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Gender Budget and Care: Macroeconomic Analysis from the Gender Perspective

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《Abstract》

In most, if not all, bodies of knowledge, domestic structures, particularly unpaid care labour, appear to remain as taken-for-granted. In this article we argue the gender budget from the methodological point of view¹⁾. In so doing, we shall explore some implications of including the domestic as one of the sectors, along with the public and private sectors; and of including circuits structured by interpersonal relations of kinship, friendship and mutuality, as well as those of commerce and citizenship. There are two principles of gender budget: namely 1) the assessment of budget impact on an individual as well as a household basis, and 2) the recognition of the economic contribution of unpaid care labour, which is done primarily by women. We also acknowledge that macro-level analysis of gender budget is to be complement with micro-level analysis of family.

Key words

Gender budget, domestic structure, unpaid labour, care, family, market,

1) Though John Stuart Mill and Karl Marx recognised that the production of labour force on a daily and intergenerational basis was dependent upon households, both treated the functioning of households as taken for granted. See also Elson (1998).

Introduction

Gender budget is a device for ‘gender mainstreaming’. The aim is to introduce a gender perspective in the theory, its core concepts and in the analysis of practice (Women’s Budget Group 2004). The term ‘gender mainstreaming’ came into widespread use with the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action²⁾ in 1995. The Platform highlighted the slow progress in achieving real change in the position of women despite the efforts of over two decades. Mainstreaming policies, including the allocation of resources, needs to reflect the interests and views of women, as well as those of men. However, “the aim of gender assessment is not only to produce a gender balance sheet for individual policies. Rather it is to find ways in which policy-makers can achieve their goals while simultaneously reducing gender inequalities” (Himmelweit 2001: 69). That is, the integration of a gender perspective into budgetary policy has both equality and efficiency dimensions (Elson 2001 and 2002, Himmelweit 2001, Sharp 1999 and 2001, Women’s Budget Group 2004).

In this article, first of all, we argue a framework of gender budget by making a comparison between ordinary budget and gender budget. In so doing, we shall explore some implication of including the domestic as

2) The strategic objectives adopted in the Beijing Platform for Action are for governments to:

1. restructure and target the allocation of public spending to promote women’s economic opportunities and equal access to productive resources and to address the basic, social, educational and health needs of women.
2. facilitate more open and transparent budget processes.
3. review, adopt and maintain macroeconomic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.

one of the sectors, along with the public and private sectors; and of including circuits structured by interpersonal relations of kinship, friendship and mutuality, as well as those of commerce and citizenship.

1. What is a gender budget?

1.1 Macro-level focus in gender budget

The methodology of gender budget is a macro-level focus, looking at political economy primarily from a structural perspective. The macro-level focus means that the analysis is able to engage directly with the concerns of macroeconomics, that is a branch of economics which analysis of the aggregate stocks and the flows of money, goods and services. By focusing macro-level, “we shall sidestep the issues of whether or not the people whose actions give rise to national output are ‘rational economic men’ engaged in constrained maximization” (Elson 1998: 191). By contrast, a micro-level focus, such as an analysis of family decision making, has to engage directly with this issue³⁾.

As Elson (1998) said, there are losses as well as gains in eliding the difference between ‘doing’ and ‘choosing’; in treating everyone as if they had well ordered, well defined preference functions; and in treating every situation as if the bounds on choice are self evidently exogenous.

3) For example, Gardiner tried to expand a concept of human capital. She said, “Feminist Economists have generally rejected human capital theory in terms of both its methodological individualism and its use as an explanation of gender differences in pay and occupational segregation.” However, “gendered political economy might engage with the concept of human capital in order to link the household and market sectors of the economy.” (Gardiner 1988: 189) Humphries (1998) also argued the household decision making process. See also Amartya Sen (1990). He described a family as ‘Cooperative Conflicts’.

Macro-level analysis, nevertheless, still holds the promise of being able to illuminate some of the constraints on individuals and to a coherent and sustainable whole. “The issue of coordination failure has always been a central concern of political economy. The macro level focus, therefore, is complementary to the micro-level focus.” (Elson 1998: 191)

We shall then make a comparison between ordinary budget and gender budget to define clearly a framework for gender budget.

