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Gender, Feminism and Political Economy

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This article appears in a journal which sees itself as fostering the study of a new political economy. A new political economy has to take on board both feminist critiques of existing approaches and have a gendered analysis at the core of its concerns. The developing feminist political economy must take its place in the 'theoretical toolkit' which the journal utilises. Otherwise this journal will not be able to provide the innovative understandings and interpretations of the new conjuncture which it has laid out as its task in the editorial of the first issue, and any newness will be superficial.1

However, it cannot be assumed that the incorporation of gender and feminism can happen effortlessly within the remit of the journal as it has been laid out. While it emphasises its lack of rigidity and the broadness of its scope, not only is there no mention throughout the first editorial of gender or of feminist analyses (perhaps they are assumed to be subsumed in the rather incongruous and somewhat inappropriate catch-all category of 'cultural politics and identity'), but the definition of some of the analytical categories, such as the nature of the division drawn between the public and the private, shows a disregard for some of the most important feminist critiques—for example in political theory—to have emerged so far.2 Having the occasional article by a feminist academic, and 'openness' as a policy, is not enough on its own. It would be a pity if this exciting and innovative project missed the opportunity to be one of the first places where both feminist theorising and gendered analyses could play their part in the creation of a new political economy and where the nascent feminist political economy could also be developed.

In this article, I will discuss some of the most important insights which are emerging from this young and fast developing field to provide the embryo of a feminist political economy. I will also demonstrate its potential contribution to a new political economy. The majority of useful work to have emerged over the last 20 years and the last five years in particular comes from two interconnected sources: first, the new field of feminist economics and, second, some of gender and development literature. Much of this new and heterogeneous work shares common concerns with those outlined by the editors of New Political Economy (NPE) and while critical of some of the approaches cited it also takes some of its inspiration from a number of the same sources. The first area, feminist

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economics, provides both a critique of the mainstream of economics and is part of moves to refashion that discipline. While much of this new work shares many of NPE's overall aims, it also provides NPE with a number of methodological challenges, for example to its vision of bridging the divide between structure and agency as it has been constructed by the journal. This challenge is expressed both in terms of the need for a gendered understanding of institutions and economic processes and through its critique of the assumptions underlying rational choice, the nature of the household and the public/private divide.

In the second area, recent work, inspired by the gender and development tradition and undertaken by both feminist economists and other social scientists, has examined the place of gender relations in the emerging global economy and changing international division of labour. This research has focused on the relevance of gender as an analytic category at both the macro and micro levels by looking at structural adjustment in the Third World and restructuring globally. As such, it makes an important contribution both to the political economy of development and to international political economy (IPE).

It is these two strands which form the core of an emerging feminist political economy. So far the contributions from other areas of the social sciences, except perhaps those of sociologists and geographers undertaking gendered studies of flexibilisation and the labour market in the First World, have not played a significant role. The majority of feminist analyses within political science, except a few which look at the Third World, have not really addressed questions of political economy. While there has been more interest in the creation of a feminist IPE from those working with an international relations background, I will not be discussing this research in any great detail as so far it has been rather weak and unsophisticated, often doing little more than describing the developments in another field: feminist international relations theory. Where it does discuss IPE it often relies primarily on the gender and development literature mentioned above and can only outline what needs to be done in the future to create a feminist IPE rather than actually doing it.3

Feminist economics

Economics, particularly neoclassical economics, is a 'hard' discipline reliant on quantification and, in comparison to the 'soft' qualitative social sciences such as sociology and anthropology, has proved to be one of the social sciences least open to feminist analyses and the incorporation of gender into its frameworks. However, the late 1980s and 1990s have seen a turning point in both the emergence of a feminist economics and in its increased recognition within the mainstream of the discipline.4 This has been marked, for example, by the founding of the International Association for Feminist Economics, the inauguration of its journal Feminist Economics and a series of conferences and new publications.5 Feminist economists reflect the diversity which already exists within the discipline of economics. Some see themselves as remaining within the neoclassical paradigm, while probably a majority would regard themselves as part of a heterodox tradition which provides critiques of the dominant orthodoxy of neoclassical economics.

