

September 2017

**Key words:** Social exclusion, social inclusion plans, gender perspective, public policies**Social exclusion, inclusion policies and gender inequalities**

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**This article seeks to discuss the conceptual framework of social exclusion by reviewing social inclusion plans at different government levels and assessing the introduction of a gender perspective in these discussions and policies. As a starting point, several current perspectives around the concept of exclusion will be addressed, suggesting new models of inclusion policies. Secondly, the main inclusion plans will be described, as means of action against poverty and social exclusion, from European Union to a local scale, highlighting some important experiences in terms of gender in places such as Alt Empordà and Barcelona. Finally, an inclusive and feminist agenda, supported by the local authorities, will be suggested.**

**Times of crisis; rise of social and gender inequalities<sup>1</sup>**

When discussing social exclusion, inclusion policies and gender inequalities, three aspects need to be considered. Firstly, inequalities resulting from a capitalist and patriarchal model that enable a power-based relationship system underpinned by class and gender, influencing all social relations in all areas of life. The patriarchal ideology states that capitalism lets patriarchy intervene in all dimensions that are useful and enables it to perpetuate and reproduce the system (Otero, 2013).

A socioeconomic system in which life is subordinated to capital and productive work is the only valuable thing (Pérez Orozco, 2014).

Secondly, rapid social transformations create whole new contexts, with huge social, economic and cultural repercussions. In that sense, inclusion and exclusion trajectories are becoming more difficult to gauge and precariousness and disengagement forms are spreading. The gender mainstreaming perspective analyses the co-relation with other inequality and discrimination factors which must be considered in order to address social exclusion forms.

Finally, in times of financial crisis, inequalities and social exclusion forms increase, placing them at the centre of the political agenda, at least on an elementary basis. As many studies conclude, European countries have executed austerity plans that have widened women and men's inequalities (Bettio et al, 2012; Gálvez, 2013). The impact of austerity measures is especially

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1. This article has been made thanks to the discussion and feedback of Cities and People Seminar from the Social and Political Sciences Institute. An extended version is published at De La Fuente (coord.) "Social exclusion and gender at local level. Mainstreaming, longitudinal research and empowerment", Barcelona: ICPS.

relevant in the support provided to families in caring tasks, and in important areas such as dependency support, healthcare or childhood support. The need to work –albeit in precarious jobs– has increased, whereas women have been more pressured to assume more reproductive work.

Crisis, gender and social exclusion then are especially interrelated in the situation of women in relation to standard and non-standard economy and the economy of care (Gálvez, 2016). In short, a *market society* conceived through familism forms is occurring, connecting with tasks that, before the crisis, had been partly carried out by public authorities. A narrative focused on the traditional roles of genders is contributing to that trend, worsening situations of social exclusion and even sexist violence (Ezquerro, 2011). The consequence is a reinforcement of the patriarchy domain, both in material aspects affecting women's life on a daily basis, and in symbolic and cultural aspects.

### **1. Perspectives around social exclusion and inclusion trajectories**

The transformations that have occurred in capitalist societies have led to new definitions of complex social trajectories. The academic discussion has efficiently detected situations of devaluation, vulnerability and family breakdown as causes of social exclusion. It is a broadly accepted concept, acknowledged by institutions as a key element in their social inclusion plans. These concepts are defined according to the political framework and, in that sense, they are an important matter of study.

The French government started using the concept of social exclusion, for the first time in Europe, during the 80's in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. After that, the United Kingdom began to use it before the European Union presented the concept at the Lisbon European Council in 2000. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, government departments, from a local to an international level, have adopted the concept of social inclusion as a key concept in their policies. That way, plans are designed grouping actions that already existed in a segmented manner, and new inclusion action lines are implemented.

One of the arguments used to defend the concept of exclusion is that poverty refers to economic and income aspects of inequalities, an 'inflexible' approach that doesn't consider other dimensions of vulnerability or exclusion. The feminization of poverty intends to explore these inequalities of earnings and economic capacity, which are especially dramatic for women. But the notion of poverty, in being focused on distributive aspects and individuals, fails to introduce the gender perspective, especially when it's used as a measurement tool for the household, since other situations of exclusion remain unexplored (Valls and Belzunegui, 2014). The concept of social exclusion is comprehensive, as it embraces many triggers and dimensions causing vulnerability and risk situations. To summarize, it describes a social model where a section of the population falls outside social and citizen rights, where several vulnerability and risk forms take place, in various grades. (Castel, 1997).

