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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Who cares? A thematic literature review around the themes of care work, social reproduction and Universal Basic Income

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Abstract

This article explores the themes at the intersection of social reproduction, care work, and Universal Basic Income (UBI) in the literature. UBI has become important, both in the academic and public spheres, in an attempt to even out social disparity and injustice (Parolin and Siöland 2020). Given the global crisis of care, most recently highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic (Heintz *et al.* 2021), it is evident that a shift in the relationship between capitalism and social reproduction must take place (Bauhardt and Harcourt 2019; Heintz *et al.* 2021). The focus of this paper is looking into UBI's potential to transform the way value is attributed to care work and social reproduction in society and, consequently, the gendered practices that lie underneath (Weeks 2011). This article stresses the complexities of such a transformation and shows that UBI can only be transformative if carefully implemented in co-ordination with other interventions, within a targeted policy frame, and with a specific focus on gender and social reproduction. To offer an accurate picture, the author conducted an extended literature review in search for the main debates around social reproduction, care work and UBI. To identify the most relevant themes within the conversation, Braun and Clarke's Thematic Analysis (TA) (2017) was chosen as the most fitting method.

Key Words: Universal Basic Income, Care Work, Gendered Roles, Value Transformation, Citizen Participation

Introduction

In recent years alternative economic theories have experienced a resurgence of attention, given the uncertainties and crises of capitalism and the understanding that endless economic growth does not always lead to wellbeing and happiness. Feminist economists have pointed out that the survival of capitalism lies on the exploitation of those reproductive services that ensure its renewal (Bauhardt and Harcourt 2019; Heintz *et al.* 2021). These services, offered by humans and nature, are highly devalued in the current system and are assumed to be endless and renewable. Many believe that a shift in the way social reproduction and care work are valued in society needs to happen for the system to undergo a real change (Leonard and Fraser 2016; Bauhardt and Harcourt 2019; Heintz *et al.* 2021). One of the policy proposals that aims at the creation of a post-capitalist and post-work society is Universal Basic Income (UBI).

The idea behind UBI is that every member of a society should be given a certain amount of money each month, regardless of employment or status, that is sufficient for subsistence and promotes economic stability (Bidadanure 2019). Despite there being much literature around UBI, the themes of gender, care work and social reproduction seem to be marginal, as will be clarified later in the analysis. This article aims at filling this gap by trying to understand if UBI can truly be transformative in this regard and how it interacts with the feminist economic understanding that social reproduction and care work need to be reconceptualised within economy.

Context

Rethinking work

The industrial revolution is considered the point that separates the modern era from post-modern societies. Before this, the concept of working for a wage did not have such a prominent position within society, given that it did not play as much of a social or political role as it does today, and people used to work less. It was with the advent of industrial capitalism that the role of work slowly asserted its dominance, culminating in being considered an ethical and moral duty of all individuals (Gorz 1999). The rise of neoliberal policies, that started towards the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s, came with a promise of endless growth and the idea that hard work equates a good life, happiness, and success (Gorz 1999; Beneria 2016b). Looking at today's globalised marketplace and its multiple financial crises, it is evident that capitalism did not keep the promise that economic growth automatically generates a better life. On the contrary, it is possible to identify a widening of inequalities, increasing social unrest, and the weakening of democracies across the globe (Berger 2001; Beneria 2016a). A new conversation around development began in the 1980s, which aimed to challenge the assumption that economic growth and paid labour are the only source of success and satisfaction for human beings (Gorz 1999; Beneria 2016b).

