Why all economists should be feminist economists

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This chapter will present what I see as the key features of feminist economics, arguing that these all follow from its fundamental premise: that economics needs to take account of gender relations because the differences in men's and women's roles are integral to how any economy runs. Changes in the economy can affect gender relations and vice versa. Feminist economics is therefore not economics for women, but simply better economics and all economists should become feminist economists.

Definitions

Although feminist economists have been resistant to producing a list of its key principles and few writers explicitly define what they mean by feminist economics, three definitions are implicit in the type of critiques given of mainstream economics (Schneider & Shackelford, 1998).

It can be implicitly defined by its politics, as economics that focuses on what is needed to create gender equality. It might seem improper to define a field of economics by the political change that it wants to promote. Surely, a mainstream economist might say, even if one is interested in promoting a more equal society, does one not have the duty to be as objective as possible when studying economics? Those who use such a political definition of feminist economics would argue that mainstream economics is itself ideological, based on perpetuating gender inequality by normalising men's lives and ignoring much of what women do (Strassman, 1997). Thus, "economic man", the typical individual of mainstream economic models, engages in market transactions, supports himself by earning an income from employment and spending the money he earns on buying consumption goods. This individual does not do housework, care for anyone else and certainly does not give birth. Economic man, therefore, leads a life that leaves out much of significance in women's lives. As a result, models based on him cannot be used to understand, or even notice, many gender inequalities, or to develop policies to reduce them. In practice, of course, such models also provide an incomplete picture of what affects men's lives, since men's existence also depends on unpaid work, on production for direct use and on care, and many men are involved in these activities too - even though it has been left to women and feminist economics to point that out!

Feminist economics can equally well be defined by its subject matter, as the study of all forms of provisioning, by which is meant everything that human beings need to survive and flourish (Nelson, 1993). The use of this notion of provisioning comes from the recognition that "the economy" as understood by mainstream economics is an incomplete system, one that is dependent for its continued existence on many activities that lie outside its scope. The survival and reproduction of people and society as a whole requires not only paid employment, but unpaid domestic work too, not only the goods and services that are produced for sale on the market, but also those produced for direct use within families and communities, and not only the production of material goods, but everything that people need to grow and flourish, including the provision of care. It has since been suggested that "social provisioning" might be a better term for the subject matter of economics, to emphasise that the ways in which people organize themselves to make a living are "interdependent social processes" (Power, 2004, p6).

Finally, and this is the definition that I will adopt in this chapter, we can define feminist economics methodologically as economics that recognises that gender relations are a structural characteristic of any economy (Sen, 1987). They are structural in that even if we took a narrow traditional view of the economy, as being constituted by market relations alone, changes in the economy can affect gender relations *and vice versa*. Causation is not just in one direction, so that any account of the economy that ignores changing gender relations is incomplete. Defining feminist economics methodologically in this way, this claim becomes the fundamental assumption of feminist economics. Of course, it is a claim that needs justifying. However, assuming it is true, then gender needs to be taken into account in any understanding of the economy.

By contrast, much mainstream economics, and also much not-so-mainstream economics, is "gender blind". It does not recognize the gender aspects of its subject matter; when challenged, economists will often claim that gender is irrelevant to their particular topic, taking that to be self-evident. Feminist economists would instead suggest that we should *start* by assuming that everything has a gender dimension. It is on this methodological basis that feminist economics would claim not to be an economics for women, or a branch of economics that studies a particular subject matter, but an economics that by taking account of gender relations is better economics, and therefore that *all* economists should be feminist economists. The rest of this chapter will be taken up with substantiating that claim.

Differences with mainstream economics

In this chapter, I will discuss five main features of feminist economics, contrasting it in these aspects with a loosely defined notion of "mainstream" economics. The latter includes both neo-classical economics and, with respect to at least some of the features, other schools of economics that would classify themselves as more heterodox. These five main features of feminist economics are the following:

1. It does not analyse market relations alone. Instead feminist economics recognises that people relate to each other in many other ways, including through relations of love, obligation, domination, power, reciprocity and mutual interdependence within families and communities. The self-centred independent individual, "economic man", is not taken as the basic model, deviations from which need to be explained, nor as an ideal to be worked towards. The recognition of mutual interdependence between people is taken as both more accurate and a better basis for thinking about improving society;

2. It does not treat the household as the basic individual unit of the economy. Instead feminist economics recognises that the preferences, interests and choices of members of the same household can differ. Therefore, it is not households who "make decisions", but individuals, albeit it in the context of the families and communities of which they are part;

3. It rejects the notion that people have individual preferences that are independent and unchanging. Instead it recognises that social norms influence what people want and do, and

that these norms change in ways that can be analysed.

