

Presentation

This issue of *Ekonomiaz* is devoted to feminist economics, a heterodox school of economic thought that presents a critical take on economic and social theories and realities based on an analysis of the roles allocated to women and men.

Feminist economics (FE) has a long track record that runs practically parallel to prevailing economic thinking. Among its most influential classical authors were Harriet Taylor (1807-1858), Beatrice Webb (1858-1943) and Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919). However it was in the 1970s that it began to acquire a higher profile; the International Association for Feminist Economics was then founded in 1992 and the Journal *Feminist Economics* in 1995. This journal remains a benchmark for feminist economists today.

In spite of this long track record, to date FE has not achieved major influence in the academic world, though recent evidence suggests that this may be changing. For example in March 2016 *The Economist* carried an article under the title «A proper reckoning. Feminist economics deserves recognition as a distinct branch of the discipline». This article recognises FE as an established branch of economics and acknowledges its contributions, particularly in the study of unpaid work. Further evidence of its gradual consolidation can be found in the fact that institutions that have traditionally been impervious to the field have begun to publish documents focusing on core issues for feminist economics: a case in point is the attention paid to gender budgeting by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The publication of this issue of *Ekonomiaz* can in itself be seen as an indicator that this school of thought has acquired greater impact and penetrated further into the mainstream.

The influence of FE in economics teaching and research has been limited, though it has grown steadily in recent years, particularly as a result of the incorporation of the approach into postgraduate courses at numerous universities. FE has enjoyed considerable influence in other areas, especially among social movements and organisations that are critical of the current economic model and seek fairer, more equitable alternatives. An example of the social success of the discipline can be found in the number and range of participants, including both attendees and speakers, at feminist economics congresses that have been staged every two years ever since. The first of them took place in 2005 in Bilbao at the Faculty of Economics and Business of the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU).

The interest sparked by FE in various forums may be due in part to its interdisciplinary nature. It transcends the conventional limits of economics and has close links with other disciplines such as sociology, politics, law and anthropology. Some authors are critical of this, but we believe that it is enriching, because it enables different viewpoints, forms of expression and forms of research to be brought together. This in turn enables the complex processes underlying individual and collective human behaviour to be explored in greater depth.

As a discipline, FE has been developed basically by Western female academics, mostly from the English-speaking world, and has therefore dealt mainly with the situations prevailing in that context. However in recent years there have been many analyses by authors from elsewhere, including Asia, Africa and Latin America. The promotional work done by the Journal *Feminist Economics* has played an important role in this expansion. The field is now attracting the interest of more male economists, but for the moment the vast majority of research has been done by women. They have included, and continue to include, authors from various schools of economics (Institutionalists, Marxists, post-Keynesians, etc) and from various traditions of feminism (liberal, socialist, radical, etc). The knowledge areas explored by their research are also varied (applied economics, foundations of economic analysis, economic history, econometrics, etc), though applied economics accounts for the lion's share.

Feminist Economics has its roots in both feminism and economics, and although it can be thought of as a single concept it is not precisely monolithic as a school of thought. This should come as no surprise because there is no single school of feminism and no single vision of economics. However, there are certain points which are common to and shared by all its researchers; one of them is a critical view of current reality based on concern for social inequalities in general and gender inequalities in particular. Another is that they do not always agree with the way in which orthodox economic thinking sees and explains economic reality; this has led them to cast doubt on economic concepts that were formerly thought of as unquestionable. A third point, closely linked to the other two, is a desire for change, with support for a world with fairer, more equitable economic relations, though the paths to be taken and the priorities to be set in order to achieve this are a matter for debate.

MAIN LINES

One of the main driving forces behind economic output in this field is a desire to raise the profile of socio-economic features that are important for quality of life and social progress but have been marginalised in mainstream economic thinking. Work-related topics have taken centre stage in the studies produced to date, including papers focused on both work in the job market and on domestic and community perspectives. There have also been in-depth examinations of the links between the two types of work at different times during economic cycles and life cycles.

Discrimination against women has been a constant area of concern in studies focused on the job market. Although its degree has changed over time and varies from one place to another, such discrimination has resulted almost always and almost everywhere in lower wages, barriers to entry into certain occupations, horizontal and vertical job segregation, greater exposure to job insecurity and/or atypical employment (part-time, short-term, etc) and discontinuous careers. All these aspects are detrimental to women throughout their adult lives, particularly when they exit the job market temporarily or for good. The effects can be seen clearly in the years that follow active employment; years in which women are generally more economically vulnerable than men.

