

Towards a Political Economy of Care

原, 伸子 / HARA, Nobuko

(出版者 / Publisher)

法政大学比較経済研究所 / Institute of Comparative Economic Studies, Hosei University

(雑誌名 / Journal or Publication Title)

Journal of International Economic Studies / Journal of International Economic Studies

(巻 / Volume)

21

(開始ページ / Start Page)

17

(終了ページ / End Page)

31

(発行年 / Year)

2007-03

(URL)

<https://doi.org/10.15002/00002042>

Towards a Political Economy of Care

Nobuko Hara

Faculty of Economics, Hosei University

Abstract

The family, within which unpaid care work is carried out mostly by women, is again an important topic. This paper investigates the meaning of unpaid care work in social reproduction, and examines the concept of economic efficiency. The ‘gender budget’, which is analyzed here from the macroeconomic perspective, is a gender mainstreaming device and a notable challenge to orthodox budgets in terms of integrating the care sector into the ordinary budget and thus making care work visible. It is also an attempt to convert economic efficiency to social efficiency. In so doing, it induces criticism of the methodology of modern economics. The paper emphasises that understanding requires us to recognize that the family is a 'key economic and social institution'(Himmelweit 2000) and moreover, that it has relative autonomy from the market economy(Humphries and Rubery 1984) in terms of welfare provision for family members. Care work performed mostly by women is not a passive, but an active and decisive factor in the social reproduction.

Keywords: care, economic efficiency, family, gender budget, social efficiency, welfare state

Introduction

Gøsta Esping-Andersen has written on the welfare state and the family from the comparative welfare regime perspective as follows:

“The political Economy paradigm, which so powerfully underpinned welfare state research in the 1980s, did little to resurrect interest in the family. Its analytical lens was fixed on the battle between state and market, and the family received mention only in so far as it was the nucleus of a class constituency or the beneficiary of distributive outcomes and de-commodification” (Esping-Andersen 1999: 45).

Esping-Andersen thus proposed a new political economy focused on the micro-behavior of the family in place of the macro-comparative political economy. His proposal was a response to the criticism brought by gender scholars against *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (Esping-Andersen 1990), which is recognized as a milestone in comparative welfare regime theory. Scholars (e.g. Lewis 1992, Orloff 1993, Sainsbury 1999) working from the gender perspective argued that the welfare social policy reproduced the gender discrimination and that Esping-Andersen had failed to address this aspect. Esping-Andersen acknowledged that this criticism should receive considerably more attention, mainly because it was a salutary reminder that the family is the core component of any welfare regime. (Esping-Andersen

1999) It is now recognized that understanding the relationship between market and family is of great importance in a context of ‘the crisis of welfare states’ and of ‘the pro-family movement’ that has spread in the advanced countries since the 1980s.

Behind this issue lies the fact that although huge numbers of married women, including those with young children, do enter paid employment, the vast majority of them take on jobs that fitted around rather than challenged their domestic commitment. (Himmelweit 2000: *xvii*) Indeed, the growth of part-time work for women can be seen an example of the relatively stable gender norm.

Thus, the family and the care work which is carried out mostly by women within family are again becoming important issues in both theory and policy-making. This paper is an investigating what the meaning of unpaid care work is, and examines the concept of economic efficiency which is used to measure a paid work in market economy.

The first part of the paper provides a general overview of research on unpaid domestic work, from labour to care, conducted in recent decades. It then analyzes the gender budget as an example in terms of how the care sector can be made visible. It finally consider the relationship between the family and the market economy.

1. From labour to care

An analysis of family organization and unpaid household labour has been the critical issue in Feminist Economics since its beginning,¹ and I maintain for three reasons.

The discovery of unpaid work

Firstly, debates about the concept of labour within a Marxian conceptual framework took place in the 1970s. I refer to the ‘value controversy’² and the ‘domestic labour debate’. In the last twenty years, however, there has been remarkably little progress in terms of developing the theoretical implications of these discussions (for a recent critical summary of the ‘domestic labour debate’ see Gardiner 2000). Jean Gardiner, who has been a key contributor to these debates from the outset, has reflected on these issues and their relevance to the study of gender and work in the 1990s. She writes as follows:

“The ensuing ‘domestic labour debate’ was subject to much criticism. However, one of the starting points for that debate remains valid, namely that a feminist political economy can only be developed fully if a way is found to integrate domestic labour into economics”. (Gardiner 2000: 80)

¹ The title of the 1990’s American Economic Association conference was ‘*Does Feminism Find its own Comfortable Place in Economics ?*’, which is memorable as the first conference with ‘*feminism*’ in its title in the US. Thereafter, the International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) was founded in 1992. Then subsequently, the first issue of ‘*Feminist Economics*’, an official publication of IFFE, was published in 1995. This was a methodological challenge to traditional economics in terms of “opening the gates that have for so long protected economic theories from fundamental critique” (Strassmann 1995: 1. See also Hara 2003).