1.2 Ordinary budget and gender budget

Government budgets are clear reflections of the government priorities. It is the single most important economic policy instrument of a government, and as such, therefore, it can be a powerful tool in transforming a political logic of country to meet the needs of the poorest, be they women or men. At the same time, gender budget analysis is also a device to transform the efficiency of ordinary economics by introducing a domestic sector as productive agency into ordinary budget.

Gender budgets refer to a variety of processes and tools aimed at analyzing financial allocations on proposed policies according to gender and facilitating an assessment of the gendered impacts of government budgets. The focus has been on checking funding and auditing government budgets for their impact on women and girls. For example, The Women’s Budget Group (WBG)⁴⁾ in the UK has established consultation procedures with Her Majesty Treasury (the UK Finance Ministry)

4) The Women’s Budget Group has lobbied successive Governments on gender and economic policy since 1989. It is independent organisation that brings together academic and people from non-governmental organisations and trades unions to promote gender equality through appropriate economic policy. The WBG has gained extensive access to policy-makers and now works most closely with Her Majesty’s Treasury (the UK’s Ministry of Finance). (See Rake 2002)

which involves annual meetings on the Budget and on the Pre-Budget Statement with both government officials and Ministers, as well as meeting on more specialist topics. Such topics include not only the policies peculiar to women, but also rather comprehensive policies such as unemployment policy and so on (Himmelweit 2001 and 2002, Rake 2000 and 2001, Women's Budget Group 2004).

The essential difference between ordinary budget analysis and a gender budget analysis lies in the fact that the latter recognizes: first, the importance of individuals as well as households as units of analysis, and secondly, the importance of the 'reproductive' sector of an economy with much labour unpaid, performed primarily by women. These are 'two key principles of gender budget analysis' (Elson 2001: 15).

Domestic labour, like the market and state sectors of industrial economies, undergoes continual change and restructuring. An understanding of the internal processes within the three sectors, and the linkages between them, is necessary to inform the development of economic policy.

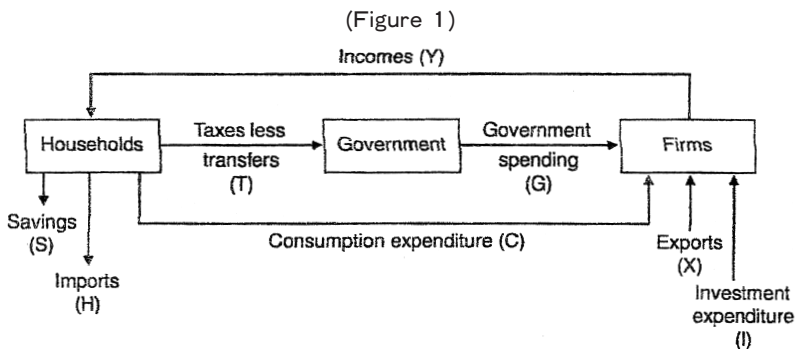


FIGURE 1. The circular flow of national money income.

Source: Elson (1998)

(Figure 2)

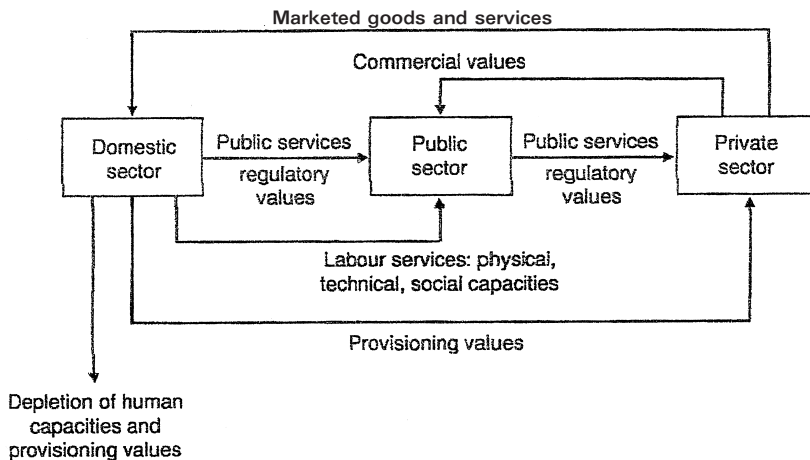


FIGURE 2. The circular flow of output of goods and services

Source: Elson (1998)

We shall then show the circular flow of national money income in ordinary budget and of output of goods and services in gender budget as follows.