The reduction of work

Shifting the focus towards human wellbeing would bring a new outlook to human activity, where work is not simply a service offered in exchange for monetary compensation

but also a pleasurable and caring activity (Gorz 1999; Haug 2009). In today's "work-based society" (Gorz 1999, p.41), productive work is considered to be a moral obligation that individuals need to fulfil, with the understanding that it will result in collective success. With the concept of "work ethic", there is an attribution of morality to labour that automatically shifts the responsibility onto individuals. This creates a dichotomy between those who work hard and are therefore granted social recognition, and those that for various reasons do not deliver on this duty and are deemed shameful and unworthy to be in society (Gorz 1999). Under this premises, it is clear why waged labour ends up dominating people's lives. The only way to be able to dedicate attention to other aspects of life is by reducing the number of hours dedicated to paid work. Proponents of a reconceptualisation of time dedicated to wage labour suggest a division of human activity that encompasses "domestic labour and work-for-oneself", (Gorz 1999, p.43) as well as "autonomous activity" (Gorz 1999, p.44). The first includes all of those tasks that do not have a monetary motivation and are aimed at the reproduction and wellbeing of individuals and communities, while the latter refers to those creative pursuits that humans undertake for no other purpose than enjoying the process.

Universal Basic Income as a model to reduce work

A policy proposal and economic model that has been associated with the reduction of working hours is UBI. It is a proposal that since the 1980s has gained more and more attention in academic circles, among activists, as well as in the mainstream discourse (Van Parijs 1991; Weeks 2011). One of the most recent supporters of UBI is Philippe Van Parijs (1991), who in his article "Why Surfers Should Be Fed: The Liberal Case for an Unconditional Basic Income" defines it as "an individual guaranteed minimum income without either a means test or a (willingness to) work condition" (p.102). Bidadanure (2019) expands by defining it as "a *radical* policy proposal of a monthly cash grant given to all members of a community without means test, regardless of personal desert, with no strings attached and, under most proposals, at a sufficiently high level to enable a life free from economic insecurity" (p.482, emphasis added). What is crucial to understand is that it is a grant that is paid out in *cash*, *individually* to people and not households, *unconditionally*, *universally* to the whole population and on a *regular* basis (Weeks 2011; Bidadanure 2019). The fact that UBI offers economic wellbeing to individuals without any work being performed in return is valuable when attempting to achieve an overall reduction of paid work, freeing time from the subordination to labour (Weeks 2011). Furthermore, this model has received much attention for its compatibility with a renewed understanding of the importance of care and reproductive work.

Care work and social reproduction within capitalism

To better understand how UBI could interact with care and social reproduction, it is necessary to zoom out and look at capitalism's relationship with reproductive work. Feminist economists have pointed out that there is a clear interdependence between the market's ability to accumulate capital and unpaid domestic and care work (Beneria 2016c; Bauhardt 2019; Heintz *et al.* 2021). Lourdes Benería and Sen (2016c) identify these unpaid activities as "reproductive work" while the feminist discourse has long been referring to them as "social reproduction" (Bakker and Gill 2003). Reproductive work and social reproduction encompass

various activities that contribute to the propagation of capitalism: On the one hand, they include daily tasks that renew workers ability to work (e.g. eating, sleeping, emotional or psychological support) while, on the other hand, they encompass all aspects of biological reproduction (e.g. bearing, raising, and educating children, and so forth), including nature and the ecological services it offers (Bauhardt 2019).

Care work is located within this broader landscape of social reproduction and reproductive work. The concept of care has been centred in feminist discourse and is fundamental to understand the necessity of reducing waged labour. Care work, as the name suggests, is an activity that is inherent to human beings and is the root of human interaction; it consists of people's ability to connect with each other on a personal, intimate level, to care and to be cared for (Lynch 2009; International Labour Organisation 2018). Because of this relational and intimate nature, it is more difficult to commodify and outsource it as it involves emotional and psychological labour, which are more difficult to assign a market value to (Beneria 2016c; Heintz *et al.* 2021). Truly acknowledging the relevance of care work for social reproduction entails a restructuring and rebalancing of waged work and other types of activities within neoliberal capitalism.