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Influenced by feminist analyses in other disciplines, feminist economists have launched an important critique of orthodox neoclassical economics. In common with other feminists, feminist economists see women as disadvantaged relative to men and wish to change this situation, although there are many different views on the nature and source of this disadvantage and of the best ways of countering it. A feminist economics, therefore, in addition to its role in improving orthodox economics, also has a role to play in countering women's disadvantage through its different subject matter, new understandings and policy prescriptions.

The discipline of economics is characterised by feminist economists as having a masculine bias in terms of its methodology, approach and subject matter, with women absent as either researchers or objects of study. This analysis builds on the feminist critique of science which argues that, far from being objective, science is constructed around dualisms of masculinity and femininity with its associated dichotomies of rationality/emotion and mind/body. Sandra Harding argues that the methods of science are not neutral (positive) but inevitably full of contextual values and interests. Indeed, Harding has recently argued that an improved version of objectivity, entitled 'strong' objectivity, is needed in which one recognises one's standpoint and cultural values in contrast to the conventional 'weak' objectivity, which is dependent on the objectivity ideal.

In a response to Harding, Janet Seiz argues for a middle ground between the unsophisticated rhetoric of science and what she terms the 'hypersophisticated' relativists. With this analysis of economics as socially constructed, many feminist economists have much in common with other heterodox economists—for example, institutionalists, those who discuss economics in terms of the important role played by rhetoric within the discipline and those who wish to reorient the discipline on a human-centred rather than a growth-orientated agenda.

It is clear, therefore, that the creation of a feminist economics is much more than simply the inclusion of 'women's issues'. In a formulation which is increasingly being taken up by others, Julie Nelson has argued that not only feminist economics, but the discipline as a whole, need to be reorientated away from the study of choice under conditions of scarcity towards the provisioning of human life. Following the work of Amartya Sen, it also needs to focus on enhancing human capabilities as one of its major concerns. Sen argues that, while there are problems for example with indexing, focusing on the capabilities of a person in terms of what she or he can do or can be provides a very direct approach to someone's well-being. Within this framework, capabilities are more than just the ability to be well nourished and escape early mortality but include the ability to write, read and communicate as well as the ability to take part in the life of the community and appear in public without shame. In a recent special issue of World Development on 'Gender, Adjustment and Macroeconomics', Lourdes Beneria argues in similar vein that feminist economics should contribute 'to building a more humane economics centred around the provisioning of human needs rather than around the notions of scarcity, efficiency and the maximization of economic growth without human purpose'. For many feminist
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economists this also includes the consideration of inequality along the lines of race, class and sexuality as well as gender.

Marianne Ferber and Julie Nelson outline a number of possible alternative strategies for creating a feminist economics. These range from affirmative action in order to increase the number of women in economics, to feminist empiricism which would better apply the existing tools of the discipline, to what they call feminist difference (women's ways of knowing) and feminist postmodernism, which they claim has had little effect on the discipline so far. Influenced by Harding and the critique of science, their preferred alternative is feminist constructivism which sees economics as socially constructed via masculine ideals. In this model objectivity is still a goal but it is seen as a social phenomenon. The majority of feminist economists practise a version of feminist constructivism. Feminist constructivism uses gender as a primary category of analysis, understanding it as the socially constructed relations between men and women and, as such, the basis for a fundamental division of labour between productive and reproductive activities in most societies. As we will see below, analysing and understanding this distinction is the starting point for gender analysis and feminist economics.

While feminist economists do share a number of assumptions outlined above, a huge diversity of opinion exists among them on methodology and approach. While some are against mathematical formalism, there is a widespread recognition of the need for not just one model but many broader models, which use a wider view of what constitutes knowledge. From this perspective, formal models are a complement to other forms of analysis. From this flows a need to reassess the value judgements which give greater worth to 'hard' quantitative data as against 'soft' qualitative data and to abstract theory over concrete detail.

There are two important and interlinked areas of analysis in feminist economics which have emerged from the concerns described above and are particularly relevant to a new political economy. The first is the critique of the rational choice game-theoretic model and the second is the analysis of the household and the associated critique of new home/household economics.

