GENDER JUSTICE

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1. Introduction

AT THE NORMATIVE HEART OF FEMINISM lies the belief that nobody should be disadvantaged because of their sex. Here I propose, and defend, a principle of gender justice meant to capture the nature of a very wide range of injustices based on gender.[1] In a nutshell, the principle says that, in a gender just world, a gender-neutral lifestyle would be the least costly option for both women and men. Gendered lifestyles need not be ruled out, but should not be achievable at lower costs than a gender-neutral lifestyle. This principle is grounded in the values at the core of liberal egalitarian justice: equality of access and the good of individual choice.

Because the principle is meant to explain the injustice of a very wide range of phenomena, the sense of "costs" is similarly wide. Such costs can be material – for example financial, time or effort – psychological – self-respect, a good relationship with one's body and emotions – and social – such as reputation, social acceptance and valuable social relationships.[2]

I illustrate my proposal by discussing the injustice involved in the gendered division of labor, which is one of the most important, yet philosophically disputed, gender issues in the developed world. Some liberal egalitarians contest that a freely chosen gendered division of labor is unjust.[3] Others believe that in order to know whether particular outcomes are gender just we need to pay attention to the context of people's choices, to the processes of preference formation and to the cumulative effects of particular choices. Some of the latter even doubt that liberal egalitarianism has the theoretical resources to recognize the gendered nature of the gendered division of labor.[4] I argue that it does.

The gendered division of labor is also at the core of a long-lasting debate about two different models of change, embodied by different strands of feminism. Here is a crude picture. The first model, centered on equality between women and men, consists in empowering women to enjoy all the "good things of life" that men have traditionally enjoyed. The second model, centered on "difference," consists in discovering, explaining and enhancing

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[1] For an earlier, undefended, formulation of this principle, see Anca Gheaus (2008), "Basic Income, Gender Justice and the Costs of Gender - Symmetrical Lifestyles," *Basic Income Studies* 3(3).

[2] I do not engage here with the difficult question of measuring the different costs, but I illustrate policies that could decrease the costs of gender-neutral lifestyles.

[3] See the exchange between Williams and Dworkin: Andrew Williams (2002), "Dworkin on Capabilities," *Ethics* 113(1): 23-39, and Ronald Dworkin (2002), "*Sovereign Virtue* Revisited," *Ethics* 113(1): 106-43.

[4] See Anne Phillips (2004), "Defending Equality of Outcome," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 12(1): 1-19.

the value of what has long been deemed "women's lifestyles." Traditionally, women have been associated with the spheres of the family, close relationships, domestic work and with the individual virtues believed[5] to make life in these spheres as good as it can get. Men have been associated with the complementary spheres of politics and commerce and their respective virtues.

Since "feminine" as well as "masculine" functional spheres are necessary for individual survival and social reproduction,[6] both emancipatory models proposed by the two different strands of feminism have run into major difficulties. If women and men are to have an equal share of the good things in life by merely opening men's lifestyles to women, the question is: Who will do what it takes to maintain the spheres of family, close relationships and domestic work? Feminists who advocate "masculine" lifestyles for women have been criticized as compromising the quest for equality by relegating "feminine" work to the often-exploited women whose poverty, race or immigrant status pushes them to the margins of society.[7] The alternative possibility, that the *entire* "feminine domain" be outsourced, looks unappealing to most, and possibly not even coherent.[8] The second solution to gender justice, that is, making women and men equally well off by giving more recognition and economic support to "feminine lifestyles," was criticized for entrenching the gendered division of labor and therefore curtailing women's access to "masculine" lifestyles.[9]

These solutions sacrifice either equality between women belonging to different classes/races/national groups, or women's substantive freedom to choose nontraditional lifestyles. Such sacrifices could be avoided if women and men were to voluntarily share paid and domestic work and their benefits. To some extent this has been happening for several decades, under a combination of pressure coming from markets and individual preferences alike. But women and men are still far from sharing all types of work and benefits equally, and sometimes women themselves seem to prefer the status quo. The question of what a gender-just world would look like is still as yet unanswered: How should women and men share the burdens and benefits of social cooperation, and why? Should we strive to accommodate all individual preferences concerning gendered lifestyles equally, and at what costs? And if

[5] "Believed" because a very important strand in feminism is critical of traditional virtues. Feminists have convincingly argued, for instance, that justice is important in the family as well as in politics and that care can and should be a political, as well as a personal, value.

[6] Indeed, taken together they seem to exhaust what it takes to insure that human life continues; they are not merely two out of several elements necessary for this resulting benefit.

[7] See, for instance, Joan Tronto (2002), "The 'Nanny' Question in Feminism," *Hypatia* 17 (2): 34-51.

[8] One could outsource much of the care work, i.e., turn it into paid work. The interesting question is to what extent it is a good idea to do so. Obviously one could not "outsource" the friendship and love, or the time and work necessary to sustain them.

[9] See, for instance, the work of Barbara Bergmann.

all preferences cannot all be equally accommodated, which should be given priority and on what grounds? There is still a lack of normative agreement with respect to these questions. In the '60s and the '70s, feminists nourished the hope that men would engage as equal partners in domestic work, and the disappointment that this has not happened sufficiently has labeled feminism a "stalled revolution."[10]

On the one hand, a new wave of academics from various disciplines seeks to legitimize individuals' gendered preferences and a society able to accommodate these preferences equally.[11] On the other hand, for almost two decades feminists such as Nancy Fraser have been advocating a universal caregiver model whereby women and men would share equally the paid work and the caregiving,[12] a model fleshed out in the work of Janet Gornick and Marcia Meyers.[13] More recently, Ingrid Robeyns has argued that society will be gender just only when women's and men's capability sets, constraints on choice and resulting benefits are the same (allowing for inequalities resulting from sexual difference).[14] This paper shows why the gist of the latter proposals is correct.[15]

Central to my project is the idea, for which I argue below, that gender norms oppress *both* women and men, and they would do so even if they were to leave men and women equally well off overall. This claim need not lead to paradoxical consequences because it is possible that, in fact, gender norms oppress women more than men, leaving the latter net winners. Nevertheless, if my argument is correct, in a gender-unjust world both women and men suffer injustice.[16] As well as identifying injustice, the approach I suggest could therefore also provide everybody with *some* motivation for change.

I work with the classical distinction between sex and gender, with sex referring to biological features (chromosomes, sex organs, hormones and other physical features) and gender representing the social meanings associated with sex.[17] Because sex and gender map onto each other – albeit imperfectly – and because, as I argue below, gender norms are a source of

[10] The term was coined by Arlie Hochschild.

[11] Such as natural scientists who want to find the inborn elements of gender, or like sociologist Catherine Hakim, to whom I return toward the end of the paper.

[12] See, for instance, Fraser (1994), "After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State," *Political Theory* 22(4): 591-698.

[13] Gornick and Meyers (2005), *Families That Work: Policies for Reconciling Parenthood and Employment*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

[14] Ingrid Robeyns (2007), "When Will Society Be Gender Just?" in Jude Browne, ed. *The Future of Gender*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 54-74.

[15] Which is not to say that I agree with every detail of any of these proposals.