While some care tasks have entered the realm of waged production (Weeks 2011), a big portion is still carried out in the domestic sphere and, because it is often assumed to be performed "out of love", it is therefore unpaid (Beneria 2016c; Bauhardt 2019; Heintz *et al.* 2021). Even when institutionalised and waged, reproductive work is often undervalued and consequently underpaid (Beneria 2016c; Leonard and Fraser 2016). Additionally, it is a sector that is often feminised (Leonard and Fraser 2016; Lynch 2022), with women globally performing three times as much unpaid care work as men (International Labour Organisation 2018; UN Women 2020), often because of gendered stereotypes and cultural beliefs that they are "naturally" more apt to it (Bauhardt 2019). Aspects such as socio-economic status and race contribute to the creation of hierarchies of care, where those that have the economic means hire others to perform domestic caring responsibilities, segregating these chores to a minority of women (Hoppania and Vaittinen 2015; Leonard and Fraser 2016; Amelina and Lutz 2019).

Feminist perspectives on Universal Basic Income

When applying a gendered lens to the UBI model, it is possible to interpret it as a tool to rethink and reshape gender inequalities within the family on a small scale, as well as on a bigger, societal scale (Weeks 2011; Bidadanure 2019). In theory, this would allow moving away from a gendered male breadwinner model to a more gender-balanced division of care given that UBI "does not address its potential recipients as gendered members of families" (Weeks 2011, p.149). However, given that gendered roles are deeply rooted in societal understanding of labour division, it is necessary to discuss and address them proactively to unlock UBI's transformative potential to revalue care work and social reproduction within society.

UBI is a policy proposal that is increasingly receiving attention in multiple spheres. Given the opportunity that it offers in restructuring society's current understanding of time and work, it is fundamental that the discourse takes on a gendered lens. This has often not been the case, given that "[s]ociological, economic, legal and political thought has focused on the public sphere, the outer spaces of life, indifferent to the fact that none of these can function without the care institutions of society" (Lynch 2009, p.36). As economist and sociologist Diane Elson (1998) clarifies in "The Economic, the Political and the Domestic: Businesses, States and Households in the Organisation of Production", "the majority of people reading and writing political economy, and making practical decisions based on their understanding of political economy, do not have women's rights and gender equality as their prime objectives" (p.190).

Methodology

This article is based on secondary analysis of academic papers and was carried out as an extensive thematic literature review with the aim of acquiring insights into the various themes that exist within the literature at the intersection of UBI, care work and social reproduction. Despite this being a thematic review, it was still relevant to maintain an approach to the search strategy that is as systematic as possible, to avoid any bias. For this purpose, it was important to define what criteria for inclusion and exclusion of articles would be applied and maintained throughout the process. Given the time constraints in writing the paper, the criteria adopted in the search were that the articles would be written in English and published in the last 10 years, which would also ensure they are relevant to the current discourse. Additionally, to ensure reliability, only peer reviewed articles were chosen. Given that there was no funding allocated for the writing of this paper, only open access articles made it to the final cut. Because of time constraints it was only possible to search on one database, therefore Web of Science was chosen both for the variety of disciplines it covers and also for its convenient search strategy options. To find articles, keywords used in different combinations were "Universal Basic Income", "Basic Income", "care", "social reproduction", and "gender".

When conducting the review, the process of selecting the articles took time and attention so that the findings would truthfully reflect the discourse. This happened in different stages, starting with an initial scanning of existing articles, followed by a more in depth reading to assess their pertinence and quality. The selection process was thoroughly documented on a separate log to ensure that any decision taken could be traced back and justified. This log included information such as how many articles were originally identified, how many were selected for the final review, and why some were discarded (Punch 2013; Raddats *et al.* 2019; Snyder 2019). The definitive selection was conducted on June 23rd 2023, resulting in 30 articles being picked for further reading.

After more in depth analysis, some articles were removed because they referred to "basic income" as minimum wage and were therefore not pertinent. Others, such as the ones written by Pinto et al. (2021) and Johnson et al. (2019), despite their focus on UBI, looked at extremely technical aspects of health that did not necessarily fit the scope of this specific

review. Additionally, two articles by Gopal and Issa (2021) and Cabaña and Linares (2022), despite being very interesting, were excluded because they offered a more general discourse around UBI and did not engage enough with the themes of social reproduction and gendered empowerment. The article by Vega and Santana (2022), despite the abstract being in English, was written in Spanish, but because of its relevance to the research question and because of the author's ability to speak and read Spanish, it was kept. The literature review was finally conducted on 13 articles that are listed in a table at the end of this article.