Rational choice

The dominant model of traditional neoclassical economics is that of the self-interested agent who is successful at making optimising choices subject to exogenously imposed constraints, often under conditions of perfect information and perfect competition. The 'separative' self is autonomous and uninfluenced by society, assumed to be selfish in the marketplace and altruistic in the home. This view of the rational actor lies at the heart of the Cartesian model of the individual which emerged as part of the Enlightenment. Its assumption of rational choice also forms the basis for many of the mathematical models used by economists and other social scientists.

While increasingly coming under attack from some economists, this model of human behaviour has been challenged by many outside the discipline. Postmodernists have argued as part of their attack on the Enlightenment that the unitary subject is an interpretative fiction and that in fact people have multiple and
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fractured identities. A few feminist economists such as Debra Friedman and Carol Diem have defended the rational actor model, but a larger number, echoing feminist analyses in other disciplines, have criticised several of the model’s underlying assumptions. Nancy Folbre and Paula England have led the assault. Folbre has criticised the unwarranted assumptions included in the model about how individuals make decisions, particularly the notion that an individual’s desires are not socially constructed, but appear fully formed from elsewhere. England shares these views, arguing that the model has at its basis a masculine conception of the separative self unaffected by its surroundings. The notion of the individual’s selfish behaviour in markets does not allow for the existence of empathy, altruism or a sense of social solidarity. England agrees with Folbre and others that tastes (preferences) cannot be seen as both exogenous and unchanging. However, once tastes are seen as endogenous and empathy is allowed for, the interpersonal utility comparisons, deemed impossible in the orthodox model because utility is the satisfaction of the individual’s subjective desires, are facilitated. This inclusion allows issues of distribution and equity, hitherto excluded, to come to the fore. Within neoclassical economics, discrimination on grounds of race or gender is seen as irrational and unlikely to persist as it will only harm profit-maximising employers who do not employ on criteria of talent but prejudice. As such, there can be no convincing explanation within the model of the lower wages and discrimination that women experience in the labour market except to ‘blame the victim’ by arguing that women choose to take jobs with low pay and status because of preferences determined outside the market.

Folbre recognises that there are other economists who have also criticised the crude assumptions underlying traditional neoclassical economic theory and have substituted instead imperfect knowledge, uncertainty and imperfect markets, at the same time as recognising the importance of institutions and cultural and social norms in creating preferences. One is reminded that Amartya Sen’s formulation—‘the purely economic man is indeed close to being a social moron. Economic theory has been much preoccupied with this rational fool decked in the glory of his one all-purpose preference ordering’—has been embraced by many feminist economists. In the new model of decision making, individual choices do not always conform to the theory of rational behaviour. Bargaining and coordination become important, with the result that this model can provide improved explanations of labour market discrimination and, as we will see below, of the role of power in bargaining relationships between men and women within households. However, Folbre believes that even an institutionalist interpretation of rational choice is reductionist. But she, along with other feminist economists, is reluctant to ‘throw the potentially rational baby out with the reductionist bathwater’ and argues for a notion of purposeful choice. This term, Folbre believes, ‘encourages us to ask how people define and pursue their desires, but avoids any implicit dichotomy between rational and irrational’. It also overcomes a dichotomy in the construction of preferences between individual rationality and cultural/social determination and can provide a better explanation of collective action and the free rider problem. Choices are meaningful but they are limited and constrained.
So while some feminists from a number of other disciplines are unhappy with any notion of rationality, the majority of feminist economists would like an improved version which can accommodate the construction of gender identities and the unequal power relations between men and women which create the structures of constraint within which purposeful choices are made.

The public/private divide and New Home/Household Economics

Neoclassical economics generally sees the family and household as a kind of ‘black box’ lying outside the realm of economics in the private sphere; as such, they typically play a minor role in the neoclassical schema. Unpaid labour within the household—for example, childcare and providing wage workers with care and sustenance—is not quantified as economic activity within this framework as it does not enter the market through monetised exchange relationships, even though it plays a key role in the reproduction of the labour force. In maintaining this division between the public and private spheres, neoclassical economics shares certain characteristics with liberal political theory which stretch back to the contract theorists of the 18th century. In this model, women are assumed to be subsumed within the private sphere and it is men who become the heads of households and who are the individuals who enter the market. However, as many feminist theorists have argued, this analytical division does not work in practice, as women do enter the public sphere but are often constrained by their roles in the private sphere and frequently undertake activities in the labour market which are an extension of their activities in the private sphere.