[16] And therefore the approach I suggest can be used to identify a "second sexism," that is a sexism directed toward men. For several examples of this, see David Benatar (2003), "The Second Sexism," *Social Theory and Practice* 29(2): 117-210. I do not endorse all of Benatar's analysis and I find some of his examples problematic.

[17] My conclusions will arguably also apply if one believes that sex, as well as gender, is a socially constructed category.

injustice, I am framing the problem in terms of *gender* (in)justice.[18]

The next section explores the scope of gender injustices, moving from the less toward the more controversial cases. The third section introduces a principle of gender justice, which subsequent sections explain, justify and illustrate.

2. The Scope of Gender Injustice

It is hard to dispute that women and men are equally entitled to just treatment and that, when someone suffers injustice *because* of their sex, they are a victim of gender injustice. But the exact definition of gender injustice and therefore the scope of gender injustice are contentious matters.

Some forms of gender injustice are easy to identify. In many countries some kinds of violence against women are particularly high, often women receive lower pay than men for the same work and in some countries women still do not have legal rights equal to those that men hold. It is not difficult to see the problem in these cases. Widely endorsed conceptions of liberal egalitarian justice uphold people's moral rights to dignified treatment and physical integrity, to equal compensation for equal work and to equality in front of the law. If those directly responsible for the above injustices are partly motivated by hatred or prejudice against women, the victims of violence and discrimination do not just *happen* to be women – rather, they become victims of injustice *because* they are women. Hence, these examples are clear illustrations of *gender* injustice.

Other cases are a bit more difficult to describe as gender injustice or, indeed, as injustice full stop. Take, for example, women's "second shift." Significant numbers of women worldwide simultaneously hold full-time jobs and do most of the work that goes into maintaining households, raising children and caring for disabled or elderly family members. They are clearly shouldering more than their male partners.[19] Even worse, in case of divorce, women who used to be full-time homemakers and caregivers often find it hard to enter, or reenter, the labor market, and are much more likely than their former partners to fall into poverty – especially when they have children.[20] But these women seem to owe their situation to voluntary choices: neither laws, nor physical coercion, nor, strictly speaking, a lack of

[18] I assume (without making my argument dependent on the assumption) that in an ideally just world the only existing gender norms, if any, would be those directly related to sexual difference; for instance, norms associated with menstruation or erection. I owe this point to an anonymous reviewer of *JESP*.

[19] See Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung (1989), *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home*, New York: Viking Penguin. For an argument about why time in particular is an important currency of justice, see Lina Eriksson and Robert E. Goodin (2007), "The Measuring Rod of Time: The Example of Swedish Day-Fines," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 24(2): 125-36.

[20] Pamela J. Smock, Wendy D. Manning and Sanjiv Gupta (1999), "The Effect of Marriage and Divorce on Women's Economic Well-Being," *American Sociological Review* 64: 794-812.

alternatives, forces them to take on double shifts (since it is possible to live without a male partner and without dependents, or to go on strike with respect to all but the most urgent care tasks). Moreover, some women say they enjoy being able to discharge several social roles successfully. Why are they then subject to gender injustice? One way to explain why is by assuming that people become double shifters as a result of adapting their preferences to fit gender norms and to avoid other types of hardship. Women have traditionally been, and still are, expected to meet the material and psychological needs of their nearest and dearest; and leading a solitary life, or going on strike, can be emotionally very costly[21] for most people. When alternatives are very undesirable, we often adapt our preferences to the status quo in order to make our circumstances more bearable. Action guided by adaptive preferences, while not as morally problematic as coercion, should not count as entirely voluntary.

But it is possible to account for the injustice of the double shift even without reference to adaptive preferences. A widely acknowledged feature of a just society is that it allows its members to share the benefits and the burdens of living together fairly. That is, in a just society nobody has to systematically take on more burdens than others – unless they freely choose to *and* are offered proper compensation. Nor is anybody entitled by default to more benefits than anybody else. The systematic overburdening and denial of benefits that others enjoy to some individuals because they belong to a particular sex are forms of injustice. Even if the double shifters in our example were to take on the excessive burdens voluntarily, the injustice comes from a systematic failure to fully compensate them, or even to offer such compensation.[22] Moreover, their male partners systematically enjoy more benefits thanks to the social cooperation structured by women's double shift: These men have extra free time, better access to economic well-being and fewer overall responsibilities.

Gender justice requires that nobody should be expected to carry higher overall burdens, or enjoy overall lesser benefits than others, without due compensation, simply because of their gender. But think now of cases in which women and men shoulder the same overall burdens and enjoy the same overall level of benefit by conforming to gendered lifestyles. A good example is a heterosexual family, intact over time, and adopting an equal, but gendered, division of labor. This may come in the more extreme traditional form, with the man as a full-time breadwinner and the woman as a full-time homemaker. Or it may take a more modern shape, with the man holding a full-time job and doing some housework and care and the woman working part time while also managing and doing the main bulk of the housework and

[21] It may not be *difficult* to live on one's own, or refuse to do domestic work for another, but it is nevertheless *costly*. See section 5 for an argument concerning the relevance of costs to justice.

[22] Homemakers' wages, proposed by some feminists, would be an example of such compensation. There is debate about whether this compensation could be adequate.

care. If both partners work the same amount of time and enjoy equal benefits, is there any injustice at stake?

The answer for which I argue below is that no injustice is involved in such an arrangement if the society in which this couple lives does not make their arrangement – or, indeed, any other kind of gendered division of labor – the least costly[23] lifestyle option. In other words, this is not a case of injustice provided the couple in question would find it no more costly to share paid and unpaid work equally. This claim, I believe, accounts well for the intuition that all is fine if people voluntarily choose to divide work as the couple above, but not if they end up with this arrangement due to the pressure of gender norms coming in the form of individuals' expectations or constraints of the labor market.

The last example also raises a deeper worry, related to the possible meaning of making a truly free choice in an environment structured by gender norms. Think, first, of a world where there is no distinguishable gendered pattern of dividing work in society in general and between family members in particular: There is as much variation in the paid/unpaid ratio between spouses as there currently is, say, eye-color variation. In this case, indeed, nothing seems to be wrong with the particular division of labor of this couple – in fact, it is *not* a gendered division of labor and the couple is *not* a traditional couple. (Because gender plays no role in the way people divide their labor in this world.) In contrast, imagine that the couple in question lives in a society where most men hold full-time jobs and most women do the bulk of domestic work. Also, imagine the spouses in our example *like* this arrangement because it is adequate to their personalities. The lingering worry is that the very fact that a gendered arrangement is adequate to the kind of people they are may be a sign of background injustice. Perhaps they had their personalities shaped such that gendered lifestyles are the least costly for them. Perhaps the gendering happened as early as infancy, well before they could decide which influences to allow into their lives. (This problem is inevitably connected to the question of what is nature and what is nurture in gender, and I will return to it in section 6.)

The principle of gender justice that I propose is capable of accounting for cases where the injustice lies at the very deep level of determining agency by shaping individuals. At the same time, the principle explains *at least some*[24] of the gender injustice of the entire range of examples given so far: violence against women, economic and legal discrimination, domestic exploitation and the gendered division of labor. Moreover, if the principle is correct, it means that men as well as women can and do suffer from a range of gender injustices.