The articles selected are mostly theoretical and do not look at specific empirical cases. They come from a variety of journals around Sociology, Policy, Feminist Studies, Economy, Childhood studies, and Law. Once the sample of sources was selected, the articles were thoroughly read to generate specific codes that were later condensed into bigger themes. To identify recurring and specific themes an interpretive TA approach proved to be the best method of analysis (Becker *et al.* 2012; Clarke and Braun 2017). Examples of codes that emerged and were eventually used are "gendered stereotype"; "hindrance to transformation"; "transformative potential"; "policy support"; "cultural assumption"; "alternative proposal"; among others.

Given that the article only engaged with secondary data, much of the ethical considerations had to do with the interaction with the texts as well as with the position of the author within the knowledge. A limitation of this study lies in the necessity to set exclusion criteria to narrow down the scope of the literature. This automatically implies that some articles did not make it to the final selection, and it is possible that relevant sources were excluded because of language and accessibility limitations.

Findings and analysis

Overall, the articles reviewed are based on similar conceptualisations of UBI that rest on the understanding previously presented in the context chapter: a grant paid in *cash*, *individually, unconditionally*, *universally, regularly,* and that is assumed to be enough to ensure a decent living standard without the need for recipients to engage in paid work. In this theoretical understanding, UBI is presented as a utopic and society-altering intervention, which leads most of the authors to raise some critical questions around its promise of singlehandedly opening a window of transformation into a post-capitalist and post-work utopia. Throughout the literature, twelve of the articles present both positive and negative opinions and five debate interventions that could support UBI and what policy framework would help it deliver on its promise of a society where social reproduction, and care work are re-valued, and consequently gender norms and stereotypes are challenged.

The main themes identified within the articles were: marginality of gender in the discourse; positions in favour of UBI; critiques of UBI; alternative models to UBI; and policy planning and challenging gender norms.

Marginality of Gender

Some of the articles reinforce the claim laid out in the context chapter, that gender and social reproduction have a marginal position in the UBI discourse. Lombardozzi (2020) clarifies that UBI has attracted attention from both left and right wing parties, and when it comes to progressive left wing positions, it has been praised for its ability to open up space for progress. Despite these claims of the transformative nature of UBI, authors such as Koslowski and Duvander (2018) are sceptical, stressing that the movement does not position itself as explicitly feminist and that, as many other political projects, it has left gender equality behind in favour of other social achievements. Additionally, some of the authors argue that UBI does not challenge the historical norms and cultural understandings rooted in biological determinants that lead to gendered roles in care work (Yamashita 2016; Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Lombardozzi 2020; Yang *et al.* 2021; McGann and Murphy 2023), and the added discrimination that derives from classism and racism (Dinerstein and Pitts 2018; Vega and Santana 2022). Lombardozzi (2020) clarifies that it is fundamental for gender to be at the core of all future policy and economic projects, including UBI, in order to achieve true gender transformation.

Positions in favour of UBI

Nine of the articles articulated the positive outcomes that UBI can have when addressing gender inequality and the invisibility of social reproduction and care work in society.

Even out gendered dynamics

Many of the authors argue that, by freeing up time, UBI would help challenge the social division of labour, inside and outside of the home, and consequently question the biological assumptions that inform the gender segregation of tasks (Zelleke 2022). Lombardozzi (2020), Vega and Santana (2022) and McGann and Murphy (2023) maintain that UBI could help create the right conditions for women to negotiate the value of unpaid reproductive and care work within society. In this sense, UBI could support a more gender-neutral social citizenship (Yang *et al.* 2021) and lead to a more balanced distribution of care work between genders (Lombardozzi 2020), helped by the promotion of part-time employment among men (McGann and Murphy 2023).

