

# Gender and Development : Contributions of Feminist Economics

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# Many Contributions at Macro, Meso and Micro Levels

Beneria and Bisnath ( ed) 2001, *Gender and Development: Theoretical, Empirical and Practical Approaches , Vol I and II*, Edward Elgar

Sections on:

Economic Development and Gender, Methodological Approaches, Accounting for Women's Work, Families and Households, Project Implementation and Empowerment Strategies, Women's Access to Resources, Gender Employment and Labour Markets, Structural Adjustment and Economic Restructuring, Gender and Markets, Institutional and Social Change

Authors from global south as well as from global north

# *Feminist Economics*, 1995-2018

- Most issues have at least one article on gender and development.
- Special issues on:
  - Globalisation Nov 2000
  - Complexities and Potential of Theorizing Gender, Caste, Race and Class, July 2000
  - Amartya Sen's Work and Ideas, Nov 2003
  - Gender, China and WTO, Oct 2007
  - Inequality, Development and Growth, July 2009
  - Unpaid Work, Time Use, Poverty and Public Policy, July 2010 and Oct 2011

# *Feminist Economics, 1995-2018*

- Most issues have at least one article on gender and development.
- Special issues on:
  - Gender and International Migration, April 2012
  - Critical and Feminist Perspectives on Financial and Economic Crises, July 2013
  - Land, Gender, Food Security, Jan 2014
  - Gender and Economics in Muslim Communities, Oct 2014
  - Engendering Economic Policy in Africa, July 2015

# Selected Issues for Further Discussion

## *Critique of neoliberal macroeconomic policies*

- stabilization and structural adjustment In Latin America and Africa
- response to economic crisis in Asia (1997) and Europe ( 2008)

## *Unpaid work, economic development, and public policy*

- 3 r's of unpaid work- recognise, reduce, redistribute
- unpaid work and Sustainable Development Goals
- unpaid work and right to care

## *IMF takes up gender equality: how to respond?*

# Stabilization and Structural Adjustment in 1980s and 90s

- 1980s debt crisis in developing countries in Latin America and Africa
- IMF stabilization programmes and WB structural adjustment programmes-devaluation, deflation, deregulation
- These programmes worked to 'prevent debtors defaulting, reduce budgetary and fiscal deficits in developing countries, and keep the commercial banks and the IMF and World Bank solvent. Deficits in human well being did not come into the picture'. Elson (1994) 'People, Development and the International Financial Institutions'. *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 62

# Male Bias in Stabilization and Structural Adjustment

Failure to consider implications of:

- Gender division of paid work
- Intra-household gender divisions in consumption and expenditure
- Unpaid domestic work

‘This male bias at the conceptual level predisposes such programmes to male bias in operation and outcome.... Such programmes tend to result in an unfair distribution of the burdens... between women and men.’ Elson ( 1991) *Male Bias in the Development Process*, Manchester University Press

# Gender Division of Paid Work

- ‘Nimble fingers’ - and ‘muscular arms’
- Barriers to redeployment of labour across occupations and sector
- My argument was not that women necessarily lose jobs more than men
- My argument was that the outcome in many countries would be enforced idleness for men , and overwork for women, because of gender norms in paid and unpaid work, coupled with cutbacks in public services
- Stabilisation and Structural Adjustment did facilitate growth of jobs for women in export oriented sectors-garments, electronics, flowers, fruit and vegetables
- But was this ‘decent work’ ? – Many women struggled for better pay and conditions. Subordination and exploitation don’t mean absence of agency.