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[23] For simplicity, I shall henceforth use "cheapest" instead of "least costly." It is important to bear in mind, however, that not all costs are financial or even material.

[24] Presumably there is more to some gender injustices, such as gender-based hate crimes or the systematic discounting of needs, than unfair costs. But these forms of gender injustice also tend to unfairly increase the costs of gender-neutral lifestyles as defined in this paper.

3. A Principle of Gender Justice

A gendered division of labor, even when it burdens women and men equally, is unjust if it is set in a social context that endorses gender norms that make some choices cheaper for women and other choices cheaper for men. The pressure such norms put on people casts doubt on individuals' freedom to choose certain valuable elements from the lifestyle of the other gender. Sometimes this happens because gender norms make the costs of such elements prohibitive. Even when the costs are not prohibitive, and individuals *are* free to choose these elements, gender norms compromise the equality of women's and men's access to what they have reason, and sometimes choose, to pursue.

Before proposing a principle of gender justice, let me explain how the pressure of gender norms works and what is problematic about it. There are three different ways in which gender norms can interfere with just outcomes through limiting individual choice,[25] all illustrated by the "glass-ceiling" effect in women's careers.

First, there is increasing evidence that much gender bias operates at the unconscious, and hence not directly controllable, level.[26] Even individuals who consciously reject gender norms tend to unconsciously evaluate women and men according to different criteria and to expect members of each gender to do better in those respects that are traditionally associated with their gender; this is called implicit bias. Often, implicit bias puts people at a net disadvantage due to their gender. Moreover, we are ourselves unconsciously sensitive to gender norms and actually perform worse in environments in which we are expected, on the basis of our gender, to be less successful; this is called stereotype threat. It is not very difficult to see the unfairness of implicit bias and stereotype threat and of the ensuing differential treatment of women and men: They invite unjustified discrimination. Additionally, the imposition of different standards of evaluation of performance on women and men unjustifiably limits the scope of occupational choice, or at least the equality of access, for some. So, part of the explanation of the glass-ceiling effect lies at the level of unconscious discrimination, due to gender norms, in evaluating women. A woman has to prove herself more than she would had she been a man. In order to be deemed equally good as men, women must pay the higher cost of superior performance. If one adds the stereotype threat into the picture, the costs – especially psychological – are even higher, since extra self-confidence is needed to overcome the drawbacks of being perceived as inferior. Some

[25] For a more detailed discussion on the mechanisms through which gender shapes society, mostly to the disadvantage of women, see Robeyns (2007).
[26] Virginia Valian (1999), *Why So Slow? The Advancement of Women*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

women are unable to pay this price, and their freedom of occupational choice is thereby limited; others are able to pay it but their access to top jobs is unequal to men's.[27]

Second, it is costly for individuals to frustrate gender expectations (for instance, most men would be mortified to appear in public wearing dresses and makeup). This is particularly true when dealing with the expectations of people we care about (often gay people find it hardest to come out to their own families) and even more so when the expectations are internalized (the urge to please others is more difficult to resist when one's self-perception as an acceptable individual depends on pleasing others). I return to the relevance of these distinctions in section 6. Once someone starts to systematically behave in ways that conform to others' expectations, it becomes increasingly hard for that person to resist them, for two reasons: (a) because it is subjectively hard to break patterns of action that have become part of one's regular lifestyle, and (b) perhaps more importantly, because patterned behavior generates legitimate expectations. Being always there to meet the essential needs of the nearest and dearest, as women are expected to do, or to earn the living of the family, as men are expected to do, results in duties that cannot be dissolved at short notice or with little effort. Both habit and acquired duties curtail one's freedom of choice. A second part of the explanation of the glass-ceiling effect is in the way that gender norms shape the family. A woman with dependents who wants to rise to the top of her profession will have to pay higher material costs than she would had she been a man: She is the main caregiver in her family and so either needs to work harder overall or else she needs to counter social expectations and to overcome habit in order to transfer her care duties to somebody else. The cost, for women, of having a successful career is often prohibitive, and hence they enjoy lesser substantial freedom of choice in this respect than men do and/or unequal access.

Third, external pressure in the form of gender expectations can generate what economists call "statistical discrimination," which is a structural feature of work markets. If most people from your social group conform to (gender) expectations, others will reasonably predict that you will conform as well, even if in fact you will not, and will treat you accordingly. So, for example, if enough women put less time than most men into advancing their careers because they dedicate their time to meeting essential needs of the nearest and dearest, it may be reasonable for potential employers to expect *any* woman who has needy dependents to do so. This is the last part of the explanation of the glass-ceiling effect, consisting in how gender norms structure women's

[27] For instance, both anecdotal evidence and research suggest that, in order to be judged competent, women must adopt what is usually perceived as a "communication style," but if they succeed in doing so, they are perceived as less likeable, which, in turn, hurts their assessment as workers. See, for example, C. von Hippel, C. Wiryakusuma, J. Bowden and M. Shochet (2011), "Stereotype Threat and Female Communication Styles," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 37(10): 1312-24.

relationship to the labor market. Even if a woman has generally resisted gendered expectations in her family life, and even if such expectations play no role in evaluating her performance,[28] prudent employers will be reluctant to promote her. Employers have limited knowledge, and it is statistically more likely that female employees will lead a gendered lifestyle that prevents them from performing as efficiently as a similarly positioned man. In other words, gender norms also make the costs of promoting women that *employers* have to pay higher than those of promoting men. This results in market mechanisms that limit people's opportunities, and therefore the scope of individual choice, on the basis of their gender.

When is the limitation of individual choice, resulting from social norms, unjust? It cannot *always* be so: Much of the way in which we manage ourselves and our relationships with others is shaped by social norms and, arguably, this is often for the better. It is costly to frustrate social norms, but this does not involve any intrinsic injustice; in the case of general norms everybody's choice is limited in the same ways and to the same extent. Moreover, some of the general social norms that curtail individuals' freedom block access to things that are *not* valuable.

One problem with the majority of gendered norms is that, in general, they make it more costly for women than for men to obtain certain valuable things such as fulfilling careers and self-esteem, and the social recognition that comes with them. Indeed, much of the feminist work on justice reflects this fact, and an analytically powerful way to understand gender itself is by reference to its essential connection to social advantage or disadvantage.[29]

However, this is not all there is to object to gender norms. Non-hierarchical gender norms can also entail injustice.[30] In the example of gendered but equally burdening and rewarding lifestyles, gendered expectations may well be as costly for men as they are for women: They make women's access to fulfilling work very costly and make equally costly men's access to fulfilling relationships. Imagine that fulfilling work and fulfilling relationships were equally valuable and received equal social recognition. Even in this case – highly unrealistic as a paradigm of the costs associated with gender in real life! – there is a problem with gender norms.

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[28] Which, in fact, is particularly difficult to do if the literature on implicit bias and stereotype threat is correct.