All these inequalities in the world of employment are closely interrelated and have historically been associated with inequalities in other areas such as access to formal education (especially at university level) and participation in social and political affairs. However, major advances in women's education have cast doubt on the validity of the arguments conventionally used to explain gender-related economic inequalities, especially the wage gap. Furthermore, progress in anti-discrimination legislation and the securing of formal equality have now made discrimination more subtle, but that does not make it any less real.

To analyse this complex social and job-related reality, the discrimination mechanisms that underlie the market must be examined in depth; but, in any event, they are rooted in a sexual division of labour that continues to condition the lives of women. The classic sexual division of labour stems from a form of social and household organisation in which men are assigned the role of breadwinners and dedicate themselves exclusively to public life, and women are expected to dedicate themselves –also exclusively– to caring for the home and are economically dependant on men. This ideology, also referred to as the «ideology of domesticity», was consolidated in the mindset of the 19th century. Throughout the 19th century and for much of the 20th, many families particularly among the bourgeoisie and the upper classes, were structured in this way, but there were also many others in which women took an active part in the market, albeit in highly precarious conditions and in some cases with the active rejection of men who saw them as unfair competition. It can be said that the presence of women in employment was tolerated strictly as a matter of survival.

The sexual division of labour is a social construct, and as such can be changed. Indeed, as time goes by the conventional gender division has been modified in the wake of the large-scale entry of women –especially married women– into the job market during the second half of the 20th century. Many different factors have played a part in this, including the struggle of women, cultural changes, changes in customs and in demographics, progress in education, the development of welfare states, changes in the nature of employment and in working conditions, etc. The classical sexual division is no longer the majority model in practice but it continues to prevail at an ideological level and is still widespread in the 21st century. An argu-

ment often put forward to justify acceptance of the model is individual freedom of choice which, curiously, always results in a very similar gender division of labour.

Changes in the classical sexual division of labour have not resulted in the disappearance of that division, which continues to be clearly present not just in the unequal division of productive and reproductive labour but also in each different area. It has various nuances but in general takes the form of a male role model that has remained unchanged (men are expected to devote themselves continuously to the job market throughout their adult lives, even if they are no longer the only wage-earners) and a female role model in which women take part in the labour market but continue to be responsible also for unpaid work. This modified sexual division of labour goes by various names, including the «one and a half breadwinners» model, the double presence of women, the presence/absence model and others.

These reflections are closely linked to another core axis of feminist economics: that of unpaid domestic and care work. Major efforts have been made to bring to light and evaluate this work, based on the one hand on the fundamental nature of the work itself for social reproduction and on the other on the fact that it has been completely ignored by conventional economic studies. Authors such as Nancy Folbre consider that in a patriarchal society being a woman is devalued, which means that the activities undertaken by women (care work) are also devalued. In this regard, studies have focused on many different areas ranging from inequalities in time distribution to gender blindness in the actions of public administrations. All these developments in the field of paid and unpaid work have confirmed what is known as the «care economy», which comprises all activities focused on attending and caring for persons.

FE advocates overcoming the sexual division in labour. One of the methods that it proposes for achieving this end is joint responsibility of men in domestic tasks. This would have repercussions for the living and working conditions of women and for the availability of time for other activities, and would also be beneficial to men because it would enable them to enjoy the positive aspects of care work. Getting men involved in domestic work would help heighten their awareness and the awareness of society as a whole as to its value of, its burden and the need for it.

DEBATES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Studies focused on work have achieved significant progress in theoretical (questioning assumptions in regard to economic behaviour), conceptual (the concepts of work, welfare and economic flows, among others) and methodological terms (statistics, techniques and tools for analysis and for bringing to light situations of inequality).

On a theoretical level, the principles that govern the behaviour of *homo economicus* according to neoclassical economics (independence, selfishness, autonomy

and rationality) are called into question. FE has concerned itself with the extent to which economic rationality may not prevail in the way assumed by orthodox economics, even under capitalism. This has led authors such as Marianne Ferber, Julie Nelson and Nancy Folbre to stress the need to draw up alternative models based on assumptions of human cooperation, solidarity and collective welfare.