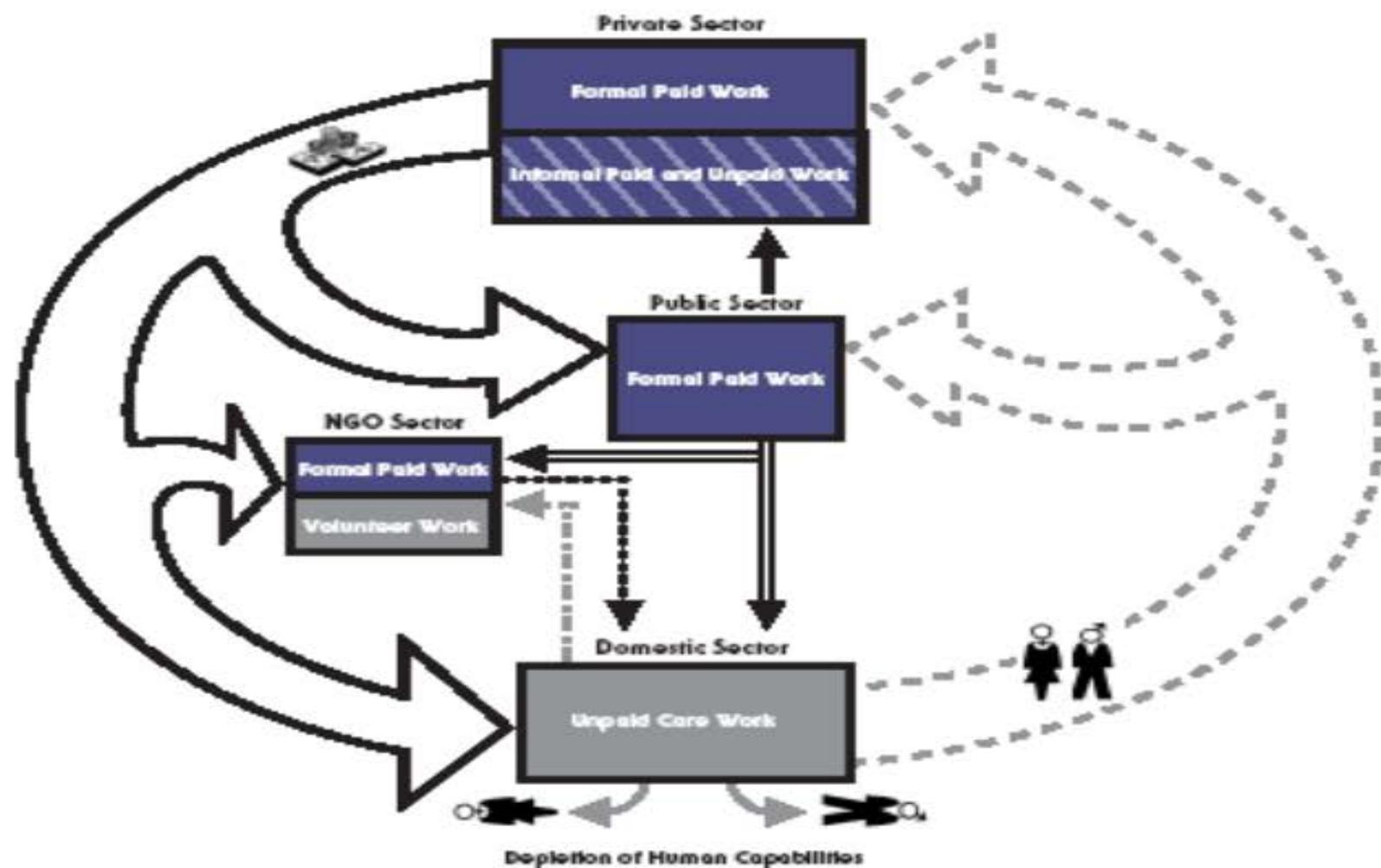
# Intra-household Divisions In Consumption and Expenditure

- Not all resources are pooled and shared
- Men in a wide variety of case studies found to retain some income to fund consumption of alcohol, tobacco and leisure activities and were resistant to changing this
- Norms of masculinity built around this consumption
- Dwyer and Bruce (eds) (1988) *A Home Divided: Women and Income in the Third World*, Stanford University Press
- Also true in rich countries: Pahl (1980) 'Patterns of Money Management within Marriage', *Journal of Social Policy*, 9(3)

# Unpaid Domestic Work

- Invisible in macroeconomic statistics, invisible in macroeconomic theory
- But vital to produce and reproduce labour and the social fabric
- Though capacity to sustain human well-being in a market economy is NOT unlimited
- Need to 'incorporate the question of depletion and replenishment of human energies.' Elson (1998) *The Economic, the Political and the Domestic: Businesses, States and Households in the Organisation of Production*, *New Political Economy*, 3 (2)
- New empirical work on depletion : Chopra with Zambelli (2017) *No Time to Rest: Women's Lived Experiences of Balancing Paid Work and Unpaid Care Work*, Institute of Development Studies, Brighton
- See next slide : visualization from UNIFEM (2000) *Progress of World's Women*

Chart 1.1: Re-visioning the Economy Through Women's Eyes



- marketed goods and services and payments
- marketed and non-marketed goods and services, including information and advocacy
- inputs of paid labor
- inputs of paid labor and volunteer work
- public services, income transfers and payments, less taxes and user fees
- depletion of human capabilities

- formal work, included in GNP
- informal work, undercounted in GNP
- volunteer and unpaid care work, not included in GNP