Additionally, Yang *et al.* (2021) argue that by offering a per-capita income support, UBI would empower women (Lehmann and Sanders 2018; Lombardozzi 2020; Segal *et al.* 2021; Yang *et al.* 2021; Zelleke 2022), allowing them to access healthcare, pension and income support (Zelleke 2022) and helping them out of abusive situations, that are more difficult to leave when economic support is given on a household basis (Vega and Santana 2022; Zelleke 2022). Furthermore, Yang *et al.* (2021) argue that UBI would hinder the outsourcing of domestic work to women who are usually exploited and discriminated in grey markets. Vega

and Santana (2022) add that UBI would support women to leave informal sectors of the market, areas where they are often employed, especially in the Global South. At the same time UBI could empower workers in general to negotiate better conditions, given that they would not need a job to live but would want to work as a personal choice.

Change the welfare state

Lehmann and Sanders (2018) underline how current welfare systems are complex and invasive, arguing that the difficulties in applying and receiving subsidies actively contribute to perpetuating cycles of poverty. From this perspective, UBI can be seen to substitute a very complex welfare system, since it would be granted indiscriminately to every citizen, avoiding scrutinising practices of eligibility, preserving personal dignity, while also cutting the costs associated with assessment and evaluation (Lehmann and Sanders 2018; Vega and Santana 2022). Additionally, UBI has the potential to reach people that live at the margins and fall through the cracks of the welfare system (Lombardozzi 2020), large numbers of which are women (Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Vega and Santana 2022), especially supporting female-led single parent families (Yang *et al.* 2021; Vega and Santana 2022) and thus empowering women in the face of the state (Vega and Santana 2022). Lehmann and Sanders (2018) further argue that UBI can be an expensive policy proposal but that it is fundamental to have a clear understanding of the current costs of the welfare system UBI would replace, while also considering that it would come with health benefits, further reducing the costs on the health system as navigating the current welfare system takes a toll on citizens' mental health and wellbeing.

Transformative potential

Despite controversial opinions around UBI's real power to transform society, Alessandrini (2018) offers a good reading of its transformative *potential,* portraying it as a conversation opener that could lead to a bigger restructuring. As the author clarifies,

> "[i]t may be that in the process, the way in which we conceive of work, and this includes reproductive labour, may be affected so that in place of the old 'work as worth' ideology, a discussion on how to organise the activities we value in life could begin, and in this discussion the meaning of reproductive labour may be re-articulated, delinked from the house, the family, the mother and the woman" (Alessandrini 2018, p.406).

After all, as Segal *et al.* (2021) claim, positive outcomes have been seen in UBI experiments with people actively engaging in paid work, re-entering the workforce long-term after being unemployed for extended periods of time, and being more likely to find long-term and better quality employment. Experiences collected in UBI trials show improved mental and physical health, as well as higher levels of happiness and satisfaction (Lehmann and Sanders 2018; Segal *et al.* 2021). When addressing gendered dynamics, pilot projects prove that UBI enhances women's economic independence while reducing their necessity to engage in transactional sex (Segal *et al.* 2021; Yang *et al.* 2021) and has a positive impact on their social standing, especially for those living in poverty (Lehmann and Sanders 2018).

Critiques of UBI

Twelve of the articles offered a more sceptical perspective on UBI's ability to deliver a long-lasting transformation when it comes to social reproduction and gender inequality.

Reproduction of systems of oppression

A strong critique directed at UBI by Dinerstein and Pitts (2018) and Lombardozzi and Pitts (2020) is that it is not transformative enough, and that it rather seems to be a necessity for capitalism to stabilise its current crises and further reproduce. These authors claim that UBI oversimplifies the social processes that take place in society and has a partial understanding of the complexity of the mechanisms of capitalism and the interconnectedness of today's crises. Given that UBI is designed to work within the capitalist system, it seems difficult for it to have the tools to challenge the system itself (Lombardozzi and Pitts 2020). Dinerstein and Pitts (2018) and Vega and Santana (2022) argue that UBI is presented as a solution to diffuse social tension and even out inequalities by appealing to a concept of universality that does not address the social relations underneath, running the risk of being blind towards intersectional forms of discrimination. They argue that it would only strengthen class and racial segregation in hierarchies of care where women in lower income families would end up tied to domestic work more than women in upper classes, hindering collective action. Finally, because pilot projects have only run for short periods of time, these authors claim there is a gap in the knowledge around long term and intergenerational impacts of UBI. Given these uncertainties and doubts, it is fundamental for proponents of the policy to pay attention to the social relations of capitalism within which UBI operates and address them, if the model is to be transformative (Lombardozzi and Pitts 2020).