Some orthodox economists have used conventional economic analysis to try to understand the household and the place of women within it in what has become known as New Household or Home Economics (NHE). Within NHE, market-orientated models and concepts are applied to the ‘family’ (generally assumed to be heterosexual and nuclear), a term which is often used interchangeably with the home and household. Within NHE the household is treated as an individual with a single joint utility function and to solve this aggregation problem it is assumed that an altruistic head of household (presumed to be male) makes decisions for the whole family which maximise the joint activity of its members. New households are formed according to a marriage market and decisions—for example, over who will enter the labour market or over children—are made to maximise family welfare. In sharp contrast to the selfishness which rules behaviour in the market, altruism and cooperation reigns in the family, enforced if necessary by the head of the household who acts as a ‘benevolent dictator’, for example against the possibility of the ‘rotten kid’.

NHE demonstrates that considering an issue (i.e. the economics of the household) is not the same as having a feminist analysis of it. Feminists have been fierce in their criticisms of NHE, arguing that, in their reliance on sociobiology and the notion of the altruistic head of the household, proponents such as Gary Becker neglect power relations within the family. The assumptions of a joint utility function and the harmonious household obscure the different and often conflicting interests and the differential power which may exist within each family unit, particularly between men and women. Within
NHE, therefore, there is no notion of subordination or inequality in relationships between the genders in the household. Nor is there any questioning of the origin of the allocation of skills or the sexual division of labour which is attributed to comparative advantage, with explanations for it ultimately rooted in sociobiology. Echoing the more general criticisms of the rational choice model, feminist economists argue that mothers do not often abandon their children when their economic costs become very high and that affection and reciprocity affect decision making. However, they also point to the contradiction between the totally selfish behaviour expected in the marketplace and the altruistic behaviour expected in the home, arguing that selfishness and domination can exist in the household just as a degree of reciprocity exists in the market.33

Building on the work of Amartya Sen, the notion of cooperative conflict has been put forward as a better way of understanding relationships within the household.34 Sen’s bargaining model applies game theory to the household, seeing the family as a site of cooperative conflicts. He understands gender relations as socially constructed, arguing that while men and women cooperate together in the household there are also important conflicts of interest to be resolved. Decisions are therefore made through a bargaining process and the bargaining power of different members of the household is a product of their location in the intersecting hierarchies of gender, lifecycle and class. According to Diane Elson, ‘rather than the gender division of labour and income within the family being seen as the optimal outcome of free choices, it may be seen as the profoundly unequal accommodation reached between individuals who occupy very different social positions with very different degrees of social power’.35 While not universally accepted, this bargaining approach has been used by other feminist economists to model household decisions with regard to labour market participation and fertility.36 This model has also been taken up in the analysis of households in the gender and development literature to be discussed below.37

Until very recently feminist economics has concentrated on providing gendered analyses at the micro level and a large literature has been produced. According to a number of feminist economists, the challenge is now to integrate gender issues into macroeconomics.38 This entails not simply analysing the impact of macroeconomic policy on gender relations but investigating how macroeconomic institutions, analysis and policies are gendered. According to the editors of the *World Development* special issue on ‘Gender, Adjustment and Macroeconomics’, feminist analysis provides a number of insights relevant to macroeconomics. First, it reshapes the understanding of the paid economy, the traditional domain of macroeconomics, by treating labour as a produced unit and by making unpaid household labour visible. Second, feminist analysis highlights gender as a category of social and economic differentiation, along with race and class, which influences the behaviour of economic agents in the economy and other areas, such as the distribution of work, income and wealth. Third, ‘feminist economic analysis points to the gender biases of micro and meso level institutions, such as households, government agencies, firms and even markets, from which macroeconomic outcomes emerge’.39 The economy is a gendered structure, as is the state, which can act to both uphold and refashion existing patterns.
of gender relations, for example by intervening in the market to determine who can have rights over property and other economic assets. Markets, too, as social institutions which embody social norms and practices, are imbued with structural power relations which include a gender dimension.