The main ambits of social exclusion are not only linked to economic resources and productive systems. As is seen in Table 1, other elements and dimensions such as education, health and social provision, housing, community, family and geographical factors are also meaningful, as well as itineraries of social and community disengagement. As other non-monetary factors are included, the concept of social exclusion acknowledges the gender perspective, since the inequalities' pattern among women and men can be considered (De la Cal, 2009). The following table addresses the principle dimensions of social exclusion, introducing the use of time and the impact of overwork –including the reproductive dimension– as core indicators of economic exclusion.

**Table 1. Main factors of social exclusion.**

Factors of exclusion	Dimensions
Economy	Monetary (income) Use of time and overwork
Employment	Labour market access Labour conditions
Education	Education access Qualified population
Community care, healthcare	Health, morbidity, life standards Health services access Physical, psychological and emotional health
Housing	Affordability Housing conditions
Relations	Personal and family networks Community network
Citizenship-politics	Citizen rights Participation
Spatial-territorial	Physical Social space Economical

Note: exclusively elaborated for this study according to data from the Public Policies and Government Institute (IGOP), 2004.

It's not always easy to translate theory into empirical research of social phenomena, since the studies depend on the indicators chosen and the data available. Using accurate indicators aimed at measuring men and women's disparities is one of the main challenges for robust knowledge to be obtained. On the other hand, the flexible and broad nature of the concept of social exclusion has been criticized for being ambiguous, and makes it difficult to get a precise definition and rigorous methodology. And, although there's usually a common ground of social exclusion, not every approach shares the same features. For that reason, we consider it important to review the different approaches.

### Paradigmatic approaches of social exclusion

Although the concept of social exclusion is generally accepted, an accurate definition of its causes remains largely unexplored. What makes up the opposite concept has also been debated. In that sense, research perspectives address different notions about what is social exclusion and which are the trajectories of social inclusion. These proposals not only provide different definitions of social exclusion itineraries, but also propose different responses and, accordingly, might have an impact on public policies and on the current social model.

To illustrate the different thoughts, the paradigms formulated by Silver (1994) and Levitas (2005) are presented here. The first author points out three discussion views of social exclusion based on different political dimensions: republicanism, liberalism and social democracy. The second author analyses discourses in the British context and addresses three points according to the concept of social inclusion: redistribution, social integration and, finally, a conservative view linked to market policies and labour insertion. These three discourses presented by Levitas have some similarities to the three discussion views of Silver.

Table 2 summarizes these three discussion views and presents a fourth, more thorough view, outlining exploitation and domination as the main causes of inequalities and, accordingly, calling

for radical social transformation. Although the other three paradigms see social inclusion inside an established order, the last proposal believes in combining radicalized democracy with power-acquisition recovery policies in order to revert gender and class inequalities and achieve a society free from capitalism or patriarchy domination patterns. 'Social policies for equality' should acknowledge identities with adequate redistribution processes in order to revert the inequalities (Fraser, 1995).

**Table 2. Paradigmatic approaches of social exclusion.**

Paradigm	Discourse	Social model	Political model	Gender awareness
<b>Individual behaviour</b>	Individualism: work effort and motivation	Market model	<i>Workfare</i> programs: compulsory insertion programs	No gender awareness
<b>Social disengagement</b>	Solidarity and social cohesion	Social integration	Active inclusion policies	Low gender awareness –or none
<b>Inequalities</b>	Redistribution and equality	Social rights and citizen rights	Welfare redistributive policies	Gender awareness in some proposals
<b>Exploitation and domination</b>	Social transformation	Alternative social model. Acknowledgement of differences	Political decentralization, empowerment actions and autonomy	Gender awareness

Note: Exclusively elaborated for this study

The personal attitudes' paradigm refers to the individual's effort and motivation, and the need to take advantage of social opportunities. From a neo-conservatory perspective, attached to the liberal anglosaxon viewpoint, that advocates for remunerated labour market access as a principle –or unique– means of social inclusion. *Workfare* policies propose substituting social protection systems by a graduated system of incentives and coercive measures to access the labour market. Statements such as "the poverty trap" or "the culture of dependency" associate social exclusion with excessive subsidies, demotivating individuals to access the labour market (Davies, 2005). That point of view legitimizes welfare cutbacks which substitute the idea of 'social inclusion' with 'occupation' and labour insertion as priority goals.