As an example of the criticism levelled at human behaviour according to neo-classical economics, they state that the idea of interdependence rather than independence needs to be stressed at all stages of life, though with different degrees of intensity depending on age and individual circumstances. Caring for dependent persons calls for high levels of human investment, and so long as that care is provided largely by women on an unpaid basis, as if it were the natural result of affection or a love, the work involved will be a major source of gender inequality. Providing care work in general and caring for dependent persons in particular will be one of the major challenges of the 21st-century.

Dependence arises not only between individuals but also in regard to nature. In recent years, more and more studies have examined the links between feminist economics and environmental economics. At the outset relations between these two disciplines were somewhat strained, because some environmentalists prioritised the sustainability of the planet over the sustainability of human life. Moreover, when eco-feminism arose in the 1970s some authors tended towards essentialist universalism. However, nowadays such tensions can be thought of as a thing of the past.

At a conceptual level, the frontiers of economics have expanded beyond markets, transcending them as the backbone of the economy. In terms of labour, this means breaking with the traditional assumption of equivalence between work and employment. Employment is just one form of work, specifically one that is carried out under capitalist mercantilist relationships in exchange for money, usually as wages. The equivalence between work and employment was established by scholars from the neoclassical school which emerged in the late 19th century. With the consolidation of this school, the subject under examination shifted from social reproduction to mercantile production, thus legitimising the separation of public economic affairs from private, non-economic affairs.

Bringing domestic tasks and care work back into the macro-economic circuit is a substantial contribution of feminist economics, in that it has extended the definition of «income» in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Incorporating such work means not only including hidden tasks historically performed by women but also examining their relationship with the capitalist production system, which could not currently sustain itself without them. This broader circuit of work or macro-economic flows is generally represented in simplified form as akin to an iceberg.

Incorporating care work means incorporating not just the material side but also a more subjective side in terms of affection and relationships, the role of social security in the home (socialisation, healthcare, etc.). All these are tasks «intended to raise and maintain healthy, emotionally stable, secure persons and foster relationship and communication abilities, all of which are human characteristics without which the capitalist mercantile world could not possibly function. In short, domestic care work is absolutely necessary for the survival of market work». Antonella Picchio argued along similar lines in the early 1980s, asserting that social reproduction is not an area that lies outside the market but rather an assurance of the existence of the market, so social reproduction is its very starting point, because without reproduction there can be no production. In any event, the studies carried out in the field of unpaid domestic and care work must not be taken as inferring that these are the only really important areas of work or that this is the sole focus of attention of feminist economic analyses.

In recent years, even reports by economists of acknowledged international renown such as Nobel laureates Joseph Stiglitz and Amartya Sen reflect, to some extent, the contributions of FE. For example the *Report of the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress* acknowledges that «[m] any services that households produce for themselves are not recognized in official income and production measures, yet they constitute an important aspect of economic activity». Therefore, «more and more systematic work in this area should be undertaken. This should start with information on how people spend their time that is comparable both over the years and across countries».

This questioning of the concept of work brings with it a questioning of the concept of welfare traditionally linked to the maximising of utility and the increasing of per capita GDP. Criticisms have thus been levelled at the concept of welfare most widely used in economics, which is linked exclusively to material wealth obtained via mercantile relationships. In this critique of welfare, FE has drawn on significant theoretical contributions such as the «capability approach», also known as the «human development approach» from the 1980s onwards. FE has thus joined its voice to the various schools of thought that criticise the use of per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as an indicator of welfare, and has advocated other measures that take non-monetary aspects into account. Work has been done in this field concerning the importance of time and time distribution for welfare. As stated by Marilyn Waring, if women counted, then economic results would be very different.

There have been significant methodological changes in many fields. In general, FE has been critical of the methods prevailing among neoclassical economists, who centre their theory on the individual choice of a subject whose actions are easily expressed mathematically, and disregard all explanations of economic phenomena that are not amenable to mathematical modelling. FE thus advocates changing methods and, for instance, attributing more importance to qualitative analysis through surveys rather than just statistics adapted from formal models.

In the field of unpaid work, many countries have set up surveys on the use of time. These surveys provide a breakdown by gender and by type of activity of the way in which time is distributed, and are therefore a fundamental tool for obtaining an in-depth knowledge of a situation that has historically remained hidden. In this regard the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country is a pioneer in Spain: it is the only Autonomy that conducts such surveys (by the Basque Statistical Institute, EUSTAT), and has been doing so every five years since 1993.