A memorable event was also in Japan in terms of the critique of traditional economics. JAFFE (Japanese Association for Feminist Economics) was founded in 2004, and its first conference was held at Hosei University in Tokyo.

² From 1972 to 1976 or so considerable efforts were made to determine what might be meant by socialist economics. This involved a resurgence of interest in and controversy about Marxist economics, with extensive debates on value theory, productive and unproductive labour, the theory of accumulation and crisis, and the theory of imperialism. Mohun (ed., 1994) reflects on the value controversy and has its origins in these debates with postscripts stating the present point of view of the authors.

As Gardiner pointed out, the main purpose of the domestic debate is to integrate domestic labour into economics, although at that time analysis instead concentrated on the difference between them. This view has led to the broadening of the concept of labour from the dichotomy of labour between paid labour and leisure to the trichotomy among paid labour, unpaid care labour and leisure. A helpful way forward for feminist political economy is, as Gardiner suggests, to refocus on theorizing households as care providers (Gardiner 2000: 81).

At the same time, however, the domestic labour debate failed to recognize the precise meaning of unpaid care work in terms of social reproduction. This was because the debate was concerned with the precise nature of the structural relationship between patriarchal social relation and capitalism and claimed that women's responsibility for unpaid domestic labour was the key to their oppression by capitalism and men (Hartmann 1979).³ However, the way of articulation between patriarchal relation and capitalism is somewhat 'ambiguous' (Humphries 1995): that is, this issue based on feminist standpoint theory gives rise to the dichotomy in which the domestic labour is different from and is not tied into the market economy. As Jane Humphries (1977, 1984) has argued, it is crucial for understanding the social meaning of unpaid care work that the class struggle has historically played the active role in the survival of domestic labour. Humphries rightly points out that it was unbalanced to attribute the survival of domestic labour to the power of capital alone and to ignore the ability of the working class family to exert an influence on the standard of living and the survival of their family structure. Unpaid care work ensures the welfare of the members of family, therefore, the standard of living is different from the wage level both historically and theoretically. Thus, the question arises as to why the family organization and domestic labour have continued to exist.

From the mid-1980s, it has been realized that the domestic division of labour had a tenacity of its own and that the family as an institution is not only responsive but also reactive to the labour market. Thus the emphasis on care and the theorizing it within economics is becoming 'a defining feature of the new field of Feminist Economics that has grown up in the 1990s' (Himmelweit 2000: *xviii*). Further, Himmelweit writes on the methodological question of the care as follows: ⁴

“Although feminist economists deal with all issues concerning women from a variety of theoretical positions, they are also engaged in a continuing methodological quest for a way of encompassing care within economic analysis. Care is becoming seen as an important economic issue at a macro-level too, as it is increasingly being recognized by policy-

³ Heidi Hartmann (1979) put forward a typical patriarchal theory, namely that the patriarchy exists in articulation with capitalism and that men have organized to ensure that they maintain patriarchal power within the workforce and home. Hartmann's analysis belongs to the feminist standpoint tradition. (Humphries 1995: *xvii*)

⁴ Himmelweit (2000) also writes on the methodology of value theory in the postscript in reference to her former joint paper with S. Mohun, 'The Reality of Value', from the present point of view. She writes as follows:

“...value theory has not been a major preoccupation of mine in the intervening fifteen years, so looking back on this led me to consider the way in which its general approach has been pertinent to my work in other areas. One idea stand out for me: the notion of a *real abstraction* (emphasis added), the idea that behind the abstraction that we build into theory, as abstraction in thought, should lie a real process that carried out that abstraction in reality. This idea that all theoretical categories must be historically grounded was very useful to me in developing my work on the relation between production and reproduction...” (Himmelweit 2000: 171)

According to Himmelweit, a real abstraction is the idea that all theoretical categories must be historically grounded. I think that this idea also is useful for analysing the meaning of care labour, because the difference of explanation of care among economists, in particular between New Household Economics and Feminist Economics, lies their basis in the difference of both methodology. We need to recognize that methods carry their own ontologies (see Lawson 2005 and his article in this volume).

makers that any individual's labour market availability depends on the extent to which they or others are carrying out caring responsibilities" (Himmelweit 2000: *xviii*).⁵

Critique of New Household Economics

Secondly, from the outset feminist economics has challenged the New Household Economics (founded by G. Becker in the 1960s) regarding the concept of family organization and the interrelationship between family and market economy. The New Household Economics highlighted the importance of the household as the relevant unit of decision making with significant implications for the analysis of labour supply. However, "the New Household Economics was not new in terms of approach or method. The novelty lay in the domain: the application of standard microeconomics to choices made within the household" (Humphries 1995: *xix*).