4. It rejects a model of work and production that is based on manufacturing as its typical example. In particular, what people do in providing care suggests an alternative model of work and production that is also relevant, to a greater or lesser extent, to many other purposive activities, including much paid work.

5. It uses broader definitions of well-being, assessed at the social as well as individual level, and of infrastructure and investment, that include investment in social infrastructure.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will expand on each of these features of feminist economics. In some cases, mainstream economists have responded to the implied critique (or have even thought of it themselves), but inevitably they have done so by seeing how some assumptions of the basic framework of mainstream economics can be altered to accommodate one or other of these features in specific cases. However, they do not admit that the whole framework might need to be changed, because these features are not just special cases but apply generally. To do that would make them feminist economists!

Analysing market relations is not enough

Feminist economists recognise that many activities that take place outside the market, in particular the caring and other unpaid activities that go on within households, affect how the economy runs. Further, because people do not necessarily behave outside the market just like they do within it, the motivations behind such non-market activities cannot be analysed with the same tools that we would use to investigate market relations. (As we shall see, we might also question whether standard mainstream analysis of how people behave *within* markets is correct).

In particular mainstream economics' omission of non-market activities means that time spent on them tends to be ignored, or seen as simply "leisure". But how that non-market time is spent affects what else people can do with their lives. In particular, a sense of obligation to spend time on non-market activities limits the time that can be spent on employment and other market activities. While this is true of men too, it is particularly salient for women. One of the biggest gender differences throughout the world is that obligations to do unpaid household and caring work structure women's lives and opportunities to do other things far more than they do men's.

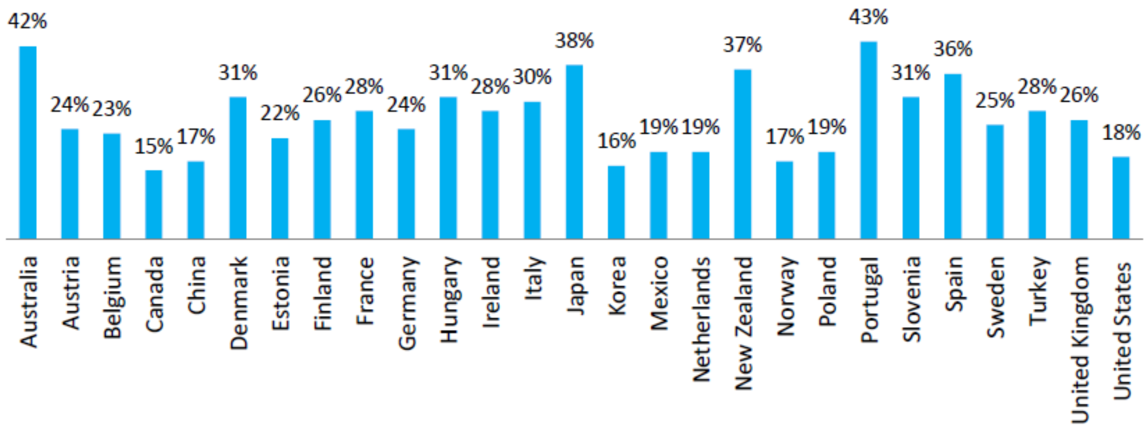
As a result, we cannot assume that all workers are wage-workers, and certainly not for all their lives. While in men's lives non-market activities are often fitted around their market activities, for women the opposite may be the case. As caring and other non-market obligations tend to vary over the course of a life , so typically do women's engagement in labour market activities, giving them employment histories that tend to be much more varied than men's.

This is an example of the inadequacy of taking the self-centred independent individual,"economic man", as the norm, deviations from which need to be explained. There is a mainstream analysis of household production, known as New Household Economics, which has come up with some useful results, but it works by applying market logic to a non-market area. Its answers are therefore somewhat partial. It can explain why it makes sense for a couple to specialise, with one doing the household production and the other earning an income, and why on average women with greater earning power are likely to spend more time in market work and less in non-market work than those who can earn less. However, it has little to say on any reasons beyond the biological why women might specialise in household production and men in market work. In particular it has no explanation of why women and men might differ in their feelings about who does what.