Reinforcement of gender segregation

When specifically looking at gendered power dynamics, Lombardozzi (2020) and Vega and Santana (2022) question UBI's ability to offer a rearticulation of these roles, given its foundation in pre-existing patriarchal structures and stereotypes. Because UBI does not openly and intentionally address the gendered dimension of labour distribution in the public and private sectors, and the biases present in the welfare system (Yamashita 2016; Lombardozzi 2020), it might actually end up *reinforcing* segregation in pre-determined roles, gender-based expectations and hierarchies (Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Yang *et al.* 2021; Vega and Santana 2022; McGann and Murphy 2023). Additionally, it runs the risk of playing on top of existing inequalities, worsening the wellbeing of poorer women (Lombardozzi 2020). A thorough deconstruction of gender roles within society needs to happen before UBI can deliver on its promise of equality (Koslowski and Duvander 2018). What seems fundamental to understand is that norms condition decisions in daily life, understanding how they shape culture and institutions is fundamental to properly challenge power dynamics (Lombardozzi 2020).

Depoliticisation of the State

Lombardozzi and Pitts (2020) stress that the state is "the political form" (p.581) that capitalist social relations take and Dinerstein and Pitts (2018) proceed to criticise the fact that UBI lacks a critical perspective towards it. Firstly, they claim, the state must be recognised, not as a neutral entity, but as one of the social relations of capitalism that perpetrate inequality and it is therefore impossible to expect that it will spontaneously alleviate conflicts and contradictions within the system. Secondly, it is fundamental to recognise it as a space that can only deliver a change when there is political struggle and conflict. By overlooking this function, UBI may end up handing over too much power to the state and obliterate those social contradictions that are the fuel for civil action. Especially looking at how UBI has entered the political agendas of right-wing parties and more authoritarian regimes, the risk that the state might arbitrarily decide who can access the grant and who cannot is a matter of real concern. The fact that UBI "concentrates power absolutely in the hands of the state as a benefactor rather than a boss, with the more subservient and compliant relationship this implies" (Dinerstein and Pitts 2018, p.486) may lead to a loss of civil society's capacity to bargain and enact a class struggle for better conditions. Consequently, UBI runs the risk of reinforcing the commodification and privatisation of care services moving accountability from the state onto individuals (Lombardozzi 2020) and potentially weakening women's position in face of the state (Vega and Santana 2022).

Alternatives to UBI

What emerges from many of the articles is that UBI should be contextualised within a broader and more comprehensive set of actions. As Koslowski and Duvander (2018) claim, "[b]asic income is a freedom project. The question is whether money is sufficient to procure such freedom" (p.9). Many of the authors have drawn attention to alternative policies that could either substitute or complement UBI. These are Universal Basic Services and Universal Basic Infrastructure, Participation Income and Care Income. For the scope of this article the last two will not be expanded on.

Universal Basic Services and Universal Basic Infrastructure

Universal Basic Services (UBS) is a proposal that offers an alternative to UBI's reliance on money. As defined by Lombardozzi (2020), the purpose of UBS is to offer "a set of public, free, basic, and quasi-universal services to address material needs such as shelters, sustenance, healthcare, education, legal support, transport and communication" (p.321). This policy would alter the way care services are seen away from being commodities on the market towards a social resource available for everyone (Lombardozzi 2020), consequently repoliticising the State and its responsibility towards citizens (Lombardozzi and Pitts 2020; McGann and Murphy 2023). Lombardozzi and Pitts (2020) and McGann and Murphy (2023) claim that a state expenditure aimed at offering basic services would have a positive outcome as it would reduce the cost of living and increase the percentage of wage that workers would be able to keep for themselves and not invest in care services. This would additionally foster a sense of