Diane Elson reinforces these points when she argues that:

The key issue is that macro-economics has a one-sided view of the macro-economy: it considers only the monetary aggregates of the 'productive economy'. It ignores the human resource aggregates of the 'reproductive economy', the indicators of population, health, nutrition, education, skills. This one-sided view of the macro-economy is a male-biased view, because the sexual division of labour means that women are largely responsible for the 'reproductive economy' as well as contributing a great deal of effort to the 'productive economy'.

There is clearly a pressing need to include the human resource aggregates of the reproductive economy. In order for this to occur Cagatay, Elson and Grown argue that gender should be incorporated into macroeconomic modelling as a way of achieving better communication with the mainstream, enhanced theoretical precision and a greater influence on policy making. They emphasise that this kind of work is at a very early stage and highlight a number of possible ways of doing this so as to direct policy making towards achieving the better provisioning of human needs and the lessening of inequality.

While Beneria highlights the strides made in the gendered analysis of national income statistics and Cagatay et al. add the literature on the relationship between gendered patterns of employment and cycles in industrialised economies, it is in the analysis of structural adjustment, broadening out to a more general discussion of restructuring, that the most thorough exploration of the implications of gender analysis for macroeconomics has taken place so far. The majority of this work can be placed under the heading of gender and development and it is to this that we now turn.

Gender and development

The nature of the structural change occurring in the world economy for at least the last two decades has been of great concern to scholars in a number of disciplines, particularly IPE. They have attempted to document and understand the complex processes at work often under the rubric of globalisation. Most analysts agree that:

Both North and South have experienced profound restructuring in the last decade, reflecting heightened international competition, shifts in the centers of economic power, and rapid technological change. There has been increased emphasis on the market. National governments have deregulated and imposed fiscal restraint, while international institutions like the IMF and World Bank have imposed policies of structural adjustment.

In the North discussions have focused on the conjuncture of post-Fordism and
flexibility, examining the ways in which 'firms, industries and indeed national economies and world capitalism are restructuring in this era of technological change, heightened international competition and rapidly changing markets'.

However, the majority of the conventional literature on restructuring, whether in the First or Third World, fails to include gender adequately and thus suffers from either gender blindness or male bias.

Feminists have argued that a gendered perspective is absolutely essential to understanding the process of restructuring. However, many of those examining the First World have argued that this is not simply a matter of seeing 'flexibilisation' as synonymous with a feminisation of the labour force, nor of identifying a 'male core' and a 'female periphery'. Flexible specialisation also raises questions about the gendered nature of the concept of skill and technology which have been largely ignored.

Many of the gendered analyses of restructuring and structural adjustment which have focused on the Third World have been influenced by, or are part of, the now large literature on gender and development. Often marked as beginning with the publication in 1970 of Ester Boserup's landmark Women's Role in Economic Development, this literature has a number of inspirations and catalysts. It was provoked in part by the need to provide a critique of modernisation theory and to add a missing gender dimension to underdevelopment, dependency and world systems theories. Some of the literature emerged from a liberal 'women in development' (WID) paradigm, while much of the more rigorous and analytically sophisticated work was more directly influenced by attempts to gender Marxian political economy (for example through the domestic labour debate and in the field of peasant economics). Recently, too, a distinctive Third World feminist perspective has also emerged.

Lourdes Beneria has argued that there has been a tendency up until now to separate the analysis of 'gender issues related to third world countries from those of the more industrialized world', noting that 'the problem of this separation...is that, as the globalization of economic relations proceeds, the need to understand the role of gender from a global perspective emerges with greater intensity'. The example of the increasing incidence of sex tourism, by predominantly First World men visiting Third World countries for sexual services such as pornography and prostitution, is one area where a more global analysis of gender is necessary. Regional trade agreements have also been highlighted as another area where a gendered analysis is necessary but has not so far received much attention.