Feminist economists would say that such differences between women and men, and their feelings, cannot be explained on the basis of individual characteristics alone, whether of personal character or circumstances, but should be seen as an aspect of the gendered norms of society. Further, because in practice we are all interdependent, the independent individual should be neither the basis of an economic model, nor seen as an ideal to be worked towards. The recognition of mutual interdependence between people and their dependence on wider social forces is both more accurate and a better basis for thinking about improving society. So in terms of policy, for example, rather than just enabling individual women to improve their employment prospects by providing childcare so that they can compete with men for better paid jobs, it would be better to think more about how to organise society as a whole. This could involve making the caring work that women currently do a more equitably shared collective responsibility, and redesigning jobs so that caring responsibilities no longer limit anyone's employment prospects.

Unpaid domestic work is not counted in GDP, which primarily measures output that goes through the market. This continues to be the case despite revisions to the system of national accounts so that it now includes the non-market production of food and other agricultural products for households' own consumption (United Nations 2008). However, as Figure 1 shows, estimates from around the world by one method of estimation, make the value of unpaid work done within households equivalent to about 15% to 43% of GDP (Folbre, 2015). Such unpaid work has become the focus of policy not so much in its own right, but because raising women's employment rates has become seen as a way to generate additional government revenue. In particular, within Europe raising women's employment rates by the provision of childcare was seen, at least until the advent of austerity driven policy-making, as the main way to fund increased government social spending (Lisbon European Council, 2000).

Figure 1: Value of household production relative to conventional GDP in 2008 (replacement cost estimates)



Source: Ahmad and Koh (2011).

There are basically two ways in which the value of unpaid work can be measured. The first is by assessing the output produced by unpaid work and estimating how much it would cost to purchase a similar output on the market; this "output" approach is used by the UK Office for National Statistics for its Household Satellite Accounts (ONS, 2016). The other "input" approach values the time spent on unpaid work, using either the wage that the person would otherwise have earned (the "opportunity cost" method) or how much another person could expect to be paid for providing care (the "replacement" cost method). Mullan (2010) gives a full account of these different approaches and uses them to estimate the value of parental childcare in the UK.

If we have a view of the total economy that includes all provisioning, it can be growing faster or slower than that measured by GDP. In general, the total economy will not slow down in recessions as much as the more usual "GDP economy". This is because some of those who lose their jobs will spend time on unpaid work - to save money perhaps by buying unprocessed foods, or because children are taken out of childcare. On the other hand, when the level of paid employment increases, less unpaid work may be done, and the recovery out of the recession will be slower for the total economy than for the GDP economy (Wagman & Folbre, 1996).

The household is not an individual

Because men and women have different gender roles, their lives differ and so do their interests. People tend to live in a number of different households over the course of their lives and members of the same household can have different interests. The household should therefore not be treated as a basic unit of the economy into which economics does not enter. Because resources are not necessarily shared equally within households, individuals within the same household can have different standards of living and differing interests.

Mainstream economics tends to short-circuit this complication by assuming inaccurately that households "make decisions". But in practice it is people who make all decisions, such as about what job to take, what housing to rent and what food to purchase, to name a few specifically marketoriented decisions. They may well do so taking into account the interests of other members of their household, and may know that they will share the food that they purchase, the house that they rent or the income that they earn with others in their household. But such decisions are actually made by individuals – even a couple's joint purchase of a house involves both purchasers individually agreeing to it.

This is important because it is the supposed rationality of *individuals* that lead to the axioms of rational choice on which mainstream economics is built. But it then uses those axioms to derive conclusions about how *households* behave in markets. However, two individuals within the same household may have different interests and will therefore in general not act as though they had the same preferences. So, even if individuals conformed to the axioms of rational choice, and we will see below why we might even doubt that, there is no reason to assume that households have unified interests and "act" as rational individual decision-makers.