1.3 The analysis of Figure 1

Mainstream macroeconomics analyses the interrelation between the domestic, private and public sectors through the model of the circular flow of money income in a national economy. Figure 1 illustrates the main features of this model. Households are depicted as receiving incomes from firms operating in the national economy. Households also pay taxes and receive income transfers (benefits) from government. Households then spend part of the income on the output of the firms and on imports from other economies, and save the rest of their income. Governments also purchase goods from firms and finance this from

taxes and government borrowing.

In ordinary budget (Figure 1), neither households nor government are depicted as producers. Production is the monopoly of firms, and their output is either sold to government and to households, exported or used for investment. In this type of model an investment is undertaken only by firms. The lines represent financial flows, some of which flow through the market circuit and some of which flow through the tax-and-benefit circuit.

The model focuses on the conditions for equality between aggregate demand and supply for the output of firms, which depicts it as depending upon the relationship between leakages from the circular flow between households and firms through the market circuit (saving and imports and tax revenues) and injections into the circular flow (investment and exports and government expenditure). Taxes less transfers are a leakage, and government expenditure is an injection. Because the interaction take the form of flows of money, they can be quantified and aggregated in a way that heterogeneous collections of goods and services cannot. This paves “the way for mathematical models and the construction of national income account.” (Elson 1998: 199)

Furthermore, the stock of labour and of intangible social assets (such as a sense of ethics, a sense of citizenship, a sense of what it is to communicate, a set of uncodified social norms, and so on) is taken for granted, and it is assumed that neither work nor investment is required to maintain these resources.

1.4 The analysis of Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a circular flow of output and values between the three sectors in a national economy, which in some ways is analogous to

Figure 1. Output flows through the market circuit, public services through the tax-and-benefit circuit. The diagram emphasis not financial income and expenditure, but production of goods and services and values. It emphasizes the productive role of the public sector and the domestic sector in producing goods and services which are inputs for the private sector and contributions to the well-being of a country's citizens⁵⁾. This is in contrast with Figure 1, which shows firms as the source of output, while government simply redistributes income through taxation, benefits and expenditure, and households simply consume.

Instead, there is recognition that the public sector itself produces public services and that the domestic sector produces labour services, including physical, technical and social capacities. The labour force is thus treated as a produced means of production, like equipment, not as a natural resources like land. The conventional national accounts do measure the output of the public sector as well as private sector, but they exclude the output of the domestic sector.

As we mentioned above, the differences between ordinary budget and gender budget are definitely important. The production of labour capacities (physical, technical and social) depletes human energies, which need replenishing if the level of labour services is to be maintained. Replenishment requires inputs from the public and private sectors. The domestic sector cannot therefore be seen as a bottomless well upon which the other sectors can draw: unless the inputs from the public and private sector are sufficiently nourishing, human capacities

5) In reference to the implication of this sentence, it is suggestive that we might be able to adopt the concept of human capital to domestic unpaid labour in households. (Gardiner 1998)

and provisioning values will be destroyed and they will drain away from the circular flow, as shown in Figure 2.

We also acknowledge that there are the loss and the gain of macro-level analysis on government budget. A macro-economic focus can treat aggregate stocks and flows of money, goods and services as relative autonomous from any particular characterization of agency. (Elson 1998: 191) Therefore, it is particularly important to complement these analysis with micro-level analysis. Humphries (1998) pointed out, though children have ‘public good’ characteristics, parents do not have children in order to produce a labour force for the public and private sectors, but they cannot exclude the state and business from the benefits of the availability of a future labour force. Such benefits spill over from the domestic sector and are not channeled by the circuit of the market of the tax-and-benefit system. Relationship between family and market, in particular the relative autonomy of family, is also important. (Humphries and Rubery 1984, and also see Hara 2004)

2. New Deal Programmes for the Unemployment —The Experience of WBG in UK

We now turn to the concrete case of UK policy as case study⁶⁾. This is New Deal Programmes, which is examined both to demonstrate the hidden features of policy that the gender perspective serves to reveal and to illustrate the potential shortcomings of developing policies

6) The case study of Rake (2000, 2001) about New Deal Programme for the Unemployed is very useful for us in terms of knowing the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR). She also showed an interesting case study of the Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) from the point of view of gender budget. I refer to the original date used by Rake (2000, 2001) to write the following section. See also Himmelweit (2002).

without taking gender fully into account.