[29] Sally Hasslanger (2000), "Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want Them to Be?" *Nous* 34(1): 31-55. Hasslanger proposes the following definition of "woman": "S is a woman iff_{df} S is systematically subordinated along some dimension (economic, political, legal, social, etc.), and S is 'marked' as a target for this treatment by observed or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction" (39). By contrast, I argue that hierarchy is not necessary in order to see what is wrong with gender – although in reality gender and hierarchies may be inseparable.

[30] Haslanger leaves open the possibility of nonhierarchical genders, which however she does not explore, so it is difficult to know what they would consist of and whether norms associated with nonhierarchical gender would make access to nontrivial goods more costly for members of one, or several, genders.

They render people's access to some central components of most, if not all, individuals' ideas of a good life excessively, and unequally, costly; they oppress both women and men, although in different respects. But we cannot choose our sex at trivial costs, nor can we choose how gender norms are to influence our lives. Hence, in a just society nobody should be burdened by gendered norms in the pursuit of things as important as access to work and close relationships – even if everybody was to carry an overall equal burden. One's gender should not block access to any of these, or make it either more or less costly than they would be for somebody similar in all respects[31] but gender.

More generally, I advance the following principle of gender justice as capable of explaining the entire range of gender injustices[32]:

> A society is gender just only if the costs of a gender-neutral lifestyle are, all other things being equal, lower than, or at most equal to, the costs of gendered lifestyles.

4. The Principle Explained

Before defense, the principle requires more explanation. By gendered lifestyles I mean lifestyles that conform to gendered norms. In the contemporary western world they usually impact the division of labor; standards of beauty and bodily propriety; standards of social interaction such as expressions of sociability, emotion, interest, taste, ambition and competence; and, at least in some social circles, standards of sexual morality. In all of these respects – and possibly others – women and men are evaluated, whether consciously or not, according to different norms.

More difficult to grasp is the concept of "gender-neutral lifestyle," because, since all known societies were or are structured by gender norms, this must be defined by reference to a hypothetical world. In defining a gender-neutral lifestyle, one has to imagine what would be a valuable lifestyle in a world without gender norms. This would have to include elements that meet two conditions:

> (i) We have good reason to regard these lifestyle elements as valuable[33] *and*
> (ii) These lifestyle elements can be attainable by any number of people without thereby excluding others from attaining them. They are co-exercisable options.

Some lifestyle elements (valuable or not) are currently unequally accessible to

[31] Individual features, such as strength, beauty, intelligence, skills, personality and character traits do of course impact the costs of the various things people wish to attain.
[32] That is, capable to identify all cases of gender injustice, but not necessarily to account for the *whole* injustice of all of these cases.
[33] And, thus, a more accurate formulation of the principle would refer to *elements* of lifestyles. A reformulation along these lines would make the principle too complicated and would encounter the further problem of how exactly to individuate lifestyle elements.

women and to men, that is, they are elements of gendered lifestyles. A gender-neutral lifestyle may include a number of elements from "masculine" and "feminine" lifestyles. For instance, direct expression of one's sadness or fear is better accommodated by norms of femininity rather than by norms of masculinity. If constant discouragement to express one's sadness or fear is an obstacle to well-being, then it is plausible that in a world free of gender norms the ability to express sadness or fear would be valued rather than repressed. And there is no reason to think that some people's direct expression of their sadness or fear would limit other people's freedom to do so.

To take a different example: Nondomestic work is associated with norms of masculinity, while caregiving with norms of femininity. There are good reasons to believe that both are valuable elements of good lives and we can imagine a society where everybody had equal access to both (although perhaps not a society where everybody worked as a full-time caregiver *and* had a full-time job). Call the lifestyle including both nondomestic work and caregiving A. By contrast, although there might be value in dedicating oneself entirely to one's career – call it lifestyle B – or to caring for those nearest and dearest – call it lifestyle C – such lifestyles could not become universal: If everybody did only one, nobody would do the other and society would soon come to a halt. The principle of gender justice I propose says that in a just world neither B nor C should be the cheapest lifestyle for anybody; the problem with gender norms is that they often render B the cheapest option for men and the most costly for women, C the other way around, while A is still prohibitively costly for many.

The condition of universalizability must be carefully specified with respect to the level of generality at which it pertains, to ensure that the elements of a gender-neutral lifestyle are compossible, or co-exercisable, options. With respect to gender justice in the domains of work and family, "doing some nondomestic work" is a universalizable element of a lifestyle, while, given a general division of labor, no particular type of nondomestic work can be so (whether a division of labor is itself desirable is, of course, a separate question).

In the previous section I illustrated what it could mean for a woman to bear the costs of a lifestyle that includes a successful career. That analysis emphasized psychological (self-esteem) and material (work, time and effort) costs. If it is true that women are often in a double bind in which they are judged as either competent or likable,[34] and that the perception of one feature crowds out the perception of the other, then they are also likely to incur social costs. In other cases costs can also be straightforwardly financial.

[34] For an analysis of this, see for instance Andrea Kupfer Schneider, Catherine H. Tinsley, Sandra Cheldeli and Emily T. Amanatullah (2010), "Likeability v. Competence: The Impossible Choice Faced by Female Politicians, Attenuated by Lawyers," *Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy* (17)2.

If being a woman makes it more likely for one to be subject to violence at night in public places, and, as a result, women are as safe as men only by taking a taxi instead of walking or using public transport, then they must pay a higher price than men for leading a gender-neutral lifestyle.

According to this analysis, men are also subject to gender injustice due to the existence of gender norms. For instance, men also incur higher costs in choosing a gender-neutral lifestyle over a "masculine" one. A prominent example is men who encounter higher obstacles than women in obtaining parental leave or part-time work arrangements. Other examples include men who, in order to work with children, have to prove themselves trustworthy to a higher standard than women do, or who are met with reluctance in their attempts to socialize in all-female environments when they look after their young children.[35]

By contrast, in a gender-just society it would be equally costly for a woman and a man, who are similar in all respects other than sex, to have a particular professional trajectory, or to be actively involved in the everyday life of their children, or to do both.

5. The Principle Defended

The principle of gender justice that I propose here relies on the two values reflected, in different proportions, by all liberal conceptions of justice: equality and individual freedom. More specifically, it is grounded in a robust understanding of equality, according to which it is unfair, and therefore unjust, for some people to be worse off than others on account of their sex. An important way in which some can be worse off is by having less substantive freedom than others to choose certain valuable lifestyle elements (within the limits imposed by just constraints) – even if everybody's (lack of) freedom in this respect is equal.[36]

Therefore, the principle reflects the values of equality and individual freedom. Arrangements that leave individuals more free to pursue various valuable things are, other things equal, more desirable than arrangements that restrict individuals' freedom to do so. Also, the mere fact that a particular lifestyle is the result of adaptive preferences, developed against the

[35] But when developing models it is important to keep a close eye on the realities they model. Gender-progressive societies have various mechanisms for lowering the costs that men have to pay if they embrace A lifestyles while mounting the costs for women who try to lead A lifestyles. See appended cartoon.