Mainstream economics does recognise this as a potential problem and has built complex "collective" models of the behaviour of households consisting of more than one individual. However, although this is a thriving specialist branch of neo-classical economics, it has not influenced much of what goes in other branches, which still tend to take households their basic unit of analysis and assume that they have unified interests and act rationally. Even Gary Becker, the founder of the mainstream "New Household Economics" mentioned above, showed this assumption of unified household interests holds only under very particular circumstances. It holds only where a household has one member, its "head", who is sufficiently generous and powerful that it is in the interests of all members of his household to do as he (sic) wishes, because any "Rotten Kid" who does not do so can be "punished" by the household head redistributing the benefits of his generosity (Becker, 1974; Bergstrom, 2008). In that situation, by assumption, all members of the household have the same interests and therefore the household can act as a rational decision-maker. However, whether or not that model of family life ever held, in many parts of the world today it is no longer reasonable to assume there to be a household head who dominates family-life to that extent, and most multi-person households have more than one earner, as well as many shoppers.

So instead of building such clearly out-of-date models, feminist economics recognises that women may not be well served by policies and economic theories that assume unified household interests and equal sharing, or focus too much on a household's current circumstances. This is because women are often the ones who sacrifice their own longer-term interests to those of other household members and may well outlive their current household. Instead, women benefit more from policies that focus on individual well-being and take a life course perspective in doing so. For example, progressive taxation based on individual income rather than family income is generally fairer to women because they pay rates of tax assessed on their own incomes, not on their partners' generally higher earnings. With family taxation, women with partners may find that their own employment brings in too little income to be worthwhile if they need to pay for childcare, for example, but the long-run consequences of being out of the labour market on their future earnings and their pensions can be severely deleterious. This does not mean that women's interests are always best provided for by policies that operate at an individual level – indeed as I shall argue below both women and men have interests that are often better served by policies directed at a more collective notion of well-being – but women in general do not gain from having their individual interests subsumed under those of their household.

Social norms influence what people want and do and can be analysed.

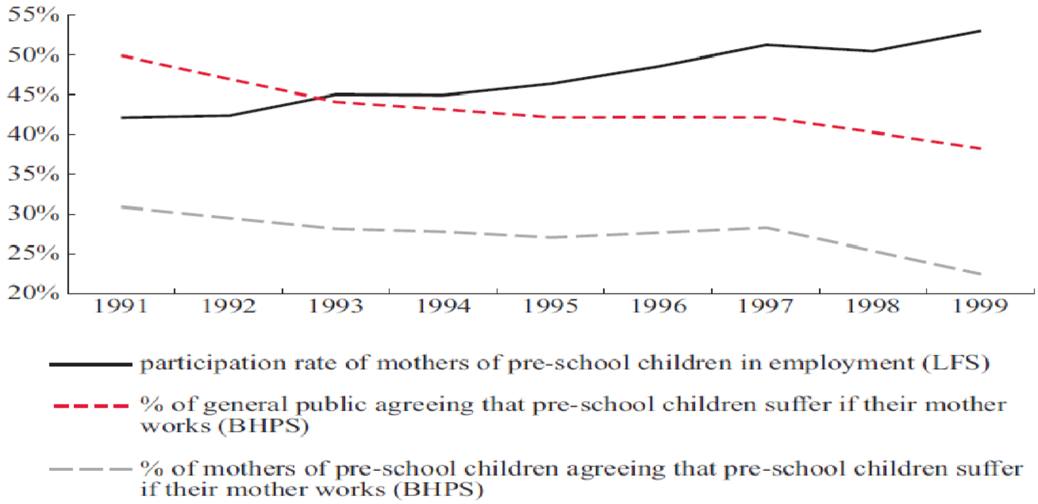
Neoclassical economics assumes that everyone follows the same method of deciding what to do, rationally maximising their own utility by making whatever choices lead to their preferences being best satisfied. Neoclassical economics generally also works on the assumption that those preferences are unchanging and independent of society. Further, the reasons why people have certain preferences are not to be investigated because these lie outside the subject matter of economics, which has to take preferences as given. Feminist economics rejects these assumptions. First, people are "humans" not "econs" as the behavioural economist Richard Thaler would put it, and therefore do not necessarily behave according to this utility maximising model (Thaler, 2015). But, on top of that, feminist economics criticises the notion of individual preferences as given, seeing instead that what people want and choose to do depends on social norms, whose formation by social processes can be analysed.

Social norms do not fit into the dichotomy between preferences and constraints that the neo-classical notion of rational decision-making demands. According to this view, rationality consists of self-centred individuals deciding to do whatever they most prefer given the constraints of the world surrounding them. In this view, preferences and constraints are entirely distinct and do not influence each other. But social norms are not constraints, because they are not absolute: "normally" people abide by social norms, but they do not always do so. And social norms are not preferences because people may follow social norms even if they do not really want to, possibly because they think they should or because they fear social disapproval if they don't.