The social disengagement paradigm or the solidarity model interplays with the ideas of French republicanism and suggests mechanisms for social inclusion to prevent social safety nets from breaking down or becoming undermined, which is the main cause of social exclusion. In that sense, it embraces political actions of inclusion and the labour market as the main interventions for social inclusion.

The inequalities paradigm, also known as monopoly, considers the context of power accumulation in detriment to social sectors that are excluded as one of the causes of inequalities. Entitlement of citizen rights and classical redistribution policies according to the social democratic discourse would be the principle measures against inequalities. Some other proposals point to the gender aspect. Finally, paradigms known as exploitation and domination acknowledge diversity and are more open to the gender perspective. Related radical ideas target social transformation, so the labour market wouldn't be the only tool for social inclusion, as the other models sustain, by seeking recognition of all jobs.

These paradigms of social exclusion are obviously not uniform and are simplified here, but presenting them allows a description of the different perspectives on the causes of exclusion and the political models involved. We also consider important, in relation to gender, the way these perspectives leave gender inequalities unexplored, a reason why the fourth discussion view deserves another category. Only the inequalities paradigm displays some gender-based proposals, whereas the most radical proposals incorporate the feminist economy perspective and gender as important –or even central– factors.

## 2. Social inclusion policies and gender perspective at different government levels

The main political tools for fighting against social exclusion are the Europe 2020 Strategy, the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion developed by the EU States and, in Catalonia, the Action plan for the fight against poverty and to guarantee social inclusion, as well as a local program for launching local plans of social inclusion. Moreover, city councils, regional councils and local administrations have launched their own plans of social inclusion. The conceptual framework of social inclusion has been incorporated by public policies.

**Table 3. Multilevel strategies and social inclusion plans.**

Government	Social inclusion strategies and plans
European Union	Europe 2020: A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth  European Pillar of Social Rights 2017
Spanish State	National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (PNAIS) 2013-2016
Catalonia	Action plan for the fight against poverty and to guarantee social inclusion in Catalonia 2015-2016
Local	Local social inclusion plans (48 municipalities, regional councils and i consortiums)*

\*According to the Social Affairs, Employment and Family Department 2016.

Note: Exclusively elaborated for this study

### Social and gender dimension weakness in the EU

Since the approval of the European Social Agenda in 2000, countries are committed to executing National Action Plans for Social Inclusion. In that line, coordination in the fight against social exclusion and poverty is agreed to be improved, marking 2020 as the target date to end poverty in the EU and to reduce drastically unemployment. Despite the good intentions, the reality is a long way from the goals stated. Firstly, because of the voluntary nature of the devices through which the strategic steps in social and employment affairs are outlined and, secondly, because of the limitations of the EU's funds, expressed by social investment and the European Social Fund.

The objectives for social inclusion are based on a methodology –called Open Method of Coordination– and instruments –National Action Plans– which should contribute to harmonize measures, establish common indicators and transfer best practices. That methodology, qualified as *neovoluntaristic*, enhances the Open Method of Coordination, aimed at coordinating social policies in European countries.

The Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth was approved in 2010 with the intention of promoting EU competitiveness, by reinforcing the market economy model and incorporating other factors not only linked to the rise of Gross Domestic Product. The Strategy highlighted five co-related goals; among which stand out the reduction of poverty and social exclusion (before 2020, reducing to 20 million the number of people below the poverty and social exclusion threshold, below 25%) and seven landmark initiatives, one of them the creation of the European Platform against Poverty.

The economic crisis has urged a revision of that strategy. Inequalities are recognized to be on the rise and the goals, in social and employment terms –especially about poverty– haven't been reached (European Commission, 2014). In relation to gender inequalities, among the commitments established by the European Strategy 2020, only the unequal share of women and men in labour market participation is mentioned, seeing the rise of active population as the principle objective, especially for women.

