of child care, though Ackerman and Alstott are aware of this (1999:132) and “support the basic idea of family allowances. Given the concerns of the liberal state with equal opportunity, it only makes sense to compensate care givers for their crucial work at the moment of teach youngster’s greatest vulnerability” (1999:175).

In my reading Ackerman’s and Alstott’s proposal, all the limitations (from the perspective of unpaid work) of the basic income proposal, equally apply to the stakeholder’s proposal.

### 6.3 Participation income

A participation income is a similar proposal as a basic income, with one major modification: the income is made conditional upon doing activities which are useful for society. This can be paid work, or unpaid work. In Atkinson's words: "In my proposal, the basic income would be paid conditional on *participation*. I should stress at once that this is not limited to labour market participation. While the qualifying conditions would include people working as an employee or self-employed, absent from work on grounds of sickness or injury, unable to work on grounds of disability and unemployed but available for work, it would also include people engaging in approved forms of education or training, caring for young, elderly or disabled dependants or undertaking approved forms of voluntary work, etc." (1996:68-69, italics in original). Thus a participation income will *not* be paid for surfing in Malibu, dealing drugs or shouting in the streets that God is alive and Jesus will return to earth very soon, except when society at large would decide that this is a societal useful activity.

Does a participation income make a difference to the valuation and distribution of unpaid work, compared with a basic income? As far as I can see it doesn't make a difference for the distribution, but it does make a difference for the *moral or psychological* revaluation of unpaid work. The reasoning is simple and can be felt intuitively: If one gets the same basic income for lying on the beach as for raising children and taking care of a frail parent, then the additional financial value that society is willing to pay from moving from the beach to the stress and 24-hours work of a household is worth... nothing. I believe that most people feel that there is no way in which a basic income signals any *explicit* societal recognition and appreciation for unpaid work. Thus, from the point of view of unpaid work, a participation income has one definite advantage over basic income proposals. Note also that for some of the basic income proponents a basic income virtually equals a participation income, as they do not decouple income as radically from work as the most libertarian proposals (like Van Parijs 1995). For example, Claus Offe (1992:70) defined basic income as a citizens' based entitlement where "not paid activities but 'useful activities', including activities performed *outside employment and the labour market* (...) constitute the moral justification of the claim to benefits" (italics in original). Nevertheless, while the difference thus might be very small, it might be wise for activists and political parties to opt for a participation income instead of a basic income, especially given the 'rhetorical reputation' which it got in recent history.

This has recently been recognised by a (non-governmental) Belgian commission reflecting on the future of the welfare state and employment policy (Soete et al 1999). Regrettably, however, they define 'labour' in its narrow economic definition of activities contributing directly to the formal measured economy. The commission thus pleads for a "participation insurance" instead of the current "unemployment insurance". This commission is, however, overestimating the effects of such a participation insurance on the gender division of paid and unpaid work (Soete et al, 1999:70) and on gender equality (Soete et al, 1999:95).

## 6.4 Sabbatical accounts

As a transitional and gradual measure to a basic income, Claus Offe (1997:100-103) has suggested to grant every citizen a “sabbatical account”. This account would give her the right to a number of years (say, 10) of subsistence-level income. Offe proposes to increase or decrease this number of years so as to allow for avoiding undesirable effects (e.g. school leavers taking up their sabbaticals) and to provide extra years for certain kinds of non-market work, such as childbearing and care.

This proposal shows that there are interesting partial proposals possible, which in some sense combine elements of the pure radical unconditionally of a basic income with giving additional credit (in the literal sense here) to non-market work. However, I would suspect that the revaluation of unpaid work is stronger under the participation income proposal, or under an alternative gradualist approach which Offe (1997) discusses, namely opening up the categories of “excuses” for non-participation that already exist. A sabbatical account could still be used for surfing in Malibu, dealing drugs or shouting in the streets that God is alive and Jesus will return to earth very soon.

## 6.5 Wages for housework

A last proposal which has been advocated by some organisations of housewives in Europe is “wages for housework” or “a housewife’s wage”. While these proposals would radically financially revalue unpaid work, they do not challenge the gender division of labour and can create unjustified inequalities amongst different groups of women. Furthermore, they might in fact even reinforce traditional gender roles. The reasoning, as I have argued elsewhere (Robeyns 2000b; 2001) goes as follows. In the strict sense, a housewife’s wage is a “wage” or benefit for individuals working in the home, who are paid for their household and care labour. It could be made explicitly conditional upon taking care of small children. Organisations of housewives in Europe advocate such a housewife’s allowance. They refer to the unjust situation occurring as some women who are now receiving unemployment benefit use it in an improper way (as they are *de facto* not available for the labour market). This also happens when working parents can apply for career interruption premia if they withdraw temporarily from the labour market, mostly to take care of small children.