One way to put this is that individuals are not the "separative selves" that neoclassical economics claims, with a clear well-defined boundary between the self and the outside world (England, 2003). Feminist economists recognise that who we are, how we chose and what we do are not in practice determined simply by a person's individual characteristics facing the constraints of a completely external world. Rather social norms *both* define who we are and limit what we can choose.

And this is not just a case of one way causation. Social norms are themselves influenced by what people do. For example, through the 1990s, the attitudes to mothers of small children being in employment held by both the general public and mothers of small children themselves changed considerably, as Figure 1 shows. By the end of the 1990s, less than 40% of the general public agreed that pre-school children suffered if their mother was employed, although in 1991 more than 50% of the general public had thought that they did. The mothers of pre-school children themselves also changed their views. At the beginning of the decade over 30% still thought that pre-school children suffered if their mother did paid work; by 1999 only just over 20% did.

Figure 2: Changing social norms about mothers' employment: UK 1991-9



Source: British Household Panel Survey and Labour Force Survey (Himmelweit and Sigala, 2004)

But the really striking line in Figure 1 is the one showing the percentage of mothers of pre-school children who were actually in employment, which rose from just above 40% to much more than 50% in that period. That these changes happened over the 1990s simultaneously with changing attitudes illustrates the positive feedback between attitudes (standing in for norms here) and behaviour. As more mothers of pre-school children entered employment, norms changed and both the general public and, more importantly, mothers of pre-school children themselves became more accepting of the idea of mothers being in employment.This in turn influenced behaviour with more mothers taking employment and so on. Such positive feedback makes change difficult to start but reinforces change once it happens. It also makes it hard to tell retrospectively what it was that started the change.

Such positive feedback between norms and behaviour can also explain why ostensibly similar economies can easily follow diverging paths with respect to any aspect of behaviour that is significantly influenced by norms. Positive feedback also explains why it may be difficult for one economy to shift to follow the path of another; because identical policies may have very different effects if adopted in countries whose norms differ. Further, which policies are adopted itself depends on existing norms, in turn influenced by current practices. In other words, because there is positive feedback between norms, behaviour and policy, all three are path-dependent and history matters in explaining where we are now.

This means that the analysis of social change is more complex than the method of comparative statics used by mainstream economics would suggest. In that method, the effect of a change in an exogenous variable, due to a policy change for example, is analysed by following through the implications for resulting equilibrium prices and quantities. So for example, a change in the subsidies to childcare, which did occur in the UK during the period covered in Figure 1, would be analysed as a change to the gain to employment for mothers with small children resulting in a higher equilibrium employment rate among that group of mothers. But taking account of the feedback between norms and behaviour would predict either a larger and growing impact on employment or a much smaller one that might just fizzle out. If subsidised childcare encourages a few mothers to take employment, norms should change so that mothers of pre-school children find doing paid work becomes more acceptable and there is a further boost to the numbers taking employment, which shifts norms further, and so on. On the other hand, it could be that existing norms are so strong that the change in childcare subsidies encourages so few mothers into employment that their effect on norms is insignificant. It is for this reason that norms make change difficult to start but reinforce change once it happens. Norms alone do not explain patterns of care provision; economic factors, such as the cost of childcare, matter too. But economic change can be speeded up or slowed down by norms.

Care provision provides an alternative model of work and production.

Perhaps the most distinctive contribution of feminist economics is its theoretical analysis of care; the hands-on services that children and some adults, according to their specific care needs, require to do what others can do unaided. Feminist economics has placed particular stress on theorising care because it sees the strong gendered norms that almost invariably allocate care to women as crucial in explaining gender inequalities in both employment and domestic life.

Mainstream economic theory and many policy makers tend to treat care as a commodity like any other, whose provision can be analysed using the same analytical tools as any other production process. In doing so they call on a model based on the production of manufactured goods, although claiming that it has more general applicability.

In contrast, feminist economists have shown how care has characteristics that differ from those assumed for the typical commodity of economics. The first of these characteristics is that both the supply and demand for care are influenced by social norms, concerning both people's needs for care and how and by whom that care should be provided, which are highly gendered. Many feminist economists see norms that allocate greater care responsibilities to women than men as one, if not the sole, fundamental explanation of gender differences in society.