Within the UE's institutional crisis context, the European Commission has approved the European Pillar of Social Rights in order to help foster social policies. The new strategy clearly prioritizes labour market insertion, displaying two important occupational goals: the first chapter, devoted to equal opportunities in accessing the labour market and the second one, focused on fair working conditions. Finally, the third chapter of the European Pillar of Social Rights refers to social protection and inclusion. Again, the gender equality is connected with participation in the labour market, by both increasing the number of women employed and improving their working conditions. Although it's said that gender equality must be assured in all areas, it's obvious that further efforts must be devoted to labour market and family-work balancing. The European Pillar of Social Rights is, nevertheless, a statement of intent of the European Commission, since it doesn't set specific actions or funds and displays a set of recommendations to be developed in the future.

In short, strategies to combat social exclusion designed by the European Union have a voluntary component, causing unequal development in the countries and failing to bind them to social policies. Despite the situation of social emergency, for the European Union, social policies have become a burden instead of a solution and the gender perspective hasn't been prioritized, nor is it a mainstream element in community policies for social inclusion. Furthermore, social inclusion is mainly acknowledged as labour market participation, overlooking other jobs and focusing equality actions on female labour access.

### Active inclusion of the National Plan against Social Inclusion

From 2001 onwards the National Action Plans for Social Inclusion started being approved –and should be reviewed twice a year; the last revision of the Spanish one is PNAIS 2013-2016. This Plan adopts the commitments of the European Strategy 2020 of poverty and exclusion reduction and sets the goal of lifting at least one and a half million people out of poverty and exclusion<sup>2</sup>. The key concept is 'active inclusion' and actions to help people enter the labour market. The Plan 2013-2016 endorses EU Council's recommendations and prioritizes reducing the number of people at risk of poverty and exclusion by reinforcing active measures of occupation, seeing unemployment as the major factor of social exclusion. All that, accompanied by more 'adequate and efficient' policies while criticizing the fact that all social policies don't have labour insertion as an objective. Paradoxically, at a time when unemployment is rising and the official political discourse highlights the importance of the labour aspect, active occupation policies have been seriously downsized, such as the welfare measures (from 2011 to 2013, funds devoted to active occupation measures were reduced by 50%).

The plan considers that the targeted population, along with the traditional profiles of poverty and exclusion, must include people on the poverty threshold and those who live in and out of poverty. In that sense, the precariousness of the 'poor workers' is described as a factor of exclusion, but no actions are addressed to tackle it. Taking as a measurement indicator the at-risk-of poverty rate or social exclusion (AROE rate), it's seen that unemployment is a determining factor of social exclusion and, therefore, active occupation policies should be prioritized. Continuing with that indicator, poverty and social exclusion affect similarly men and women, even though this indicator shows some weaknesses in the detection of the feminization of poverty, bearing in mind also that the situation of women was worse prior to the crisis.

An evidence of weakness of these 'voluntary' instruments is that among the period 2010-2014, the peak moment of the economic crisis, not a single inclusion plan was approved. The previous Plans have a very limited impact and don't manage to serve as a coordination space of autonomous plans, whereas these plans have been almost exclusively centered on giving support to local entities (Quintana and Campruví, 2015).

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2. Included are other indicators of participation in the labour market (gobal occupancy rate should be 74% and 68.5% for women in 2020), and the education system –by reducing the school drop-out rates to 15% and guaranteeing access to secondary education for 44% of people aged 30 to 44.

To summarize, State strategies of social inclusion acknowledge social inclusion through participation in the labour market, whereas other measures devoted to “people unable to work” aren't given the same importance and the gender perspective is ignored in the plan. Despite the institutionalization of equality policies, a regression in that ambit has been detected, evidenced by the lack of *gender mainstreaming* in public policies and in social policies in particular (Lombardo and Leon, 2014).

The focus on remunerated occupation and improvement of employment as key objectives connect with the *workfare* model that defends the conservative view of individual attitudes. Even though social exclusion is recognized as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, in the end the process of social inclusion is focused almost exclusively on labour market participation. This explains the importance given to women obtaining remunerated work, ignoring, thus, other jobs.

### The local dimension of the social inclusion plans in Catalonia

Since 2006, three social inclusion plans in Catalonia have been designed; the first two for a four-year period and the last, twice-yearly, bringing back the concept of poverty and taking as an example the Inclusive plan against poverty and social exclusion 1995-2000. All of them were supported by the leading organizations in social initiatives working on inclusion. They intend to serve as a longitudinal instrument, analyzing thoughtfully inclusion-exclusion trajectories, and several departments of Catalonia's Government are working on that goal.