It is also clear that there has been a large global increase in the female labour force in the formal sector since the 1960s in both the First World and parts of the Third World. In the First World, industrial restructuring has led to a shift from manufacturing to services which has led to an expansion of jobs commonly undertaken by women and, in the Third World, the expansion of manufacturing, often by multinationals for export and sometimes in free trade zones, has frequently involved female labour. In a formulation which has been widely taken up by others, Guy Standing has argued that a global feminisation has taken place through flexible labour, facilitated by both an explicit and implicit deregulation.
There is now a large literature on the growth of women’s employment which investigates the degree to which there has indeed been a feminisation of the labour force. Much of it highlights the complexity of the processes involved, showing how they have not taken place evenly or straightforwardly. Indeed, flexibilisation is not always associated with the substitution of female for male workers nor is it always detrimental for women workers. Contrary to the more simplistic ideas surrounding the new international division of labour, Patricia Fernandez-Kelly and Saskia Sassen show in their study of garment and electronics industries in the USA how this type of manufacturing in the First World has continued, but in a restructured form using the labour of immigrant women and increased levels of subcontracting. At the same time, analyses of the restructuring which has followed the collapse of communism in Eastern/Central Europe have demonstrated that this has generally been accompanied by a decline in the female labour force. In her study of rural industrialisation in Java, Diane Wolf has shown that women’s employment in industrial enterprises does not always take place in an urban context. There have also been attempts to avoid a perspective which sees women as the victims of these processes. Studies have examined both women’s resistance within factories and women’s economic organising in the face of restructuring more generally.

One thread which emerges from almost all of this literature is the need to make the analytical links between the household, the informal and the formal sectors and then to highlight their connections to the increasingly global economy. Homeworking within the household and the widespread practice of subcontracting demonstrate these ties and show that an analysis of the internal dynamics of the household is also necessary in any study of restructuring. Maria Mies has done this in her study of lacemaking within households in India, while Lourdes Beneria and Martha Roldan have examined the ways in which both class and gender interact at the workplace and the household in their study of industrial homeworking in Mexico City.

Studies of restructuring have focused on the policy prescriptions associated with it and their impact through the analysis of structural adjustment. Since the debt crisis which began in the early 1980s, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) have been implemented in numerous Third World countries, primarily at the behest of international institutions. The underlying rationale of SAPs is that economic problems commonly experienced by Third World countries, such as balance of payments deficits and inflation, are caused by underlying structural imbalances. After a period of stabilisation, these ‘distortions’ have to be removed by ‘getting the prices right’ through a liberalisation of the economy, freeing of the market and rolling back of the state through privatisation, the ending of subsidies and deregulation. As a consequence, the implementation of SAPs is often associated with higher unemployment, falling living standards for the majority and increased levels of inequality as income is concentrated towards the better-off.

Feminist analyses of structural adjustment have concentrated on two areas. First, in work that has often drawn upon and informed the critiques of mainstream economics described above, analyses have concentrated on providing gendered critiques of the models underlying SAPs. Second, through empiri-
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cal work, studies have examined the impact of SAPs on gender relations and on women in particular. Structural adjustment programmes have been, until very recently, gender-blind. This omission has meant, for example, that SAPs do not overtly take the reproductive economy or women’s unpaid labour into account in their models, while implicitly assuming their elasticity. At the same time models ignore the existing sexual division of labour, assuming the mobility of labour, for example, from industrial jobs typically done by men to service jobs typically undertaken by women. One consequence of concern to policy makers is that this gender-blindness results in inefficient outcomes, with SAPs not having the anticipated effects as women producers are unable to respond to market signals as intended.

A large number of case studies has demonstrated what these factors mean in practice. SAPs have been shown to have particular, often contradictory, implications for different groups of women. Cuts in welfare services have an impact on women as both providers and consumers of health and social services, resulting in the loss of employment for many, often middle class, women who form a large proportion of teachers, nurses and other service providers and the expenditure of more time and effort to replace the lost welfare provision by, often poor, women in their roles within the household. At the same time increased unemployment and measures such as the removal of food subsidies mean that women in poor households have to adopt survival strategies which involve the expenditure of more time and effort in ‘making ends meet’, as well as increased income-generating activity in both the formal and informal sectors. Therefore the impact of structural adjustment on the household has to be disaggregated as male and female members within the same household are affected differently through their differential access to income and other resources. For example, there is evidence that girls are often taken out of school to undertake household tasks when mothers have to increase their paid and unpaid labour time. Female-headed households can also be differentially affected, with some studies showing them to be poorer and more adversely affected than other households. At the same time, the restructured economy sometimes has a higher demand for women’s labour—for example in the financial and retail sectors and in the production of non-traditional agricultural products for export.