Becker has written on the sexual division of labour within the family and the allocation of time between alternatives as follows:

"Increasing returns from specialized human capital is a powerful force creating a division of labor in the allocation of time and investment in human capital between married men and married women. Moreover, since child care and housework are more effort intensive than leisure and other household activities, married women spent less effort on each hour of market work than married men working the same number of hours. Hence, married women have lower hourly earnings than married men with the same market human capital, and they economize on the effort expended on market work by seeking less demanding jobs" (Becker 1985).

This is the well-known preamble to Becker's "Human Capital, Effort, and the Sexual Division of Labor" and it has been used as a popular explanation for gender gaps in the labour market, such as the sexual wage differential and the disparity between married women and unmarried women. According to Becker, a household economy is one in which the wife (or husband) invests life (housekeeping) time and market goods, and undertakes household economic production so that a firm can invest labour, raw materials, and capital in a market and so that market production can be performed. The concept of 'household's commodities' expresses this logic exactly (Becker 1965).

Feminist Economics has been largely concerned with developing a critique of mainstream economics from within the neoclassical economics.⁶ For instance, Gustafsson (1997) has presented the following three versions of the feminist approach. The first rejects neoclassical theory and argues that there is a need for an alternative feminist economics. The second version argues that the feminist perspective is applied to an existing economic theory and different policy implications will be drawn. The third version argues that feminist economics will improve neoclassical theory by removing its male bias and may thus reveal mechanism by which the overall efficiency of the economy can be increased. The second version and third version are based on the neoclassical economics' framework and in particular on methodological individualism and efficiency.

Thus, feminist neoclassical economics displays the following two characteristics. First, it seeks to improve the neoclassical economics by using tools of such as game theory with gen-

⁵ Incorporation of the gender perspective into time use study has led to the measuring of unpaid work in SNA 93.

⁶ The Out of the Margin International Conference in Amsterdam in 1993 brought together hundreds of feminist economists, explicitly to examine feminist perspectives on neoclassical economics (Kuiper and Sap 1995, and also see Gardiner 2000).

der awareness. Second, however, it is essentially based on the neoclassical economic method. It seems that feminist neoclassical economics is theoretically based on the methodological individualism and politically applies the feminist perspective to an existing economic theory. It is sure this prompts the question as to whether feminist neoclassical economics may not be inconsistent with neoclassical economics in terms of methodology. (see Humphries 1998)

Hence, as I said above, feminist economics has been engaged in a continuing methodological quest for the relationship between family and market economy. Care is becoming seen as an important economic issue, both methodologically and politically.

The theory of the welfare state from the gender perspective

Thirdly, to be observed is ‘an exciting reorientation in welfare state research’ (Sainsbury 1999: 1) in 1990s. Diane Sainsbury writes as follows:

“The gender division of welfare, previously a neglected area of study in comparative scholarship, is currently a major focus of interest. Critical to this reorientation have been feminist critiques of mainstream analysis of welfare states and the combining of feminist and comparative perspectives” (Sainsbury 1999: 1).

The people, those who have engaged in welfare state theory from a gender perspective, have been focused on gender equality and care. Theoretically this focus concerns the relationship between the family and market economy. Although social democracy has a tradition of classical liberalism (i.e. libertarianism), its aim has been to achieve not only at freedom but also at social equality.

At the same time, however, social democracy has been excluded the family from justice on the ground that it pertains to the private sphere. The problem here is the public/private distinction. Carol Pateman’s (Pateman 1988) influential approach explains women’s exclusion from democratic citizenship and their specific inclusion as mothers as resulting from the public/private division in modern democracies. Sinn (2000) has called it the ‘patriarchal hypothesis’. More recently the focus in the arena of gender politics has gradually shifted towards women’s agency and women’s inclusion in democratic institutions. Sinn writes:

“Today feminist debate about the role of women’s agency is often based on a normative vision that aims at increasing women’s political participation and representation in politics, for example through the quota system and the legislation of parity” (Sinn 2000: 3).

