



Steady State Manchester
thriving people, recovering
planet

**Women work at the heart of community solidarity:
the intersection of debates about informal networking
and universal basic income ■**

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Postgrowth (utopian?) imaginaries

A future that is ecologically safe with people living within planetary boundaries

People living with greater social equity and work for the social good rather than merely for profit.

A time with less formal, paid work and consequently more time to spend on family and friends, leisure and on building community through participation and solidarity activities.

Societies with a shift in social values in favour of care – care for children, those with poor health and elders - and caring work will be shared out equitably between men and women.



stgrowth (utopian?)imaginaries

There will more time spent on socially useful activities, including food growing, low level manufacture and care of tools and household appliances, community events and activities

There will be reduced energy use and more sharing of energy intensive appliances, less car use and more use of public transport, cycling and walking, more work locally, meeting community needs.



A Feminist Dream Ticket?

Feminist critique of the economy:

problems of both redistribution of social and economic resources, as well as recognition and social status accorded to caring work

Universal Basic Income claims it can help with

(i) redistribution, ensuring every individual has an adequate maintenance income and the availability of good quality jobs are shared out more evenly, and

(ii) social status, with unpaid reproductive care and community work having a greater social value and shared more equitably between men and women. It would seem a feminist dream ticket



Feminists for and against UBI

FOR: UBI has the potential to correct the paid work bias of contemporary social security systems and to increase women's economic autonomy and power within the household.

AGAINST BI will do nothing to directly challenge the gendered division of labour and may well reinforce it

The feminist debate about BI is in some ways a microcosm of wider feminist controversies regarding how the state can recognize the unpaid work women largely do without reinforcing existing inequalities (Wollstonecraft's Dilemma)



Labour market-care dimension of gender inequality: three approaches to policy

- (i) the sameness agenda which seeks to remove barriers to women's participation in male dominated spaces and patterns of life (e.g equal opportunity policies);
- (ii) the difference agenda which seeks to recognise and reward women's entitlement to engage in care work (eg maternity leave, caregiver allowances);
- (iii) the agenda that attempts to change men's behaviour
 - 'universal caregiver' (Fraser, 1994) model, (eg paternity leave).



Back to the postgrowth imaginary

All will have reduced their labour market participation

All will spend more time on food growing, care, repair, renovation, friendships, family, community building and solidarity activities

Formal labour market participation in a post growth scenario will be less for all and UBI might facilitate this

UBI might enable greater reciprocal recognition of paid and unpaid work.



The experience of being valued as part of a community, and partaking in cooperative activities for common goals, is clearly essential to achieving reciprocal recognition. UBI takes the first step in achieving this in post-modern conditions, by removing the financial barriers to self-realisation. In addition to creating the foundations upon which a more symmetrical division of labour might be built, it opens up the debate over the distorted emphasis on paid work. By undermining the strongest and most emotive reasons for prioritising remunerated forms of work, UBI necessitates an overhaul in the manner in which recognition



Holistic Care (Work)

Beyond a focus on family and neighbour care

Care of environment, things, community

Cooperative activities for common goals

Forming, maintaining and developing informal networks

Creating and sustaining communities

Who does this? **WOMEN**- through their emotional labour, skills, sense of collective purpose - connecting with others informally



Women in the community

Women's roles in creating and sustaining communities across the globe vary

Women form and nurture the informal networks

eg UK? Women take informal community roles (informal advice, practical helping, children and elders. Men take formal advisory and advocacy roles

low paid work many women do is about connecting with others wg shop work, care work, residents' groups - citizen enhancing activities and organising around daily life



Intersections and critical notions

Essential to recognise differences and internationalisms

No suggestion of an essentialist notion of 'WOMAN'

So, at least in the short term, a postgrowth future with greater emphasis on community building, social solidarity and the forming and maintenance of social networks (whether or not we call this social capital) will place more onus on women.

UBI may assist in freeing up time away from paid employment to build this future



So What?

UBI could be a useful stepping stone towards a post growth future.

Men must understand what community building and social solidarity means in practice, and to acquire the motivation and the skills to share in the construction of a post growth future, of caring and of community building

Women cannot do it all.: FEMINISATION OF POLITICS AND EVERYDAY LIFE