EUSTAT has also published a satellite account for domestic output associated with each of the five surveys conducted to date. These accounts establish a monetary value for domestic and care work, and help to measure the extent to which women and men contribute to the relevant output. The valuations used are subject to debate, but there is no widespread questioning of their use as a tool for analysis and awareness.

Parallel with the theoretical, conceptual and methodological progress made, a great deal of effort has been put into improving statistical information so as to enable analyses to be conducted from a gender approach. Accordingly, the approval of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women spurred public organisations into paying more attention to the characteristics of the data available to them. Major progress in the disaggregation of data has certainly been made, but this is taking longer than expected, especially after the passing of *Act 4/2005 of 18 February on the Equality of Women and Men in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country* and *Public General Act 3/2007 of 22 March on the Effective Equality of Women and Men*, both of which make it compulsory to include gender systematically as a variable in statistics and to establish and include new indicators in statistical operations that enable more to be learned about differences between the values, roles, situations, conditions, aspirations and needs of women and men.

Criticism of androcentric bias in economic analysis should not serve to conceal the importance of other variables such as age, class and race. One must avoid the temptation of arguing for a universalising perspective that places all women in a single, homogenous group without taking into account the enormous differences that there may be between them. It is advisable always to bear in mind the diversity of women and men, and realise that apart from gender there are other influential variables such as income, geographical provenance, functional diversity, sexual orientation, etc. Intersectionality, which dates back to the 1970s, when Black and Chicano feminism brought to light the simultaneous effects of discrimination, is carrying increasing weight in economic analysis when it comes to examining and understanding the many inequalities that affect women.

TOPIC

The topics covered by feminist economics are many and varied. The importance of work, which has already been mentioned, is a topic that is also linked to economic crises. In the past few decades most of the analyses drawn up have focused on economic crises, particularly in Latin America from the 1980s onwards, and much criticism has been levelled at the structural adjustment programmes promoted by international organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank, which have had highly detrimental effects on large groups of people. More recently, with the onset of the latest great recession, the impacts of the crisis in terms of increasing instability in employment and life in general, the perpetuation of poverty among certain groups, the impact of austerity policies, etc., have been widely studied in Europe. An exhaustive analysis of the increasing economic inequalities that have arisen and their consequences from a gender approach has yet to be conducted.

Another topic that has been widely discussed by feminist economists is the role played by public policy in the quality of life of women and men as a result of their redistributive and regulatory functions and their ability to modify social behaviour patterns. In the past few decades, there has been increasing interest in the analysis of public policies from a gender approach, with a view to demonstrating a lack of neutrality in public-sector actions. Claims of neutrality have tended to be based on the idea that policies affect the whole population equally, but this ignores the fact that women and men occupy different positions, as has been clearly shown in all analyses of actual situations.

Another key theme of FE is the role played by public policy, widely of economic policies include studies on tax policies, employment policies, income distribution policies, family policies, spending and investment policies, etc. One of the most widely used instruments in these analyses is gender budgeting, because the public sector budget reflects the priorities of an administration and thus reveals what activities are considered most valuable (and therefore most worthwhile). This also enables researchers to investigate those areas which are undervalued and therefore have the lowest profiles. Budgetary analysis also serves to show the contribution made by the administration to equality between men and women.

Gender budgeting can be seen as an instrument for implementing gender mainstreaming. The concept of transversality first became significant in the wake of the UN's Fourth Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, and with the accession of Sweden and Finland to the European Union in 1996. Transversality means that public sector policies in pursuit of gender equality are no longer confined to the ghetto of equal opportunities, where they are frequently just symbolic positive actions with very low budget allocations, but are rather integrated into all policy areas, thereby shifting them from the periphery to the core of actions by public sector organisations.

Another area of interest in which there have been various research lines is that of international economics. One line examines inequalities between women and men in development processes. Work in this area dates back to the 1970s, when Ester Boserup, a pioneer and benchmark researcher in the field of women in development (WID), pointed out that development policies excluded women and concluded that the strategies applied were mainly beneficial to men. Other approaches were subsequently developed, such as gender and development (GAD), which focuses on power relationships between women and men.