Despite this lack of variation in the gender of who provides care, we do find huge cross-cultural differences in who receives care, who gives it and under what conditions. The "care diamond" of Figure 3 illustrates the different sectors in which both paid and unpaid care can be provided, some of which is allocated by the market and some more directly by families and communities.

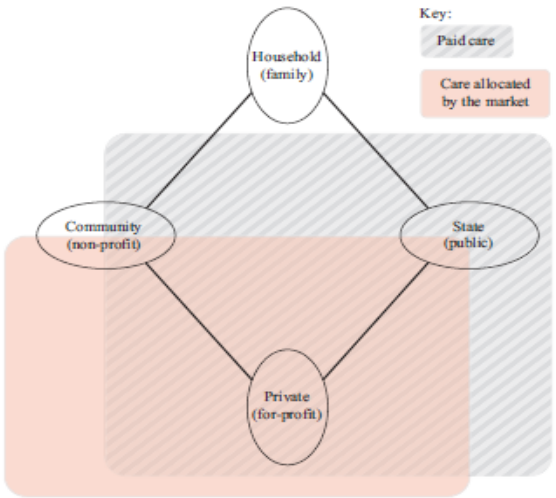


Figure 18.1 The 'care diamond'
(Source: loosely based on Rasavi, 2007, p. 21)

Figure 3: The "care diamond"

Source: Himmelweit (2011) p 263, loosely based on Rasawi (2007) p21

There is huge cross-cultural diversity in the ways in which care is provided. However, like the near universal tendency to allocate unpaid care to women, some common trends can be observed. As rising industrial productivity has increased the opportunity cost of women's unpaid care work, policies on care to enable women with caring responsibilities to take employment have been introduced in many countries. However, at the same time there has been an unwillingness by politicians, perhaps reflecting their electorates' views, to devote sufficient funds to provide it fully as a public service. As a result, while family care will continue to dominate provision, the private-for-profit paid care sector is likely to be one of the growth industries of the future. For example, in the UK, a combination of privatisation of care provision and a failure of public funding to keep up with rising needs has meant that most of those needing care will have to buy their own care from the private sector, rely on family and friends or simply have their needs unmet (Age UK, 2014).

The second characteristic of care that feminist economists have pointed to is that its provision, involves a personal relationship between provider and receiver. As a hands-on personal service care has to be consumed at the same time as it is provided, with provider and recipient relating to each other. This is a significant difference from manufactured goods whose producers and consumers typically never meet and whose consumption can be separated in both space and time from its production. Consequently the quality of the care depends, at least in part, on the quality of the relationship developed between provider and care recipient. Care would be considered of very low quality if the provider showed no interest in the care recipient.

That care involves a relationship between provider and recipient means that raising its productivity is inherently hard to do and potentially problematic. The economist William Baumol was interested in why some industries seemed to increase productivity continuously while in other industries productivity hardly increased at all. The latter industries, which included "health care, education ... and the care of the indigent', he classified as 'those in which the human touch is crucial, and are thus resistant to labour productivity growth' (Baumol, 1993, pp. 17, 19).

In industries of this type, output tends to be measured by time spent. An hour's childcare takes an hour; it cannot be speeded up. In that sense caring for someone is like playing a string quartet where neither cutting the number of players nor playing faster can raise labour productivity, as Figure 4 illustrates.

Figure 4: Neither cutting the numbers of players nor playing faster can raise labour productivity in playing a string quartet

Source: Himmelweit (2011) p269

Of course, it is possible to increase the number of children looked after by each childcare worker. But beyond a certain point this is likely to damage the personal nature of care; using less labour but reducing quality is not a real productivity increase. This is because there is a limit to the number of people a relationship can be spread over without affecting its quality. While this limit may differ between different types of care needs, after a certain point spreading care over more people must reduce its quality. Indeed, when it comes to care, measures of high productivity are specifically taken as indices of low quality: a good childcare centre is taken to be one with a high staff-to-child ratio.

This difficulty of raising productivity in care affects the pay and conditions of care workers and hence their training and ability to acquire recognised skills. It means that employers trying to increase profits can do so only at the expense of their workers and/or their customers, by either cutting wages or providing an inferior level of service. As a result care workers' wages tend to be low, with a care "penalty" paid by workers working in the care sectors in many, though not all, parts of the world (Budig & Misra, 2010). Although many carers have developed care specific skills, and are in many countries better educated than the general population, they tend to be among the worst paid workers and working under the worst, most insecure conditions.

