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Foreword

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The crisis seems to have produced a convergence between the poverty rates of men and women. In Catalonia, the AROPE indicator (*at risk of poverty and exclusion*), that registers individuals living in households affected by economic poverty, low salaried work intensity or material deprivation, is still higher for women than men. The differences reduced progressively from 4.8 points in 2009 to 0.6 in 2015. What's the point, then, of discussing the feminization of poverty? And, beyond the publication of this issue of Barcelona Society, why launch a strategy against the feminization of poverty in the city?

Based on research data, theoretical reflections and experience, the authors of the articles of the 21 issue of Barcelona Society show the need to scope impoverishment and social exclusion forms from a gender perspective, overcoming misleading indicators and an overly economicist conception of social itineraries.

The indicators based on household income, such as the at-risk-of-poverty rate or AROPE rate, don't reflect the internal distribution of economic resources. The Spanish Living Standards Survey data (ECV), reveal, though, that in 62.7% of Catalan households a man is the principal source of income. The disadvantages women face in the labour market and a designing of social protection policies based on tax contributions significantly undermine their capacity to generate income. As a consequence, the average personal earnings (work and other economic activities and social benefits) in 2015 was 17,125 euros for men and 11,375 euros for women. The source of family income determines the individual social risks and, at the same time, influences the capacity of income share. According to ECV, 25.4% of women confess they can't afford to spend even a low amount of money on themselves during the week, a proportion that, in the case of men, reduces to 20.8%.

The distribution of economic resources within the household is not the only factor that makes women's poverty invisible. An overly economicist conception of poverty ignores other socially relevant aspects. Gender determines the access to cultural resources, self-esteem, availability of time and space, dedication to non-remunerated works, personal safety, etc.

Gender inequalities affecting lives can be seen through the availability and use of time. The Time Use Survey (EUT) in 2011 revealed that, on average, men devoted 62 minutes per day more to paid work in comparison to women. At the same time, men devoted on average 46 minutes per day more to leisure and use of media than women. On the other hand, caring and domestic work are still female-dominated, since women devoted on average 112 minutes per day more than men to these tasks.

The social market model and familism forms of the activities assumed by public institutions before the crisis have a different impact according to gender. Reducing the support services addressed to caring tasks of sick people, dependant people and children impacts on the people carrying out that work inside the household. As the authors suggest, the assessment instruments of the feminization of poverty must be improved as, despite the evolution in some indicators, the crisis and austerity measures are strongly linked to a rise in gender inequalities in the distribution of poverty and social exclusion risks.