[36] Theorists of justice who embrace different views on principles of just distribution, on the proper metric of justice and, more generally, on how the values of equality and liberty contribute to justice, agree on the value of substantial freedom. See, for instance: Amartya Sen (1980), "Equality of What?" in *The Tanner Lecture on Human Values*, vol. I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 197-220; Gerald Cohen (1989), "On the Currency of Egalitarian Justice," *Ethics* 99: 906-44; Philippe van Parijs (1997), *Real Freedom for All*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; John Baker, Kathleen Lynch and Sara Cantillon (2004), *Equality: From Theory to Action*, London: Palgrave.

background of unfair gender norms, should not put it outside an individual's reach.

The ability to act on one's choices is constitutive to a substantial freedom to lead one's life as one wishes. G. A. Cohen drew attention to a useful distinction between two ways in which this ability can be curtailed: The agent may find it too difficult to accomplish something – at the limit, impossible – or she may find it too costly – at the limit, unbearably costly.[37] For instance, writing a large check is not difficult at all, but it is very costly (Cohen's example). In contrast, a tiny woman may find it very difficult to lift the same weight as a strong man. But if she takes pleasure in the challenge, this instance of lifting is not costly: She has little to lose in doing it (my example).

Difficulty (related to how possible it is for someone to act) and cost (a measure of the hardship one has to accept in order to act) are both aspects of having the power to do something. Other things being equal, the less power one has to act on one's choices the less substantial freedom of choice she has. From these two determinants of the freedom to act, cost is actually the more relevant to justice because it is directly connected to the individual's well-being. What is difficult, of course, may be costly because it is difficult[38]: It can be costly for an agent to do difficult things, since not everybody relishes in doing difficult things. This means that, in many contexts, difficulty is also relevant to justice if difficulty raises the costs of action and thus limits the agents' freedom of choice.

One of the opening examples of this paper is a good illustration for the relevance of this distinction to gender justice. Women who comply with the gender norms requiring them to shoulder most housework and (child)care find it very costly to hold paid jobs, especially of the more interesting and rewarding kind. They have to pay the costs of hard work, of having very little, if any, free time, of forfeiting much of their social life, hobbies and other kinds of pleasures, of feeling dissatisfied with under-performance in one or both kinds of work and so on. Being a double shifter is also difficult for most people, which compounds its costs. A woman doing a double shift need not find it *difficult* to shed her role as a homemaker and caregiver (she can just walk out on her family) but doing this would obviously be *costly*. Alternatively, she need not find it difficult to quit her job (saying "I resign" will do), but this would also be very costly.

Whether she decides to go on with the double shift, or to shed one of her roles, her choice is going to be unduly costly, and this is what raises an issue of justice. It is the curtailment of her freedom that makes this a worry. (A man of no independent means, who wants to become personally involved in the everyday life of his children but cannot because he has to choose

[37] See Cohen (1979), *Karl Marx's Theory of History: A Defence*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 238-40; and Cohen (1989): 918-19.
[38] Cohen (1979): 239.

between unemployment and a 60-hour-a-week job is also faced with unduly costly choices.) A first requirement of gender justice is that gender-neutral lives – for instance, lives combining the type of work traditionally associated with both sexes – be affordable to all.

The other thing that raises an issue of justice in the case of the double shifter is that she finds herself in this position because she is a woman and due to the existence, through no fault of her own, of gender norms. A man, willing to hold a paid job and to share "the second shift" equally, can find a much larger number of eligible partners than a woman. This is a worry of equality. A second requirement of gender justice is that one's sex should not influence the cost, and hence the choice, of a gender-neutral lifestyle.[39]

Let us look at the first requirement first. There is an obvious challenge to the claim that freedom of choice requires that a gender-neutral lifestyle be affordable to all. Suppose that gender were to determine different opportunities, or the same opportunities at different costs, for men and women – but that their opportunity sets were of equal value. Why would this not be enough, given that everybody would have equal overall freedom of choice?

There are two related problems with women and men having different but equally valuable opportunity sets, as opposed to them having both opportunity sets. First, more opportunities mean overall greater freedom of choice. Even if all women were to only desire options within the "feminine lifestyles" set, and all men were to only desire options from the "masculine lifestyles" set, the greater freedom of choice achieved by making all choices affordable to all would be valuable. This is because freedom has (also) nonspecific value, deriving from the way it determines agency rather than from the value of things we actually choose.[40]

The second problem is that it is unfair to make someone's access to *valuable* elements of either feminine or masculine lifestyles prohibitively costly for reasons independent of the importance of freedom of choice.

The two problems are, indeed, connected. It is plausible to think that increasing freedom of choice by the mere addition of trivial options has little, if any, value.[41] But both access to, for example, the world of paid work and access to the world of close relationships are very valuable. Indeed, their value gives reason to think that it is unfair to restrict access to any of them. Access to both worlds is valuable, in part, because people find them highly *desirable*. This in itself shows that they are not trivial choices. But another part of their value is independent from subjective preference: Access to the world

[39] In the next section I explain why it may permissibly influence the cost of gendered lifestyles.

[40] See, for instance, Ian Carter (1999), *A Measure of Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 42-3.

[41] I use "trivial option" following Raz's (1988) discussion in *The Morality of Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.153. His example is that of a man whose life is threatened and may choose to hand out the money to the gunman slower or quicker.

of paid work is the most reliable path to economic independence and very important for supporting people's self-esteem. The world of close relationships generates much of people's sense of having a meaningful life and is very important for emotional and mental stability. The last kinds of value-generating features make it unfair to make the costs of access to these worlds prohibitive.

The second requirement, of equality, calls for less defense. Rejecting it would mean to allow individuals' sex to determine their freedom of choice, which is incompatible with the fundamental principle that nobody should be worse off than others through no fault of her own. Moreover, allowing one's sex to limit one's freedom of choice can condone situations such as the double shift. But, as I argued, the double shift is incompatible with a fair distribution of the burdens and benefits of social cooperation.

However, imagine somebody believes that men and women have naturally different abilities. Why should they, in this case, have *equal* access to the elements of a gender-neutral lifestyle? Is it not acceptable that their abilities influence their access, just like, for instance, we agree that people's different abilities may be allowed to influence their access to a particular valuable activity, such as practicing medicine? One reason why it is right that individuals' abilities influence their access to practicing medicine is that, should their abilities be below a threshold, their practicing medicine would put others in danger of being harmed. A second reason is that only a certain number of people can practice medicine at a given time; practicing medicine cannot be part of a universal lifestyle. In this case, ability is probably a good selection criterion as long as there are other valuable occupations to be chosen by individuals of lesser ability in this particular area. Today it is very difficult to believe that all members of either sex have such unalterably low levels of ability that leading a gender-neutral lifestyle would put others in danger of being harmed.[42] (Below I deal more fully with the challenge that gender, like sex, is innate.) The elements of a gender-neutral lifestyle have been defined as possible to attain by all members of society.

To sum up, condition (i) above, that elements of a gender-neutral lifestyle be valuable, rather than trivial, justifies the requirement that all should be free to choose them, that is, they should not come at prohibitive costs. Condition (ii) above, that elements of a gender-neutral lifestyle be attainable by some without thereby excluding others, justifies the requirement that they should be equally affordable to women and men.