The Plan for the inclusion and social cohesion in Catalonia 2006-2009 prioritized the coordination with local organizations to launch Local Plans for Social Inclusion (PLIS). Following EU guidelines, it considered proximity as the crucial factor when designing and planning inclusion policies and, therefore, the duty was centered on local governments. Based on methodological support and through the creation of common-work spaces and monitoring plans, the idea of 'inclusive local areas' was reinforced along with policies for social inclusion aimed at encouraging participation, also from the people supported (Quintana and Camproví, 2015).

The new policies for social inclusion show that the classical measures of the Welfare State are insufficient to cope with the new risks and needs. In that sense, the traditional framework should be substituted by an innovative one: community-based, with participation, a strategic view, multi-faceted and cross-longitudinal while recognizing local features<sup>3</sup>. At a local level, this leads to the creation of spaces attached to Inclusion Plans, where participation and co-production channels occur (Boards, Committees, Agreements, etc.), aimed at empowering people starting their inclusion itineraries. Secondly, the strategic view is steered by the need to use knowledge and planning instruments (information systems, monitoring plans, dissemination of activities and discussion boards) and, finally, provide autonomy to adapt every social inclusion plan to the reality of every place.

Among the actions developed in the first Plan, the great majority of measures correspond to social policies, educational and health (78%) and half of the actions have a care intervention and palliative effect (21% of actions are direct economic support) and are mainly targeted to childhood and youth (60%), whereas the elderly are the least benefited with 9% of the actions (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2010). However, there isn't a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation of the inclusion policies.

The Action plan for the fight against poverty and for social inclusion in Catalonia 2015-2016 is framed on the European Strategy 2020 and displays several core interventions. The latest twice-yearly plan (in 2014 there was no plan) considers poverty and social inclusion suffered by youth and childhood as priority interventions, devoting 26% of resources destined to the plan in 2015, a

3. Department of Welfare and Family (2014): “Program for the developing of local plans for social inclusion”. Generalitat de Catalunya. Ed. Eines 19.

total of 1.066 million euros, and a specific attention plan for that population for 2015-2018 is also approved. The rest of the 165 actions described by the Plan are distributed in five general strategies aimed at covering basic needs (using almost half of the Plan's resources), occupation (16% of total funds) and the less-supported housing sector (7%) and social and community sector (3,7%). Nearly half of the resources belong to Departments of Business and Occupation (29%) and Social Welfare (nearly 20%) (Generalitat de Catalunya, 2015). The Plan doesn't mean an extra financial effort for the inclusion policies has been made; on the contrary, it distributes the assigned funds of each Department, with the aim to include a wider and more strategic policies scope<sup>4</sup>.

The gender perspective is not acknowledged in these plans nor is the population of women seen as a priority; only for some specific actions, for example, regarding sexist violence. The action Plan provides no statistical data disaggregated by sex –neither in the analysis nor the set of indicators used for plan monitoring. Only some indicators about contracting measures for specific groups of women are seen, and it's significant that it uses a generic male language, whereas one of the most used concepts of the Plan is 'family'. Neither is there mention of gender inequalities in a best practices report of 15 organizations. In conclusion, inequalities among men and women haven't been incorporated in the strategies of social inclusion developed until now.

On a local scale, the Program for the development of Local Plans for Social Inclusion (2014), selected among the best practices of the National Spanish Plan, is still in force. In 2016, 48 local organizations (38 municipalities and 10 regional councils and consortiums) approved their own inclusion plans, half of them in Barcelona's province. Other local institutions such as Barcelona's Provincial Council designed support programs for social inclusion policies<sup>5</sup>. Among the local bodies, some city councils are pioneers, such as Santa Coloma de Gramenet, which has had a Social inclusion plan since 2004 and Barcelona (since 2005).

### Two guiding experiences: Barcelona and Alt Empordà

Even though they are very different places, the Regional Council of Alt Empordà and Barcelona City Council both carry out specific practices where gender mainstreaming and the commitment against the feminization of poverty are priority goals (De la Fuente, 2016). The regional experience of the Plan for social inclusion and cohesion in Alt Empordà 2013-2016 is illustrative as an example of gender perspective mainstreaming in all the phases of inclusion policies. Men and women's inequalities and strategies aimed at overcoming them are included in the Plan's diagnosis and conceptual framework, as well as throughout the implementation and evaluation, and in the communication and raising awareness strategies.