Conclusion

This is an exciting time in the history of feminist political economy. While it is still at a very early stage in its development and much remains to be done, it is expanding at an exponential rate, both in the range and depth of analysis. It is clear that up until now the gender and development literature, in part because of its greater longevity, has achieved a greater level of breadth and coherence than the younger, and perhaps more heterodox, feminist economics which, so far, has concentrated on critique without yet generating a large body of empirical material. However, the moves by a number of feminist economists, who until recently have focused primarily on development issues, to look at macroeconomics more generally will surely help to spur the development of feminist economics and a feminist political economy.
In general, feminist political economy has much to offer the new political economy. It has, for example, an important role to play in the re-evaluation of rational choice, emphasising as it does the notion of purposeful choice, which can provide a bridge between the false dichotomy of structure and agency. Feminist political economy also draws attention to the yawning gaps in the new political economy as it is currently constructed. There is a pressing need to analyse not simply the productive economy but also the reproductive economy, as well as the links between the two—for example through the analysis of women’s unpaid labour and a more sophisticated analysis of the household. While the new political economy recognises the socially constructed nature of institutions and markets, feminist political economy highlights the need for gender as a dynamic to be fully incorporated within the analysis of these institutions and processes. The new political economy should not let these opportunities pass it by.

Notes


2. The NPE editorial sees the distinction between the public and the private as a distinction between the state and the economy. For a feminist analysis, see Carol Pateman, 'Feminist critiques of the public/private dichotomy', in: S. Benn & G. Gaus (Eds), *The Public and the Private in Social Life* (Croom Helm, 1983).


6. Many feminist economists such as Nancy Folbre (see Nancy Folbre, *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint* (Routledge, 1995), pp. 29–38 and 'Socialism, feminist and scientific', in: Marianne Ferber & Julie Nelson (Eds), *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and Economics* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 94–110) have also been critical of Marxist political economy, arguing that it has no adequate explanation of the subordination of women and further suggesting that, while it has a very different analysis of the workings of the market from neoclassical economists, it shares some of the same assumptions when dealing with the household. At the same time critiques of crude Marxism and the development of socialist feminism have also provided an important impetus for the development of some areas of feminist economics. In a new departure, J.K. Gibson-Graham has put forward a critique of capitalism which is derived from *feminist and poststructuralist theorising as well as anti-essentialist Marxism*. See J.K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (as We Knew It): A Feminist
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Critique of Political Economy (Blackwell, 1996). However, I do not have the space to deal with these satisfactorily here.

7. It is impossible to say that there is one homogeneous version of feminism. Until the mid-1980s the different strands used to be characterised as liberal, socialist and radical feminist. Since then, 'difference feminism', influenced by postmodernism and the critiques of black and Third World feminists, has made the definition of feminism even more complex, with analyses of race and sexuality playing a much more important role.


18. While some radical institutionalists appear to argue that feminist economics can be subsumed into radical institutionalism, most feminist economists would argue that, despite some similar aims, the two are not the same. For an exposition of this view of the shared aims of radical institutionalism and feminist economics, see Janice Peterson & Doug Brown (Eds), The Economic Status of Women Under Capitalism: Institutional Economics and Feminist Theory (Edward Elgar, 1994). Ann Jennings argues for a feminist institutionalism in Jennings, 'Public or private? Institutionalism, economics and feminism', in: Ferber & Nelson, Beyond Economic Man, pp. 111–29.