The combination of the two requirements – that a gender-neutral lifestyle should be made affordable to everybody, and that one's sex should

[42] Although not too far in the past this belief was held about women (for instance, when women were supposed to be naturally prone to hysteria for the mere reason of having wombs). Such beliefs can still be found today in discussions about men's ability to be even minimally competent caregivers.

not influence the cost of gender-neutral lifestyle – results in the principle introduced in section 3:

> A society is gender just only if the costs of a gender-neutral lifestyle are, all other things being equal, lower than, or at most equal to, the costs of gendered lifestyles.

Traditionally, genders have been understood as complementary, and so were gendered responsibilities with respect to socially essential work and virtues. For this reason, none of the gendered lifestyles could be sustained as the universally cheapest version: If too many were to engage in only one of them, much of the work essential for societal survival would remain undone. This would mount the incentive to include some measure of the work and virtues traditionally assigned to the other gender in the default lifestyle, until a balance is reached when the cheapest lifestyle would actually include the traditional responsibilities of both sexes. By definition, a gender-neutral lifestyle is the only one that can be sustained as universal. The upshot is that gender justice requires gender-neutral lifestyles to be the cheapest option.

One of the most formidable obstacles to gender justice is factual beliefs about the inborn nature of gender. I briefly engage the contemporary version of the theory of sexual difference (in fact, a group of theories, but I refer to them in singular, for convenience, as the "inborn theory") in order to indicate why it is misguided to see it as a threat to gender justice. I do concede, however, that, if true, it would raise a charge of *inefficiency*.

According to the inborn theory, gendered characteristics, preferences, behavior and lifestyles are not a result of socialization, but of biology. In particular, many neurobiologists argue that gender is "hardwired": Our brains, they say, determine gendered identities. The complementary story of evolutionary psychology explains gender difference as a result of a long history of evolution. The question is whether the inborn theory entails a refutation of the present understanding of gender justice. If the theory is correct, would it not be ideal to shape society such that everybody leads the lifestyle which best suits their innate desires and abilities? No. In the first place, it is probably impossible to know how much of the inborn theory is true, as long as it cannot be tested in societies free of gender norms. In the second place, even if it were true, its truth would not challenge the ideal of minimizing the costs of a gender-neutral lifestyle. It would, at most, give guidance on the implementation of that ideal.

Three things are beyond doubt: that women and men behave differently, that there are physiological differences between their bodies and that they are socially nudged into being different. There is more truth to the last claim than meets the eye. Indeed, if research on gender schemas[43] is correct, much of the encouraging is done unconsciously. It probably also starts very early[44];

[43] Valian (1999).

[44] One example concerns parents' behavior: Susie Orbach explains why the later weaning,

gender norms may encourage people to perceive male and female infants differently from the first day of life.[45] This can create a loop of nudging and evaluation along gendered norms. The question is, what are the causation connections between these three things? In other words, to what extent is gender natural, i.e., inborn, and to what extent is it nurtured, i.e., acquired? John Stuart Mill believed that we cannot know the answer to this question because there is no gender-free environment allowing us to find out what is inborn.[46] Scientists, now as well as in the past, have been looking at the differences in women's and men's bodies (today, more specifically, the brain and hormone levels) and at the differences in their behavior in an attempt to explain the latter in terms of the former. Much of this research has been criticized for employing spurious methodology. According to Cordelia Fine,[47] even top neurobiological research suffers from fundamental methodological errors, and some of it is unreliable at the very basic level of identifying difference. Not only does neurobiology identify more difference between women and men than actually exists, but the existing difference can be explained under the nurture assumption. And finally, not only are the gendered environment and our own beliefs about gender and ensuing actions continuously shaping our gender identities, but they also continuously shape our *biological* identity.[48] Experience "creates neural activity that can alter the brain either directly or through changes in gene expression."[49] The causal connections between sexed bodies, gender difference and gender norms is far from clear, and most interestingly, does not seem to be unidirectional.

But suppose we *could* actually know to what extent gender is inborn; suppose the theory that gender is partially or fully inborn is true. This would not entail that it is just to block individuals' access to very important goods, or even to disregard their equality of access, by allowing "feminine lifestyles" to be the cheapest option for women and "masculine lifestyles" to be the cheapest for men.

First, the most that the inborn theory purports to show is that women

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and earlier potty training, of male infants is likely to nourish a stronger sense of entitlement. Orbach (2009), *Bodies*, New York: Picador, p. 69. Another example is the environment: We enter the world in highly gendered environments (colors, clothes, bedding, etc.), whose specific function is to nudge us to identify as masculine or feminine.

[45] Katherine Hildebrandt Karraker, Dena Ann Vogel and Margaret Ann Lake (1995), "Parents' Gender-Stereotyped Perceptions of Newborns: The Eye of the Beholder Revisited," *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research* 33(9): 687-701.

[46] Mill (1973/1869), *The Subjection of Women*, in Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill, *Essays on Sex Equality*, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, p. 148.

[47] Fine (2010) *Delusions of Gender, How Our Minds, Society and Neurosexism Create Difference*, New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company.

[48] Anne-Fausto Sterling (2000), *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*, New York: Basic Books; A. Kaiser, S. Haller, S. Schmitz and C. Nitsch (2009), "On Sex/Gender-Related Similarities and Differences in fMRI Language Research," *Brain Research Reviews* 61(2): 49-59.

[49] Fine (2010): 236.

and men differ in their *average* levels of ability, not that any woman is better at "feminine" things than any man, and the other way around. More than that: The theory purports to explain only small differences in skill at the higher end of the range. And, obviously, there are women who prefer "masculine lifestyles" and the other way around. Hence, neither individuals' abilities nor their preferences would justify disincentives to engage in a gender-neutral lifestyle. Quite to the contrary: If minimizing the costs of a gender-neutral lifestyle is what justice requires (for all the reasons given above), then the existence of different inborn levels of ability would indicate that resources need to go into making up for gender dis-balance in ability. In the terms of this paper, this would entail a nudging of people into the lifestyle traditionally associated with their opposite sex: helping girls to enhance their abstract thinking and boys their empathy – to take one of the crudest stereotypes. If gender is partially innate, minimizing the costs of a gender-neutral lifestyle will have to *overcome* gender.

Although the inborn theory does not raise a problem of justice, it does raise one of efficiency. If gender was in part inborn, the most efficient organization of society would reflect women's and men's different abilities by giving each the incentives to do what they can do best and waste little time trying to do what they do not do best. This would involve a division of labor as strongly gendered as the gender was inborn. (That is, significantly less gendered than the status quo since, as already mentioned, the gender differences in ability that the inborn theory purports to explain are only marginal.) But this difficulty is not specific to an egalitarian theory of gender justice; it is rather a general argument in favor of efficiency against egalitarianism. In the same way in which an economically just social organization need not be the most efficient social organization, a gender-just social organization need not maximize efficiency.[50]

6. The Principle in Practice

Throughout this paper, I used the gendered division of labor to illustrate gendered lifestyles and showed the injustice of making them the cheapest options for women and men. This was not an arbitrary choice; many feminists[51] have long recognized that women's responsibility for the domestic sphere perpetuates their dependency on men, and hence that the gendered division of labor is at the core of gender injustice. But this thesis inevitably raises the question of how the gendered division of labor could be bad overall if women themselves so often endorse it. The principle of gender justice I propose explains why any gendered division of labor contributes to

[50] Take, as an analogy, race: Even if certain races were better fit for certain occupations, we would not want to give individuals of a particular race incentives to lead lifestyles, including working choices, that maximize efficiency.