Despite the difficulties in obtaining gender-based information sources and statistical data, in Alt Empordà –that embraces 68 city areas– special focus has been given to analysis and knowledge aspects as a basis for planning inclusion policies. It's also noticeable the interest in setting monitoring mechanisms aimed at evaluating, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, actions for social inclusion with a gender approach. Some examples of this gender awareness are the internal training or the tendering of social inclusion programs in the region where gender perspective is valued. The inclusion team, committed and with leadership capacity, has surely observed other limitations such as the difficulties implementing an equality agenda going backwards, the competence and governance limitations, the weak association network for women or political and management structures with low or deprived gender awareness, as stated by Quintana (2016).

4. Department of Welfare and Family (2015). Annual report of the Government agreement for approving the Action Plan against poverty and social inclusion 2015-2016, Generalitat de Catalunya.

5. See Diputació de Barcelona (2012): "Local plans of social inclusion. Methodological guidelines. Revision". Col. Documents de Treball. Benestar Social series, 13.

On the other hand, Barcelona is an example of inclusive support measures and teamwork on a European and international scale. It's one of the most engaged local governments in worldwide city networks on inclusive policies: internationally, through Cities and Local Governments United (CGLU) in past political terms of office and, currently, through Eurocities, where the city holds the presidency of the Social Forum. Teamwork also operates on a local scale, since the city reserves a specific place of co-production of inclusion policies: the Citizen Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona, that since 2006 has conducted a Common Strategy to end social exclusion, along with more than 600 participant organizations.

From a perspective of fighting against gender inequalities, the Strategy against the feminization of poverty and precariousness approved in 2016 and attached to the Plan for a Justice of Gender 2016-2020 must be highlighted. This strategy advocates for incorporating the gender cross-longitudinal approach in other factors of exclusion, and tackling poverty from its structural causes. The goal is to accomplish women's empowerment and participation and measures are already being implemented, following the same methodology (Cruells and Ruiz, 2016).

One of the most innovative elements of the policies carried out by Barcelona City Council is to recognize and make visible the care tasks. From a feminist perspective, one of the core elements of the Strategy against the feminization of poverty and deprivation is the economy for life and organization of time, which addresses the importance of reproductive work. At the same time, other strategies are operating to validate this hidden practice of economy characterized by inequality and precariousness that deeply affects women. Another example is the process of overhauling social services, a female-dominated professional sector, that aims to strengthen the community work in the neighborhoods and has designed caring measures for the professionals ('Impulsem' Program<sup>6</sup>). From a gendered and fighting against social inequalities perspective, one of the commitments will be to share and align these strategies with the new policies of social inclusion.

### 3. Towards an inclusive and feminist local agenda

The rise of poverty and exclusion in a context of crisis affects men and women unequally, strengthening the patriarchal scheme of submission and social control. Government cutbacks strategies have contributed to a worsened *market society* by taking over sectors that were managed by institutions and further *familism* with the intensification of the reproductive role of women. In that sense, both policies to tackle social inequalities and gender inequalities have been, since several years ago, in regression.

Discussions about social exclusion have outlined several positions, bringing about different approaches, even polarised ones. Four discussion views have been pointed out: individual attitudes, social disengagement as the central element and the conception of exclusion as a lack of social and citizenship rights. Linked to this last one, a fourth discussion view considers patriarchy and capitalist inequalities as the causes of social exclusion and would advocate for an alternative society model.

These discussion views are not rigid; they have various nuances and offer different responses to the situations of exclusion. The neoliberal framework that values individual decisions as a key factor has permeated the public picture, mainly in the European Union and the State. These positions have also been used to cut social funds. When the problem of social exclusion becomes individualized and bound to the assumption of capacities and attitudes that keep people 'employable', the chances for community action becomes underestimated and care work remains invisible. From that perspective, gender inequalities are hardly seen: on one hand, women are

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6. Launched in 2016, 'Impulsem' Program has fostered actions and discussion to strengthen the network of basic social services facing social demands and the necessity of shifting the support services approach. Some of the priorities are reinforcing community work, deinstitutionalizing the management of Social Centers and hiring more staff.

required to access the labour market in equal conditions and, on the other hand, are treated as a specific population section to whom several actions must be addressed.