Many studies of the unequal effects of globalisation have been published in the field of international economics, especially since the 1990s. Discussion on the expansion and liberalisation of international trade is not yet over but, as stressed by Lourdes Benería, the changes involved also have a clear gender dimension, because men and women have historically had different links with the market, with their own particular consequences as regards options and behaviour. Neoliberal globalisation has fostered the international movement of goods, services and capital far more than the movement of labour. In spite of the obstacles put in the way of international migratory movements, so-called «global care chains» have been set up that can be seen as representing globalisation in the field of care for individuals. These chains have arisen as a result of immigrant women being hired to care for dependants and carry out domestic chores. The formation of these global city chains have been affected by two crises: on the one hand the crisis of social reproduction in impoverished countries, which has forced many women and men to emigrate in search of sufficient earnings to enable them to live in better material conditions; and on the other hand the so-called «care crisis» in northern countries.

FE needs to respond to the challenges posed by the many socio-economic changes that are currently taking place. At an international scale, we live in times of great uncertainty, with the likelihood of substantial changes in international politics that could alter the world economic order. Some people speak of a resurgence of neo-nationalism and the strengthening of bilateralism as opposed to multilateralism. It may be a good time to start thinking about the impact of these changes from a gender perspective, because in times of crisis and change the risk of deterioration of social conditions tends to increase.

Another major challenge that needs to be tackled promptly is that of the future of employment. Far-reaching changes are taking place which are generating great uncertainty, particularly among young people. Technological advances in the transmission of information, robotics, bioscience, etc are set to transform employment in many sectors. It also appears as if the latest advances will have a substantial effect on jobs and services in caring for people, which means that they will affect not only paid jobs but also unpaid work. All this calls for in-depth analysis in which FE should be able to put forward proposals to help ensure that women are well-positioned for the future.

Moreover, the emergence of the so-called «new economies» and of new socio-economic models is set to pose challenges to FE in the future, because there will be a need to reflect on whether these new trends are conducive or not to economic gender equality. These models include the Blue Economy, the Circular Economy, the Economy for the Common Good, the Collaborative Economy, etc.

Another area of study that has consolidated itself in recent years is the analysis of links and meeting points with other schools of critical thinking that, like feminist economics, advocate social transformation and the search for fairer, more equitable, more sustainable societies. On a more theoretical level links can be found with the capability approach developed initially by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. This theoretical approach, which is closely in tune with FE, proposes a new outlook that considers that people should be seen as an end and not only the means for development and that development itself should be a process that broadens the options available to people to carry on lives that they consider valuable.

Finally, on a level more closely linked to proposals for change, considerable work has been done in recent years on the links between the social and solidarity-based economy, the green economy and the rural economy. Many of the publications produced are enriched by feminist viewpoints (postcolonial and decolonial thinking) drawn from other contexts with world views very different from those of the West, where alternative thinking has been developed that calls into question the dominant economic order.

PRESENTATION OF ARTICLES

In an attempt to give the broadest possible idea of the foundations, thematic lines and debates covered by feminist economics, this monographic issue consists of two distinct parts. The first part contains a number of conceptual articles that provide a grounding in feminist economics. The second contains contributions concerned with the main topics and lines of feminist economics from a more applied perspective.

Part one begins with an article that follows on from this introduction, outlining the main debates, challenges and problems put forward by feminist economics, taking the concept of reproduction as its thread.

Taking as a reference the conceptual advances promoted in the last few decades by FE, **Cristina Carrasco** goes a step further, conceptually and politically shifting the discussion on domestic work –a core line of the feminist reinterpretation of the economy– towards the notion of the sustainability of life. This shift means identifying and reflecting on the different elements on which the continuity of society and the welfare of its population depend. The author explores the analytical potential of the concept of (social) reproduction inherited from classical thinkers and formulated and reformulated from different perspectives, incorporating work done outside

the labour market –precisely for social reproduction– and bringing to light the way in which the economic system plunders such work and the conflict between capital and life to which a concept of social reproduction that includes care work leads. The feminist approach to social reproduction reveals the unsustainability of the current socio-economic system and proposes a break in which life rather than profit becomes the core issue.