[51] Such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de Beauvoir, Susan Moller Okin or Carole Pateman.

gender injustice. The reason is that, even in the presumably minority cases when it is not overburdening for women, the gendered division of labor makes for every person at least some valuable option unduly costly; it unnecessarily curtails individual freedom of choice and it makes central elements of good lives unequally accessible to women and men.

This analysis of gender justice better allows one to see what is wrong with policy proposals that are meant to empower women but which, nevertheless, are likely to entrench the gendered division of labor. The work of sociologist Catherine Hakim, for instance, shows the endurance of three groups of women, defined according to their work/family preferences. One group prefers lifestyles centered on career (the lifestyle B above), a second one prefers lifestyles centered on domestic work and caregiving (the lifestyle C above) and a third prefers flexible lifestyles combining elements of the first two.[52] Hakim is highly critical of homogenizing policies that nudge women in either direction, and claims that the heterogeneity of work/family preferences should be accepted as legitimate and supported by pluralist family policy. The principle of gender justice explains what is wrong with Hakim's theory. Suppose it was possible to have policies that make it equally easy for women to choose between the lifestyle options identified by Hakim.[53] First, because policies cannot by themselves undo all the existing gender norms, women would still be nudged into a lifestyle prioritizing domestic work and caregiving; hence, a traditionally "feminine lifestyle" would continue to be, overall, cheapest for women. And second, it would be impossible to ensure that men, too, could choose between these lifestyles at the same cost as women (and this would mean that one's sex would be permitted to determine what is the cheapest lifestyle one can choose). It is just not possible that everybody can choose, with equal ease, whether to do long hours of nondomestic work or do domestic work only; as long as women are nudged into one direction, men have to be nudged into the other.

More generally, the principle of gender justice defended here explains why individual preferences, while important in themselves, should not have the last say in normative decisions concerning gender – such as gender policies. Preferences are constrained by the context of choice; that is, we prefer things from the range available to us. But there is no guarantee that the context of choice itself is just; hence, preference satisfaction as such cannot be an ultimate criterion of justice. What is available to us, the options we have, to which we respond with preferences, come at various costs. The context of choice is gender just only if the cheapest option available to *everyone* is gender neutral. Otherwise – given that gender neutrality is defined in connection to lifestyles that can be universally led – women's cheapest

[52] See Hakim (2000), *Work–Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Hakim (2003) *Models of the Family in Modern Society: Ideals and Realities*, Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

[53] Which does not go without saying: Often policies must give people "default" options; choosing something else than the default has costs.

option will be different than men's cheapest option, entailing inequality of freedom of choice and inequality of access.

In an ideally just world there would be no incentive to engage in what we, given the existence of gender norms, identify as gendered lifestyles, but there would be no disincentive either. In an ideal world – that is, one without gender norms – it might be possible that various lifestyles would be equally costly to all individuals; this would also be desirable, on grounds of maximizing everybody's freedom of choice. Presumably, without gender norms to nudge women and men in different directions, there would be no sexed patterns in couples who chose to divide paid and domestic labor unequally among them. Roughly equal numbers of men and of women would be stay-at-home spouses; roughly equal numbers of men and women would have high-status, very time-consuming careers. There would be no gender injustice in such arrangements, and no need to give people incentives to avoid them.

However, if the inborn theory is correct, there *would* be *sexed* patterns in the division of labor. But they would not be a result of gender norms and, as long as people could choose a gender-neutral lifestyle just as cheaply or cheaper, there would be no injustice in these patterns. In this case, the only lifestyle that we should strive to render equally costly for women and for men would be the gender-neutral one. The principle is formulated to allow the possibility that gendered lifestyles will not be equally cheap for women and men.

To sum up, in an ideally just society, all lifestyles would, if the inborn theory is wrong, be equally costly for everybody. If the inborn theory is right, the gender-neutral lifestyle would be the cheapest option for everybody, by measures that would offset the inborn differences between women and men, inasmuch as these make the costs of various elements of a gender-neutral lifestyle different for women than for men. At the same time, gendered lifestyles may be permitted to be cheaper for the respective gender, since we do not have reason to compensate for the costs of pursuing trivial goods.

But in order to reduce gender injustice in real societies, the aim during the transitional phase should be to render the gender-neutral lifestyle cheaper than any gendered lifestyle. We should also aim to make every gendered lifestyle equally costly for women and men, in an attempt to counter the influence of gender norms, which provide incentives for gendered lifestyles. Some of these norms, for instance those encoded in legislation or policy, can be addressed directly. Most of them, however, cannot be directly tackled, either because they operate unconsciously (like gender schemata) and/or because we cannot legitimately prevent individuals from holding and acting on these norms. There is only so much that can be achieved by means of legislation and shaping institutions; much of the burden of change toward a more gender-just society must be located at the level of individual action.

One way in which individuals perpetuate gender norms is simply by conforming to them. In societies permeated by gender norms, both the good

of individual freedom of choice and the good of equal access are indirectly compromised when individuals engage in the gendered life assigned to their sex. The reason is that they contribute to maintaining the costs of non-gendered lifestyles higher than the costs of gendered lifestyles. Take, for example, a couple where the man dedicates most of his waking hours to nondomestic work while relying on his female partner to do domestic work and any caregiving. Their lifestyle has a direct impact in raising the costs the woman would have to pay in order to (re)join the labor market (if she stays at home), or to engage in a more successful career (if she works part time); it also has an indirect impact on the costs other women will have to pay for access to the labor market by validating, and hence entrenching, gender norms, including those that lead to unconscious and statistical discrimination of women. At the same time, their lifestyle has a direct impact in raising the costs the man would have to pay, should he decide to get more involved in the world of caregiving in the future (other than the monetary costs, which he would obviously have to pay); it also has an indirect impact on the costs other men would have to pay for access to the world of caregiving – including care professions – by validating, and hence entrenching, gender norms, including those that lead to statistical discrimination of men.

For this reason, in a society committed to gender justice, policy should strive to lower the costs of the gender-neutral lifestyle relative to those of gendered lifestyles as much as is possible given various normative constraints. Here are two examples argued for in more detail elsewhere. Basic income grants, which are likely to perpetuate women's domesticity, should not be introduced in developed countries without additional measures that encourage women to enter and stay in work markets. And parents should have parental leaves of equal length, nontransferable to the other parent, and allocated by default rather than by individual application, as a form of nudging mothers and fathers to take equal parental leaves.[54]

Why does justice not require, or at least allow, that we try to do away with gender norms by imposing prohibitive costs for gendered lifestyles, as some feminists suggest?[55] The reason is that adults' freedom of choice must be respected even when it is an expression of adapted preferences. This means that choices of gendered lifestyles that conform to gender norms should not be prohibitively costly; we should stop at making them slightly more costly, rather than the cheapest option, as they are now.