One consequence of the relational nature of care provision is that continuity of provision matters; care workers learn how to care for particular people and are therefore not interchangeable. Care recipients care about who looks after their needs and changing their carer is a costly procedure in emotional and health terms. Another consequence is that carers' motivations are intrinsic to the quality of care. As well as having other skills, a good carer needs to care about the person she is looking after. This makes the quality of care inevitably hard to measure or evaluate without being part of that relationship. A consequence is that the market does not operate as well as a mechanism to improve standards or efficiency for care, as it might do for commodities whose quality can easily be assessed by potential purchasers and changing suppliers has no particularly bad effects. For markets to operate efficiently to the benefit of consumers, quality needs to be easy to assess and the transactions cost of moving need to be close to zero. This is certainly not the case with care, where both adults and children benefit greatly from consistency of care.

The analysis of care is arguably the most distinctive contribution of feminist economics. Although it was developed to understand the specific features of care, it is relevant to more general economic analyses. In many types of work, relationships are important, quality may be hard to assess and changing suppliers costly. Indeed you could say that these features are not specific to a few types of work, but constitute the normal case that applies to a greater or lesser extent more generally. If so then the theory of care is another example of where feminist economics is simply better economics, even for those interested in the traditional subject matter of economics.

A broader definition of well-being, investment and infrastructure

One consequence of the above is that feminist economists have tended to be strong advocates of using a broader definition of well-being, both at the individual and societal level. They insist that existing economic indicators fail to capture much of what women clearly care about, as evidenced by their willingness to compromise their own material standard of living in order to provide care for others. As argued earlier, a more holistic and equitable approach to organising care work in society would benefit women individually, but along with everyone else women would also gain from being in a more equal society that valued care work more. The benefit of living in such a more equal and caring society is not well captured by a notion of well-being measured at an individual level alone.

Feminist economics uses a definition of investment consistent with such a broader definition of well-being. Accepting the definition of investment as expenditure undertaken in order to gain benefits in the future, feminist economics does not restrict those benefits to monetary gain, but includes any form of well-being. Thus expenditures on education, childcare and health are investments in the future because their benefits, more educated, better cared-for, healthier people and more opportunities for women do not just accrue in the current period, but last into the future. Such expenditures are also investments in infrastructure because their bring benefits not just to the individuals whose health, care and education are being improved, but to society more generally.

In theory mainstream economics would agree with that, but in practice it tends to restrict the term investment to expenditure whose future benefits are evaluated in monetary terms. This is particularly true of infrastructural investment, which in the international system employed to create national accounts is restricted to physical infrastructure.Thus, spending to employ construction workers to build a school counts as infrastructure spending, while spending to employ teachers comes out of current spending. This creates a gender bias in public expenditure, away from investment in human capital, care, health and education, and in favour of investment in physical capital, transport and buildings. The gender bias is not only in who benefits from the outcome of the investment but also in who tends to employed in creating it, since in nearly all parts of the world physical infrastructure is likely to employ more men, while social infrastructure often employs more women.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined some of the main contributions of feminist economics. In particular, that it recognises that:

i) people relate to each other in many ways other than through markets, with mutual interdependence both a more accurate characterisation of how people relate to each other and a better basis for thinking about improving society, than models based on self-centred independent individuals;

ii) the preferences, interests and choices of members of the same household can differ;

iii) social norms influence what people want and do and these norms change in ways that can be analysed;

iv) the characteristics of care can provide an alternative model of provision to that based on the production of manufactured goods that is also relevant to many other types of work;

v) the need for broader definitions of well-being, infrastructure and investment that include the benefits of investment in social infrastructure.

Not only mainstream economics but much heterodox economics would be improved by recognising these features. In that sense feminist economics is not just another school of economics – and certainly not an economics just for women – but is simply better economics, and economists of any persuasion would do better by becoming feminist economists.

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See also many articles in the journal *Feminist Economics* which covers a wide range of topics from a critical feminist economics perspective.

For help in compiling this list of readings, the author would like to thank the teachers of two excellent masters courses on Feminist Economics, the first at the London School of Economics is entitled *Feminist Economics and Policy: An Introduction* and is taught by Naila Kabeer, Diane Perrons and Ania Plomien . The second is entitled *Gender Economics* and is taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies by Hannah Bargawi. If this chapter has stimulated your interest in Feminist Economics, studying one of these courses would be an excellent way to take your interest further.