collective action that could not be achieved by a highly individualising UBI. In other words, by satisfying human needs more directly, this model could "mitigate some issues and break the individualising link with money inherent in the UBI" (Lombardozzi and Pitts 2020, p.588). As McGann and Murphy (2023) argue, at its core, UBS "is a mission to transform the way services are provided, to put people in control, and to build a new role for the state" (p.20) relying on the understanding that "collective provision yields far better results than market transactions in terms of equity, efficiency, solidarity and sustainability" (p.20). Similarly to UBS, Universal Basic Infrastructure (UBIS) is a model aimed at the direct satisfaction of needs, by focusing on expanding physical infrastructures such as railways, energy, broadband, as well as social ones such as health or care work, to better satisfy the needs of citizens (Lombardozzi and Pitts 2020).

Policy planning and challenging gender norms

Across the different articles taken into consideration for this review, it is possible to identify one recurrent theme. It is clear that UBI can only work if there is a conscious planning and a systematic intervention of the state in an effort to deconstruct gendered roles and the way care is seen within society (Yamashita 2016; Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Yang *et al.* 2021; Vega and Santana 2022). This concept is fundamental because of the risks of careless implementation, as authors Koslowski and Duvander (2018) highlight:

> "[b]asic income would potentially change the boundaries for state intervention, which for many sounds intuitively positive, and may well bring many benefits. However, if the state does not intervene regarding gender equality, gender norms will be determined by other less visible forces, such as the power dynamics within households" (p.13).

As Yamashita (2016) clarifies, the welfare system is not neutral, rather argues that "[s]ocial policies recognise and offer institutional support to some models of caring and family organisation while sanctioning others" (p.434). In their article, Vega and Santana (2022) stress the necessity to directly address cultural assumptions in order to achieve true gender transformation. In this sense, targeted policy seems to have a more direct impact when addressing the distribution of care and reproductive tasks across society than UBI alone (Yamashita 2016; Koslowski and Duvander 2018; McGann and Murphy 2023). To challenge stereotypical divisions of roles, both Yamashita (2016) and Vega and Santana (2022) clarify that it is necessary to detach any assumptions from specific roles and to normalise the practice of care as performable by all genders.

When it comes to policy, Koslowski and Duvander (2018) claim that worldwide, the policy environment for implementing a UBI is not ready and that the state should intervene to actively shape policy to guarantee transformative results. Given that "[t]he dynamics of implementing change to social policy generally, and income security specifically, are complex in any pluralist democracy" (Segal *et al.* 2021, p.399), there is a strong need for negotiation and for participation of civil society in the shaping of a new post-capitalist landscape. According to Zelleke (2022), Laruffa *et al.* (2022) and Vega and Santana (2022), it is fundamental to self-organise and adjust national policies at a local level in order to have a

clearer understanding of the actual needs of the community. Therefore, UBI should be seen as an additional integration to other services and not a substitution of them, obtained through bargaining and with the support of political action and coordination from the state (Vega and Santana 2022).

Conclusions

What is clear from this analysis is that for UBI to be truly transformative, it needs to be supported by other policies, within a framework that aims at redefining where value lies in society (Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Lombardozzi 2020; Yang *et al.* 2021; McGann and Murphy 2023). What was interesting to observe is the variety of positions present across articles and at times within articles themselves. There is consensus around some areas, for example, the understanding that gendered norms, care work and social reproduction are still quite marginal within the UBI literature, that it is necessary for them to come to the fore in order to achieve real transformation (Yamashita 2016; Dinerstein and Pitts 2018; Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Lombardozzi 2020; Yang *et al.* 2021; Vega and Santana 2022; McGann and Murphy 2023) and the fact that how gendered norms are created and performed in society needs to be centred and challenged (Yamashita 2016; Koslowski and Duvander 2018; Lombardozzi 2020). At the same time, there is disagreement around UBIs potential to transform gendered norms.