However, there is a case for abolishing gender norms in the upbringing of children; here I can only gesture toward it. In the opening section I

[54] For the first example see Gheaus (2008). For the second, see Gheaus and Ingrid Robeyns (2011), "Equality-Promoting Parental Leave," *Journal of Social Philosophy* 42(2): 173-91.

[55] An example of such a policy is Harry Brighouse and Erik Olin Wright's proposal that one spouse's parental leave be *conditional* on the other spouse taking his or hers. This would lower the cost of gender neutrality in caring for very young infants, but would make the cost of gendered choices prohibitively high. See Brighouse and Olin Wright (2008), "Strong Gender Egalitarianism," *Politics and Society* 36(3): 360-72.

mentioned that the deepest worry of justice raised by the existence of gender norms is that they illegitimately interfere with our freedom of choosing what kind of persons we are. If gender is at least in part socialized, then the things we like and dislike, the things we are good or bad at, the ways in which we relate to others, and even our self-image are shaped by gender norms. This shaping happens at a time when we cannot yet choose which influences to allow into our lives, and it can be undone only with great, sustained effort, if at all. When it is done in the context of close relationships between children and their caregivers, the gender shaping of children is particularly influential. Finally, gender shaping influences not only who we are, but also what choices will be open to us and how costly it will be for us to make those choices. Therefore, justice requires the de-gendering of childrearing inasmuch as gender imposes costs – that is, to a very large extent in all existing societies. Much of the gender shaping of children presumably happens through spontaneous interaction between them and their caregivers; conflict between caregivers' freedom of choice and children's interest in being protected from gender shaping cannot be avoided. More argument is obviously called for in order to establish the legitimate resolution of such conflicts.

7. Conclusions

I proposed, explained, defended and illustrated a principle of gender justice formulated in terms of the relative costs of engaging in gendered versus gender-neutral lifestyles. My aim was to propose and defend a principle able to explain the injustice of a very wide range of situations and, by appeal to gender norms, to explain the gendered nature of these injustices. Although the principle was developed as part of an effort to explain the injustice of a gendered division of labor, it can account for some of the injustice of the less contentious examples introduced in the beginning of the paper. For instance, when women do not have the vote it is more costly for them to have their fair share of influence in politics. Whenever armies operate on the basis of conscription, and only men are eligible, it is more costly for men than for women to lead pacifist lifestyles.[56]

A first conclusion is that, if the principle advanced here is correct then gender injustice is indeed pervasive. Here I focused on the case of the gendered division of labor, but it is easy to see how gender norms impose different costs on women's and men's choice of lifestyle in almost every aspect of life. To take one of the most trivial examples, gendered standards of beauty and propriety impose penalties on women who do not care more than the average man about their physical aspect. At the same time, they also impose penalties on men who care more than the average woman about their physical aspect. A second conclusion, therefore, is that gender injustice does not affect only women, but also men. Liberal egalitarianism has the resources

[56] Assuming that pacifism should be part of a gender-neutral lifestyle.

to acknowledge this fact without ceasing to insist that, overall, gender norms oppress women more than they oppress men. Arguably, women who wish to lead a gender-neutral lifestyle have to pay higher costs than men who wish to do the same.

Gender norms are located at many of levels of social reality and it is therefore difficult to flesh out a complete picture of a gender-just world. Gender permeates social norms, such as conscious expectations, implicit bias, stereotype threat and outright sexist emotions, but also sometimes laws, policies, traditions and, of course, path-dependent forms of social development, shaped by legacies of disproportional economic, political, social and cultural power between women and men. The principle I advance can help by providing a heuristic device: To find out whether a particular institution, policy or informal norm advances gender justice, we should ask whether it helps render gender-neutral lifestyles less costly than gendered ones.

Because so much of the reproduction of gender norms happens at the level of people's emotions, unreflective reactions and unconscious or semiconscious evaluations, these norms are both impossible and undesirable to police. They are also very difficult to control even by individuals committed to gender justice. Hence there are serious limitations to what can be achieved by changing laws and reshaping institutions. A lot of change is possible only if it happens through individual transformation as well as through individuals' interactions. There are good reasons to believe that the main agents of gender justice are individuals, rather than states and institutions. This, of course, is not to say that getting states involved through better legislation and reshaping institutions is undesirable or unlikely to achieve important progress toward gender justice. But it does mean that no amount of successful state action is likely to let individuals off the hook. Even well-meant praise for, say, "manly courage" or "feminine sweetness" can reinforce gender norms at the unreflective level, where so much of the action is. And even things as small as good cartoons can get us a step closer to gender justice.

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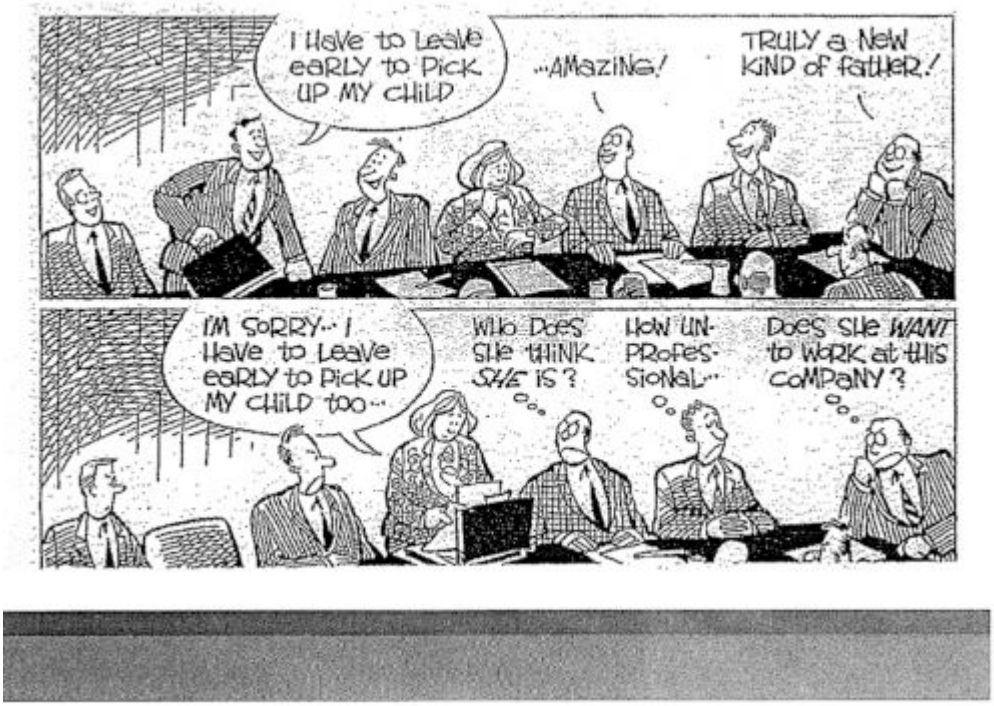
Appendix


I Have to Leave early to Pick up My child
...Amazing!
Truly a New kind of father!
I'm sorry... I Have to Leave early to Pick up My child too...
Who Does She think She is?
How un-Profes-sional...
Does She want to work at this company?