2.1 New Deal for Young People (NDYP) and New Deal for the Long Term Unemployed (NDLTU)

The title of the New Deals is given to a series of active labour market programmes that have been rolling out under the current New Labour government. The New Deals are apparently gender-neutral, open to all operating through an Employment Service which has a commitment to the promotion of equal opportunities. However, the very design of the programmes results in a significant gender imbalance in the programmes and in expenditure on the different programmes.

Participants in the two principal New Deals- the New Deal for Young People (NDYP) and the New Deal for the Long Term Unemployed (NDLTU)—are conditional on a particular duration of registered unemployment. However, women, especially women in couples, are less likely to register as unemployed and where they do so, are more likely to register for short period of time. By conditioning access on registered unemployment, NDYP and NDLTU have written into their design a typically male pattern of absence from the labour market and as a result women form a small proportion of participants on these two programmes. Up to the end of 1999, 27% of participants in the NDYP were women (compared to 29% of the stock of eligible claimant unemployed at that period) and just 16% of participants in the NDLTU are women (compared to 15% of the eligible claimant unemployed) (see Rake 2001)).

It could be argued that there is no inherent bias within these New Deals as the sex composition of participants reflects reasonably closely the composition of the claimant unemployed. However, evidence sug-

gests that women's lower representation among the claimant unemployed and their shorter spells of unemployment when registered do not reflect any greater economic or employment opportunity. According to Rake, for example, analysis of the period 1990 to 1994 showed that 22% of women received nothing but low or no pay every year compared to 8% of men (Rake 2001:7). By conditioning access on the length of the most recent period of registered unemployment, the current structure of the New Deals cannot address this 'low pay-no pay cycle' (Rake 2001:7). In sum, the creation of economic and employment opportunity for the claimant unemployed is not equivalent to the creation of opportunity for those disadvantaged in the labour market.

2.2 New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) and New Deal for Partners of the Unemployed (NDPU)

Other New Deals target groups who are not found among the claimant unemployed and have a predominantly female clientele. For example, 95% of participants in the New Deal for Lone Parents (NDLP) are women. There is also a New Deal for Partners of the Unemployed, and as this rolls out the majority of its participants will be women. This gender division between the different New Deals might not be problematic, were it not for the fact that each New Deal offers a quite distinct range of options to participants and entails a distinct level of expenditure. The two New Deals with the high level of male participation offer, in combination with an element of compulsion, the most extensive ranges of options. NDYP operates a series of options—including a generous option for training—which are to be extended to NDLTU following the 2000 Budget.

The training option has proven to be very popular—by the end of

November 1999, more than two-fifths of those on options within the NDYP were on the training option. By contrast, the emphasis in the NDLP and NDPU is on support and guidance offered by a personal adviser. For example, the NDLP offers measures such as free childcare to cover interviews as well as advice on building up a successful c.v.

The training provision in the NDLP is currently limited—by the end of November 1999, just 7% of all lone parents who had attended an initial interview undertook training (Rake 2001:8). Among the New Deals, provision is qualitatively different: where there is compulsion to participate in the programme there is more thorough provision, especially for training. However, from the point of view of the efficiency of the programme overall, one might want to match provision with the actual needs of the participants, for example the need to acquire basic skills and literacy and to maintain and upgrade those skills in employment. From this perspective, there is no clear logic in offering less

Table 1 : Spending by programme on the New Deals for the jobless (£million)

	98-99	99-00	00-01	00-02	02-03	total 97-02
New Deal for 18-24 year olds	50	210	320	440	460	1480
New Deal for the over 25s	0	10	110	160	320	600
New Deal for 50 plus	0	0	0	20	20	40
New Deal for lone parents	0	20	40	60	90	220
New Deal for disabled people	0	10	30	90	80	210
New Deal for partners of Unemployed people	0	0	10	20	20	50

Source : Rake (2000)

Table 2 : Allocation of expenditure on the New Deals, 1997-2002

Young unemployed	57%
Long term unemployed	23%
Lone parents	8%
Partners of the unemployed	2%
Other New Deals	10%

Source: Rake (2001)

comprehensive options to lone parents than to the young unemployed.

There is an issue also about the normative content of these programmes and whether they are being used to reinforce or challenge sex stereotyping of employment. In the UK, gender stereotyping of the jobs taken by New Deal participants is not seen as problematic (Rake 2001: 8). A much publicized option for lone parents is to take employment in the childcare sector, with just under an quarter of those lone parents who found employment working in personal and protective services, with clerical, secretarial, sales and routine unskilled jobs accounting for most of the remainder.