The article by **Tindara Addabbo** presents an assessment of the capability approach initially formulated by Sen (1985, 1993) and Nussbaum (2003) in the context of feminist economics as a conceptual foundation for analysing the determining features in gender inequality and proposing public sector policies to tackle them. The capability approach introduces an extended definition of welfare focused on the capability of individuals to be or do, which goes beyond income and takes in multiple, interlinked dimensions in the construction of welfare and human development. Among those dimensions, the capability for caring plays a core role, which makes this approach particularly sensitive to gender issues. On this theoretical basis, Addabbo applies the capability approach to the context of Italy, where gender inequality in the capability for work is striking, and proposes an analysis based on indicators developed to measure work from a feminist economic perspective. She then assesses a number of public policies that could influence the capability for work and gender inequality.

The article by **Nancy Folbre** and **James Heintz** examines the importance of family work for the economy as a whole, and proposes a greater integration of family dynamics and the market in economic models. To that end, the authors first give an overview of the conceptual inconsistencies implicit in conventional neoclassical models and go on to propose certain characteristics of the family economy that should be taken into account with a view to correcting those inconsistencies. This setup is used to present a critical assessment of three different models: accounting systems (including social accounting matrices), neoclassical growth models that assume joint utility (and usually give rise to «optimal social solutions»); and neoclassical growth models that problematise the taking of inter-generational family decisions (overlapping generations models). The analysis concludes that these last models provide a basic conceptual lever for the formulation of sound models, and guidelines are given on how they can be improved.

Olga Alonso and **Coral Del Río** analyse employment inequalities between women and men from a feminist economic perspective. They examine such inequalities between different demographic groups, focusing their analysis on occupational segregation, one of the main mechanisms that generates economic inequalities which perpetuate stratification and differences in power between social groups and (in the particular case of women) the gender wage gap. In parallel with this theoretical discussion, the authors put forward a methodological proposal for studying occupational segregation that includes the production of a set of indicators that enable the phenomenon to be analysed in greater depth by measuring aspects that have not hitherto been

included. Using these indicators and the microdata available from labour force surveys and wage structure surveys, they quantify the levels of occupational segregation found among four groups: foreign-born women, native-born women, foreign-born men and native-born men from 2006 to 2016. They also provide an assessment of the economic gains and losses for each of these groups that result from their distribution by occupations, in both monetary and objective welfare terms.

Part two of the issue features contributions that focus on the main thematic lines of feminist economics. The first of them, by **Arantxa Rodríguez** and **Arantza Ugidos**, presents an analysis of the social organisation of time and work based on time-use surveys (TUS). Such surveys have become an essential tool for analysing the day-to-day behaviour of populations, and a key source of information on living conditions and habits. In terms of measuring and analysing work, TUS bring to light and estimate work done outside the labour market that is not taken into account by official employment statistics or national accounting systems dealing with the world of employment. They thus form part of the conceptual and instrumental renovation needed to overcome gender blindness in social and economic analysis. In the article published here the authors analyse changes in time-use based on the organisation of working time as revealed in the time-budget surveys run by the Basque statistics office EUSTAT in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country from 1993 to 2013, with special attention on trends in inequality in the distribution of work between women and men.

Time-use surveys conducted by the Spanish statistics office INE for 2002-2003 and 2009-2010 are also used to extend the analysis of inequality within households in the gender division of labour throughout Spain. These surveys enable comparisons to be run within a single household of the time devoted to paid and unpaid work by all members aged 10 and over. The households selected are those that comprise two adults of working age with dependent children: this particular analysis cannot be run on the data from the Basque surveys because they only interview one member of each household. Based on this analysis the authors reflect on the persistence of inequality in the distribution of the time allocated within households, and its consequences in terms of inequality between men and women in society.

Mertxe Larrañaga and **Elena Martínez** examine the issue of gender economic inequalities in the Basque Country, based on an analysis of employment dynamics via basic labour market, occupational segregation and job insecurity data. For most people employment is the main, and often the only, source of income available to meet personal, family needs and provide quality of life, so job placement and inequality in the labour market are core aspects in understanding economic inequalities between women and men. Inequality in employment results in differences in income, but the authors go beyond wage inequality and the wage gap, and also analyse differences in pensions. These are crucial for the welfare of individuals at a particularly vulnerable stage of their lives, in that to a certain extent they sum up a lifetime

of economic inequalities: pensions are calculated on the basis of contributions paid throughout each individual's working life. They conclude the article by drawing up a list of compound indicators that enable gender inequalities to be observed jointly in different areas, and in particular apply the gender equality index (designed and used throughout the European Union) to the situation in the Basque Country.