29. See for example Georgina Waylen, 'Women and neoliberalism', in: Judith Evans et al., Feminism and Political Theory (Sage, 1986).
30. This vague and imprecise use of terminology has been the subject of much criticism as the (nuclear and heterosexual) family and the household are not always the same thing—particularly in non-Western contexts where the household is often an extended family unit—and all over the world female-headed households are more and more common.
33. Folbre, 'The black four of hearts', p. 252; and Nelson, Feminism, Objectivity and Economics, p. 62.
34. Folbre, 'Micro, meso, macro', p. 38.
36. For an interesting attempt to utilise this framework to analyse whether an increase in women’s income-earning capacity can act to empower them within the household, see L.N. Khan Osmani, 'The Grameen Bank experiment: empowerment of women through credit', paper presented to the Development Studies Association annual meeting, Dublin, September 1995.
38. Cagatay et al., 'Introduction', p. 1829.
40. Feminist analyses of the state are still at an early stage in their development. Until recently many feminists have tended to either ignore the state or characterise it overly simplistically as either good for women (for example, the welfare state which can provide women with an income independent of individual men and to be embraced) or bad for women (as the embodiment of patriarchy and to be avoided). There is a pressing need for more sophisticated analyses. Some attempts are now being made to provide them. See Shirin Rai & Geraldine Lievesley (Eds), Women and the State: International Perspectives (Taylor and Francis, 1996); and Vicky Randall & Georgina Waylen (Eds), Gender, Politics and the State (Routledge, forthcoming).
41. Elson, 'Micro, meso, macro', p. 42.
42. These are: first, 'the gender disaggregation method', which involves disaggregating existing macroeconomic variables by gender but does not incorporate the reproductive economy into the models; second, 'the gendered macroeconomic variable approach', which introduces new variables demonstrating the structure of gender relations; third, 'the two sector system', which makes a separation between the traditional macroeconomy and a non-macroeconomic system including gender variables; and fourth, the 'combination method', which involves a mixture of methods, for example combining the second and third approaches outlined above. These alternatives are discussed in Cagatay et al., 'Introduction', p. 1830.
43. Beneria, 'Toward a Greater Integration of Gender into Economics'; and Cagatay et al., 'Introduction'.


47. Martha MacDonald provides a gendered critique of the flexible specialisation debates in 'Post-Fordism and the Flexibility Debate', citing the work of Sylvia Walby, Anna Pollert and Jane Jenson. For a case study of gender and restructuring in the First World, see Marjorie Cohen, 'The implications of economic restructuring for women: the Canadian situation', in: Bakker, *The Strategic Silence*, pp. 103–16.


49. See for example Irene Tinker, 'The adverse effect of development on women', in: Irene Tinker & Michelle Bransen (Eds), *Women and World Development* (Overseas Development Council, 1976); Barbara Rogers, *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies* (Kogan Page, 1980); Lourdes Beneria & Gita Sen, 'Accumulation, Reproduction and Women's Role in Economic Development: Boserup Revisited', *Signs*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1981), pp. 279–98; and Kate Young, Carol Wolkowitz & Roisin McCallagh (Eds), *Of Marriage and the Market: Women's Subordination in International Perspective* (CSE Books, 1981). World systems theories, for example, have been subjected to particular criticism by Kathryn Ward who argues that they exclude the role of women from the global economy and need to be recast to include gender and race at their core. See, for example, Kathryn Ward, 'Reconceptualising world system theory to include women', in: England, *Theory on Gender/Feminism on Theory*, pp. 43–68.


59. For a study of resistance, see Alibwa Ong, *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia* (State University of New York Press, 1987), and for case studies of women’s economic organising, see Sheila Rowbotham & Swasti Mitter (Eds), *Dignity and Daily Bread: New Forms of Economic Organizing among Poor Women in the Third World and the First* (Routledge, 1994).


63. Diane Elson has attempted to rectify some of the most glaring errors and omissions by discussing strategies for introducing gender analysis into these models in ‘Gender Awareness in Modelling Structural Adjustment’, *World Development*, Vol. 23, No. 11 (1995), pp. 1851–68.


68. For example, in the case of Chile women’s employment in the fruit and fish processing industries has increased significantly. See Georgina Waylen, ‘Women, authoritarianism and market liberalisation in Chile 1973–89’, in: Afshar & Dennis, *Women and Adjustment Policies*, pp. 150–78.