# Result of Application of Gender -biased Macroeconomic Models

- Problems in quantitative testing-
- Lack of data on unpaid work
- Lack of data on allocations within households
- Case studies showed male-biased outcomes
- Women , especially low income women, bore more of the burdens of adjustment:
- Extra work for women, both paid and unpaid
- Deterioration of women's nutrition relative to men's
- Deterioration of girls' schooling relative to boys'

# Did Feminist Economics Critique Have an Impact?

- Same models and policies were applied with similar impacts
- in Asia in response to financial crisis of 1997
- in Europe in response financial crisis of 2008, from 2010 onwards

See Elson 'Economic Crises from the 1980s to the 2010s: A Gender Analysis' in G. Waylen and S. Rai (eds.) (2013) *New Frontiers in Feminist Political Economy*, Routledge

- IMF and World Bank continue to require expenditure cuts.

See Ortiz et al, (2015) *The Decade of Adjustment: A review of austerity trends, 2010-2020 in 187 countries*, ESS Working Paper 53, South Centre/IPD/ILO

- But IMF and World Bank have embraced goal of gender equality- though for instrumental reasons
- 'Gender equality is smart economics' (WB) Gender equality is 'macrocritical' IMF

# 3 r's of Unpaid Domestic Work

- Around the world there is now (even in Fund and Bank):
- Increased *recognition* of economic significance of unpaid domestic work
- Calls for increased investment in infrastructure and public services to *reduce* it
- Some attention to *redistributing* unpaid domestic work to men
- See for instance reports by NGOs and research organisations to G7 and G20 in 2018
- 3r's framework based on remarks I made to a UNDP seminar in 2009- see Falth and Blackden (2008) *Unpaid Care Work*, UNDP Policy Brief on Gender equality and Poverty Reduction

# Unpaid Domestic Work and the Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- 5.4 Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- But will there be enough action?
- Terminological issues: unpaid domestic work, care work, unpaid care and domestic work ?
- Some large NGOs, like Oxfam, tend to refer to care work and care economy- Northern Bias?

# Challenges in Development Agenda on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work

- Unpaid care and domestic work seen primarily as a constraint on women's labour force participation.
- Loosening this constraint seen as a way to increase economic growth.
- Intrinsic value of care work not seen
- We have to raise the demand of both time free from care and time to care
- Right to care and be cared for advocated in Gammage et al (2018) Imperative of Addressing Care Needs in G20 Countries, [www.t20argentina.org](http://www.t20argentina.org)

# Gender Equality and IMF: Dilemmas for Feminist Economists

- Embrace of gender budgeting- but focus on government policies not IMF policies. See Kolovich (ed) 2018 *Fiscal Policies and Gender Equality*  
<https://bookstore.imf.org/books/title/fiscal-policies-and-gender-equality>
- Embrace of gender equality as a ‘macrocritical issue’ in Article IV reviews since 2015 ( these reviews do not involve formal conditions, only ‘suggestions’)
- First explicitly gendered conditionality in 2016, calling on Jordan to increase female labour force participation, including through publicly subsidised nurseries
- Civil society critiques calling for IMF to examine impact of its own policies
- Eg Bretton Woods Project (2017) *The IMF and Gender Equality: A Compendium of Feminist Macroeconomic Critiques*  
<https://www.brettonwoodsproject.org/article-type/analysis/report/>
- IMF Guidance Note in 2018 on Operationalising Gender Issues in Country Work

“Country teams should also think about the impact of other macro-economic policies on gender. Some policies recommended by staff to support growth and stability may have differential gender impact that could exacerbate gender inequality. For example, budget cuts on subsidies and social programs, cuts in the public-sector wage bill, or increasing transportation fees might have larger impact on women. In these instances, staff may consider an alternative policy mix to prevent such negative externalities or—if the former is not feasible—suggest some mitigating measures..... In addition, policy design may need to consider potential trade-offs between government conditionality to improve targeting, such as means-testing, and their gender impact.”

IMF Guidance Note (2018) Operationalising Gender Issues in Country Work

# Questions

- Will this guidance actually be followed?
- What kind of gender equality impact assessments will be done?
- In the 2017 Article IV review of Argentina, the IMF applied a Dynamic Stochastic General Equilibrium model to determine the gendered impacts of a proposal to reduce employees' and employer's contributions to social security. The analysis concluded these reforms would increase GDP through increased female labour force participation and a decreased gender wage gap.
- These models have many limitations – for instance they assume markets work well
- Should feminist economists engage in dialogue with IMF to propose alternative forms of assessment?
- See Burgisser (2018 forthcoming) IMF and Gender Equality: Operationalizing Change. Bretton Woods Project, [www.brettonwoodsproject.org](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org)