Social policies play a prominent role in determining how committed a society is to welfare and equality. Standards of living and quality of life are the result of a complex, variable distribution of responsibilities between the market, the state and households. There is also involvement by communities and civil society in advanced industrial societies, but the welfare state has a core role to play. The social organisation underlying welfare models has traditionally been based on a standard household with a marked gender division of labour, where men are wage-earning breadwinners and women are providers of care and family welfare. The increase in the number of women in paid work has not resulted in any substantial change in the distribution of responsibilities for care work within households, and this has decisive repercussions in terms of gender inequality. The article by **María José Martínez** focuses precisely on analysing the degree of responsibility taken on by the state (through policies and their consequences) for the distribution of care work within households, and thus for inequality between women and men. The author examines the characteristics of the welfare model in general, and the case of the Basque Country in particular, looking specifically at the conditions in which mothers and fathers assume their responsibilities for childcare when they both have paid jobs. Accordingly, she considers the measures available to parents: parenting policies, work/life balance and joint household responsibility, with special attention on the orientation given to such measures, on commitment to a more equitable distribution of paid and unpaid work and on the degree of joint responsibility held by society.

The next article is by **Paloma de Villota**. It focuses on the importance of the gender perspective in fiscal policy. The author begins by stressing the need for tax efforts to enable a social model to be developed that is capable of including lifelong care as an intrinsic feature. On that basis, de Villota analyses the gender impact of some of the discretionary measures adopted in tax policies to counteract the effect of the economic crisis, particularly the raising of marginal personal income tax rates and the increased burden of VAT borne by families with dependent children before and after the rises in standard and reduced VAT rates. The analysis focuses on Spain, but also refers to other contexts, mainly in Europe.

Public sector policies, particularly budget policies and their links with gender equality, are at the heart of the article by **Yolanda Jubeto**. The author begins by setting out the main objectives that have led in recent decades to the preparation of public sector budgets from a gender equality perspective. She then goes on to examine their conceptual and regulatory basis and the main methods used in their implementation. The article focuses on events in Europe, where this approach has gradually become in-

stitutionalised since its appearance in the 1980s. In the last section of the article she examines the gender budgeting schemes introduced in the past 15 years in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country, which has pioneered such initiatives in Spain. These schemes run from municipal to regional in scope, but particular attention is paid to the scheme set up by the Provincial Council of Gipuzkoa in the 2011-2015 legislature and continued in the present legislature. The article ends with some thoughts about the lessons learned and the main challenges that limit the potential of these schemes for constructing a more equitable, fairer society.

The article by **Lina Gálvez** and **Paula Rodríguez-Modroño** focuses on differences in the impact of crises and the economic policies that accompany them (especially macro-economic and austerity policies) on individuals depending on their gender. In particular, the authors highlight three historically proven patterns of different effects: an increase in work for women, longer recovery times/greater insecurity for female employment and declines in terms of equality. The article examines these impacts (which are indeed found) in the case of the crisis in Spain from 2008 to 2014, and highlights certain elements which are characteristic of this particular moment in time and which can provide a counterweight for processes of refamilisation of care work and individualisation of risk associated with austerity, such as the legacy of equality policies, women overtaking men in education, continued de-industrialisation and widespread job insecurity.

The last article in the issue examines a key question for feminist economics: at a time when women have achieved «formal equality» in civil and political rights, how is actual inequality between women and men maintained and perpetuated? In the article, **María Pazos** argues that economic policies play a determinant role (through action and omission) in maintaining social, household and job structures marked by a gender division of labour, in which the greater dedication of women to care work corresponds asymmetrically to a greater dedication of men to paid work. Those structures in turn give rise to patriarchal institutions and an ideology that pass on inequality. However, the author also argues that, contrary to what might be thought, this gender division of labour no longer fulfils any economic function: it is inefficient and unsustainable, leads only to social and economic harm and provides no benefits to society as a whole. Finally, the article provides international evidence to support the idea that it is possible to change the behaviour of women and men and indeed the structure of society by changing policies so as to extend rights. The author suggests elements that can be used to draw up a feminist economic programme to bring about such structural changes with a view to creating a fairer, more efficient, more sustainable society: a society of breadwinners/carers based on equality.