Are wages for housework a solution to the undervaluation of unpaid work? I do not think so. There is (at least) 1 major difficulty with this proposal. If such a wage for housework is paid to any person who is not officially unemployed, or employed, and not conditional upon care work, then it will revalue and finance the housework done by housewives and househusbands, while a working woman (or man) doing household chores after work and in weekends would hence have to pay taxes for (wo)men who do the same household chores in a “paid” fashion. With a housewife’s wage, working women would then face a triple disincentive: working outside the house increases their workburden, they are extra taxed to pay for the housewife’s wage, and they do not receive any allowance for the household work they perform. The same holds if a housewife’s wage would be made conditional upon care work, except that here we have to take into account that in most continental European countries child care is subsidised,

which could be argued to create an injustice towards home care workers. Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that many mothers contribute more through taxes than child care costs the state. As such, from a purely economic point of view, it is better to encourage labour market participation, especially by high skilled women whose skills and talents are scarce on the market, instead of creating incentives to “keep them at home”.

The upshot is that a basic income and especially participation income seem to be a better way to resolve these injustices, as it would reward the unpaid work done by *anyone*, regardless whether they combine it with a paid job or not.

## 6.6 Summing up

What can we learn from this brief overview of social policy proposals studied through the lens of unpaid work? First, proposals focussing on low-wage employment creation or wage subsidies are not helpful at all from the point of view of unpaid work, as they are firmly embedded in the work ethic which assumes that labour market work is the “normal” situation and non-market work is only instrumentally useful for market work. So we need to challenge “the view that an individual’s life is expressed on the labour market and in terms of her success as a wage earner” (Offe 1997:96). Basic income, shareholding, participation income, a sabbatical account and wages for housework all do this. Based on the (admittedly rough and preliminary) discussion presented above, the participation income seems to be most helpful in this respect, but it is evident that this begs more profound research.

Note also that none of the proposals entails proposals to redistribute paid and unpaid work between men and women. I personally believe this is troubling, both morally as well as politically.

## 7. CONCLUSION: DRAWING THE CONTOURS FOR A MORE BALANCED APPROACH TO THE VALUATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF WORK

This paper has tried to sketch some of the most important findings on the political economy of unpaid work in western societies. Starting from this broader perspective on work, and taking its nature and its quantitative and qualitative importance into account, a discussion of social policy proposals looks quite differently from the more dominant discussions focussing on formal paid market work. This is problematic, as in reality market work and non-market work are deeply connected and interdependent.

Therefore I would conclude that social policy analyses and proposals should always reflect upon non-market labour. Now too many social policy analyses suffer from the legacy of modern economics on the one hand and of the strong paid work ideology in the western welfare states on the other hand. Economic theory assumes that people make a trade off between paid labour and leisure, and this has deeply influenced policy proposals. Most *men* do so, yes, as the studies on the gender division of labour show that their share and absolute contribution to household and care work increases only marginally and is not very sensitive to changes in their own labour market supply. But the reality for these men is changing rapidly,

as women (especially young and high skilled women) continue to work towards a more equal division of household responsibilities, which will put unpaid work more and more on the male employee's agenda, and as in the near future an increasing number of men will be confronted with the responsibilities of elderly care. Moreover, most *women* do not make this simple trade off between paid work and leisure; either they make a trade off between more unpaid work for less paid work (and perhaps a little bit more leisure and less stress), but many women have paid their own full time labour market participation at the price of *less* leisure, and not more. Hence, a first conclusion of this paper should be that social policy analyses, which limit their analysis to paid work and leisure, even when sympathetically acknowledging the limitations of their models, should start their work over. I would be surprised if such analyses will lead to the same conclusions once the economic and social importance of the non-market sector is fully acknowledged.

The second main conclusion of this paper is about the concrete policy proposals. If the analyses presented in this paper are right, then the conclusion to draw for social policy is that we need a revaluation of unpaid work (especially care work) while at the same time redistributing unpaid work between men and women. Labour-market oriented proposals provide no help here. Basic income or stakeholding proposals, and especially the idea of participation income, are a sensible solution for a revaluation of unpaid work. However, I have also argued that these proposals provide no additional incentives to redistribute unpaid work. And while in many countries academics and policy makers will perhaps first have to get used to the *idea* that the redistribution of unpaid work is a legitimate political aim, other countries are already working on scenario's to implement this redistribution, as is the case in the Netherlands (Bruyn-Hundt 1996b). I hope that future basic income proposals, especially those who are meant as a partial or gradual implementation, will give these concerns enough attention.

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