Some very interesting themes emerged that inform an interesting outlook onto a re-centring of care work and social reproduction within a neoliberal capitalist system and would be worth further research. Firstly, the understanding that care work is a practice that is more cultural than biological and that there is a need to deconstruct the biological understanding that informs social norms around it and implement policies that are built on this premise (Yamashita 2016; Laruffa *et al.* 2022; Vega and Santana 2022; McGann and Murphy 2023). Secondly, the focus placed by authors such as McGann and Murphy (2023), Vega and Santana (2022), Lombardozzi (2020), and Lombardozzi and Pitts (2020) on the need to shift from a more individualised policy planning to a collective and re-distributive approach towards care work is fundamental to expand on. In connection to this, the stress put by the same authors on co-production of services and shared responsibility between state and civil society is key in further organising creative alternatives around UBS and UBIS.

The bringing together of such a variety of articles and disciplines paints a very comprehensive and intersectional picture. Overall, this analysis has clarified that re-centring care work and social reproduction in a capitalist system is a complex process that will require multi-layered interventions and the involvement of multiple actors.

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Appendix

In the following table there is a list of the articles used for the literature review with some keywords identified by the author to clarify what the paper focuses on. Full bibliographic information can be found in the reference list.

Author(s) and year	Title	Keywords	Journal
Lombardozzi, L. (2020)	Gender Inequality, Social Reproduction and the Universal Basic Income	Crisis of social reproduction; gender inequality; challenging cultural practices.	The Political quarterly (London. 1930)
Lombardozzi, L.; Pitts, F.H. (2020)	Social form, social reproduction and social policy: Basic income, basic services, basic infrastructure	Crisis of social reproduction; issues with UBI; UBS and UBIS as alternative models.	Capital & class
Dinerstein, A.C.; Pitts, F.H. (2018)	From post-work to post-capitalism? Discussing the basic income and struggles for alternative forms of social reproduction	Crisis of social reproduction; issues with UBI; limitations to UBI's utopic potential.	Journal of labor and society
McGann, M.; Murphy, M.P. (2023)	Income Support in an Eco-Social State: The Case for Participation Income	Shifting the focus of economy; UBS and PI as alternative models; policy framework.	Social policy and society: a journal of the Social Policy Association

Laruffa, F.; McGann, M.; Murphy, M.P. (2022)	Enabling Participation Income for an Eco-Social State	Shifting the focus of economy; PI as alternative model; policy framework.	Social policy and society: a journal of the Social Policy Association
Yamashita, J. (2016)	A Vision for Postmaternalism: Institutionalising Fathers' Engagement with Care	Shifting the focus of economy; policy intervention; reshaping cultural practices.	Australian feminist studies
Segal, H.; Banting, K.; Forget, E. (2021)	The need for a federal Basic Income feature within any coherent post-COVID-19 economic recovery plan	Covid-19; crisis of public care sector; UBI and its transformative potential.	Facets (Ottawa)
Lehmann, J.; Sanders, R. (2018)	Editorial: Towards a Universal Basic Income?	Crisis of public care sector; UBI and its transformative potential; better practices.	Children Australia
Alessandrini, D. (2018)	Of value, measurement and social reproduction	Value of social reproduction and care work; opening for feminist demands.	Griffith law review
Koslowski, A.; Duvander, A.Z. (2018)	Basic Income: The Potential for Gendered Empowerment?	Challenging cultural practices; gender inequality; targeted policy intervention.	Social inclusion
Yang, J.Q.; Mohan, G.; Pipil, S.; Fukushi, K. (2021)	Review on basic income (BI): its theories and empirical cases	Literature review on UBI; transformative and limiting potential of UBI.	Journal of social and economic development
Vega, C.; Santana, A.T. (2022)	Universal Basic Income and Care Income in feminist debates. The perspective of the reappropriation of wealth	UBI as a feminist claim; CI as an alternative; value of social reproduction and care work.	Política y sociedad (Madrid, Spain)
Zelleke, A. (2022)	Wages for Housework: The Marxist-Feminist Case for Basic Income	UBI as a feminist claim; value of social reproduction and care work; UBI’s potential.	Política y sociedad (Madrid, Spain)

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