As seen by that context, one of the challenges is to articulate local strategies of social inclusion, incorporating justice of gender as a key factor. It's obvious that measures aimed at tackling social exclusion and gender inequalities can't only be conducted from a local context; coordination and alignment with different government levels should be achieved, as well as a legal framework to promote social rights in crucial sectors like housing, labour market, health, education or dependency support.

Paradoxically, while local entities are struggling to increase their autonomy, ground-breaking proposals are emerging, opposed to that centralism and based on new institutional practices. These are common good municipality proposals steered towards local policies and community practices that bring about innovative means of social transformation (Blanco and Gomà, 2016). Proximity is the key to create common spaces of inclusion and empowerment, since these inclusion patterns must rely on the emotional and social aspects of people, contributing to an individualized and common empowerment that should acknowledge autonomy as a standard liberty feature and the capacity for each person to decide their own life trajectory.

*New inclusion policies* should be based on the statement that “an inclusive society is incompatible with capitalism and patriarchy” (Fraser, 2015). At the same time, we need wide and multiple discussions about the three key dimensions on public policies: conceptual and discourse framework; content and fixing operative and social matters of the strategies.

- *From a conceptual and discourse framework*, the article has pointed out some of the main discussion items about the concept of social exclusion. This is a useful concept for embracing a complex and changing reality and because it introduces social, community and reproductive dimensions, enabling the incorporation of men and women inequalities in the assessment. Despite the homogeneous nature of the individualized discourse, some other approaches connected to republicanism, social democracy and new radical trends are emerging. It's evidenced by the new municipalism that advocates for ground-breaking discourses where feminism participates and a new economic and social model acknowledges all jobs. To summarize, a discourse that considers inclusion as participation and autonomy, strengthening community ties and supporting the feminist approach in order to build and prioritize a common and democratic responsibility vision of caring tasks and reproductive work. In that sense, gender justice will be achieved by the radical transformation of power access and, to do that, proximity of practices and actions is needed.

- *From an operative framework*, policies of social inclusion should be aimed at collective emancipation, strengthening measures to cover basic needs and assure rights and defense of common goods. A first step should be to revert the cutbacks suffered in the public sector to design policies that guarantee sufficient income, food and energy supply, housing and labour inclusion, while reinforcing and connecting education, social services, health and cultural policies from an inclusion perspective, targeted to dignity and autonomy (Gomà and Rosetti, 2016). Introducing gender injustices to the local agenda helps encourage policies for the organization of caring tasks, with the aim of reordering time to overcome the centrality of productive work (Moreno, 2016). That perspective should be implemented along with other key factors such as mobility, safety, urbanism and public space and geographical dissemination.

As highlighted by some studies, while the necessities for a provision of care are rising in current societies, due, to a large extent, to people living longer and to changes in family structures, local policies haven't considered them as a key factor.

This is seen by the lack of institutionalization of care services, which are strongly feminized, with high levels of job insecurity (Torns, Castelló and Recio, 2009). In that sense, contributions by the feminist economy are crucial to incorporate sustainable life as a central interest to inclusion

policies, connecting it to the defense of the common good, solidarity and social economy and the ecological economy.

- *The operative and social dimension of inclusion policies* explores how to carry them out from the strengthening of community networks and, especially, the participation of the beneficiaries of the actions, a dimension addressed in many plans of social inclusion. Setting out new inclusion policies also means to abandon official and patronizing models and incorporate co-production forms of public policies, with pluralistic evaluation patterns and methodologies aimed at collecting examples of inequalities and the impact of inclusion policies from a gender perspective. Autonomy means giving a voice to vulnerable people, acknowledging that the right to decide over their lives is as important as enhancing their opportunities<sup>7</sup>. It's crucial to value women's contribution, since there are no rights without empowerment. Believing in an alternative economy that includes all the necessary requirements for wellbeing demands the strengthening of community networks beyond a State-level: social movements and social associations. Several vindication movements have recently emerged, where women have leading roles, corresponding to sectors that suffer from insecure employment –caring tasks and support services– and that, until now, have struggled to raise their voice and organize themselves. Associations such as Las Kellys or Sindillar are a good example, as well as the fight of workers from nursing homes in Bizkaia, a mobilization approach to situations of job exclusion from a feminist perspective.

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