In terms of the expenditure the different New Deals have been assigned very different shares of the £2.6 billion that has been assigned to the programme over five years (an annual spend of around 0.05% of GDP). As table 1, 2 shows, the bulk of the money (57%) goes to young people, while the long-term unemployed receive a further 23%. The remaining fifth is shared between the other schemes. Lone parents receive a mere 8% of all New Deal spending while the New Deal for partners of the unemployed commands just 2%.

3. Use of time and care-giving responsibility

— Micro-level focus on taxes and budgets impact

As we mentioned above, gender budgets have included ‘systematically’ recognizing care work in budgetary and policy terms, because care work, both unpaid and paid, is characterized by a strong gender division of labour. The provision of care activities is of such a significant magnitude that it can be fundamental in determining budgetary impacts (Sharp 2001).

Susan Himmelweit notes taxes and benefits impacts on peoples' time use, employment incentives and care-giving responsibilities:

Care-giving responsibilities do not disappear when a person takes a job. So if some of her wages have to be spent on providing some form of child-care, the net income effect of taking a job is changed and work incentives may be rendered ineffective. Further, child-care does not take care of all parental responsibilities; there may still be a great deal to do outside working hours. The allocation of these responsibilities and therefore of demands on the time of different members of households is another aspect of intra-household inequality that gender impact assessment should consider (Himmelweit 2001: 66)

Time is divided not between paid work and leisure, that is the dichotomy that still pervades neo-classical economics, but between paid work, leisure and unpaid care (and more widely domestic) work. Typically, living standards depends not only on the level of wages, on the cost of living, but also on unpaid care work or care-giving responsibilities (Humphries 1977: 256). Yet mostly tax-benefit systems do not consider the output of unpaid care-giving work as a resource (warranting measurement).

Not to recognize domestic time as a resource implicitly treats women's and men's unpaid work in the household as a free resource to the economy. The single greatest losers in such a system are lone mothers. The acute dilemmas facing lone mothers in raising their children and earning a living as breadwinners whilst having no one to share the unpaid care work, constitute a challenge to welfare budgetary policy based on the male breadwinner model (Himmelweit 2001, Himmelweit and Humphries 2004, Lewis 1997, Lewis and Giullari 2005).

Care-giving responsibilities do not disappear as women enter the labour market. In fact, care work is essential in maintaining our 'social fabric', our sense of community, civil responsibility and the norms that in turn maintain trust, goodwill and social order, in which the economy as a whole operates (Himmelweit 2002: 53). And the family, as an institution, in which unpaid care labour is a source of welfare for its member, "has been shaped by the aspiration of people for personalized non-market methods of distribution and social interaction" (Humphries 1977: 251). The structure of family or the way of social reproduction are relatively autonomous from the market and the government (Humphries and Rubery 1984).

Further, as Himmelweit (2001) emphasized, men and women within the same household, or even women across households (lone mothers, working mothers, house-wives or a combination of these) tend to respond differently to incentives in the way of resources and policy. Welfare policy thus needs to integrate employment and care-responsibility (Rubery et al. 2001) and take account of different sorts of responses to proposed policy.

Conclusion—Towards a gender-sensitive political economy

The provisioning of caring service is a social as well as an economic issue. It has long left the original realm of their provisioning and are performed in all realms of the economy- in the individually private sector (family), in the civil society, in the public sector and an increasingly fraction in the market. The future of social and caring work has tremendous implications for human well-being. While such work may have been thought of as intellectually uninteresting because it was "naturally" abundant in supply, the profound changes taking place in

gender norms sharply call into the wisdom of continuing to neglect this area of study.

As we have considered above, two key principles of gender budget analysis are as follows:

- 1) the assessment of budget impact on an individual as well as household basis, and
- 2) the recognition of the economic contribution of unpaid care work, which is done primarily by women.

Thus gender budget is a key device for 'gender mainstreaming'. This includes, in particular, the assessment of the different influences of budgets on women and men. It is important for not only gender equality, but also for the wider goals of policy making. However, it is also important for us that we need to acknowledge that gender budgets is only a device to carry out a gender mainstreaming, therefore it is really necessary to analyze the structure of an existing society, as well as constructing new and gender sensitive political economy (Humphries 1998: 224) and, by doing so, to acknowledge more fully the relation between the market economy and the social economy, taking into account the significance of unpaid care activities for our society.

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