The public/private distinction concerns the relationship between market (paid work) and family (unpaid work, i.e., care work) from the economic point of view. Gender welfare theorists, such as Lewis (1992, 1997, 1998), Sainsbury (1996, 1999), Orloff (1993), Flaser (1994, 1997) have discussed the idea that any further development of the concept of ‘welfare regime’ must incorporate the relationship between unpaid as well as paid work and welfare. Consideration of the private/domestic is crucial to a gendered understanding of welfare because historically women have typically gained entitlements from their dependent status within the family as wives and mothers.

Esping-Andersen (1990, 1999, 2002) proposed in his extremely influential book (1990) a classification of welfare state regimes in industrial countries based on a ‘de-commodification score’ calculated as the degree to which “a service is rendered as a matter of social right, and when a person can maintain a livelihood without reliance on the market”. Esping-

Andersen's aim was to assess the extent to which welfare state regimes would support an individual incapable of wresting a living from the market place, due to unemployment, illness, or old age. The problem, to which many of gender welfare theorists have stressed (in particular, powerfully criticized by Lewis and Sainsbury) was that while unemployment, disability, and old-age insurance might keep most men above the poverty line, in practice these programmes often did not cover women well, and did not even attempt to protect them from the consequences of years spent in child rearing, elderly care, and other unpaid, but socially necessary, forms of labour. Esping-Andersen (1999) sincerely responded to people, those who had criticized 'de-commodification' for lacking gender perspective, with an analysis of 'de-familization', or welfare state policies that unburden the household and diminish individuals' welfare dependence on kinship.

2. Gender budget: macroeconomic analysis of care work

Gender mainstreaming

The gender budget is a device for 'gender mainstreaming'. It is intended to introduce a gender perspective into the theory and its core concepts, and into 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 Action⁷ 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, should 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 to say, 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).

This section suggests a framework for the gender budget by drawing the comparison between the ordinary budget and the gender budget. In so doing, it explores some implications of including the domestic sphere as a sector 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.

Macro-level focus in the gender budget

The methodology of the gender budget has a macro-level focus, in that it addresses political economy primarily from a structural perspective. This macro level focus means that the analysis is able to engage directly with the concerns of macroeconomics, that is the branch of economics which analyses money, goods and services. By focusing on the 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 con-

⁷ 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 macro-economic policies and development strategies that address the needs and efforts of women in poverty.

trast, a micro level approach, such as an analysis of family decision making, must engage directly with this issue.⁸

As Elson (1998) has pointed out, 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 were self evidently exogenous. Macro level analysis, nevertheless, still holds the promise of being able to illuminate some of the constraints on individuals and to produce 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).

I begin by drawing a comparison between the ordinary budget and the gender budget and then consider the advantageous of a macro level focus with respect to a micro level one.

Ordinary budget and gender budget

Government budgets are clear reflections of the government priorities. The budget is the single most important economic policy instrument of a government, and as such, therefore, it can be a powerful tool in transforming the political logic of a country to meet the needs of its poorest groups, 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 the domestic sector into the ordinary budget as a productive agency.

Gender budgets comprise a variety of processes and tools aimed at analyzing financial allocations on proposed policies according to gender and at facilitating an assessment of the gendered impacts of government budgets. The focus has been on checking, funding and auditing government budgets in terms of their impact on women and girls, and on gender relations. For example, The Women’s Budget Group (WBG)⁹ in the UK has established consultation procedures with HM Treasury (the UK Finance Ministry) which involves annual meetings on the Budget and on the Pre-Budget Statement with both government officials and Ministers, as well as meetings on more specialist topics. Such topics including the new tax credits, child care funding and productivity (Himmelweit 2001 and 2002, Rake 2002, Women’s Budget Group 2004).

The essential difference between ordinary budget analysis and a gender budget analysis is that the latter recognizes: firstly, the importance of individuals as well as households as units of analysis, and secondly, the importance of an economy’s ‘reproductive’ sector, where much labour is unpaid and 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 the industrial economies, undergoes continual change and restructuring. An understanding of the internal processes within the three sectors, and the linkages among them, is necessary to inform the development of eco-

⁸ For example, Gardiner has sought to expand the concept of human capital. She writes, “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 analyzed the household decision making process. See also Amartya Sen (1990), who describes a family as ‘Cooperative Conflicts’.

⁹ The Women’s Budget Group has lobbied successive governments on gender and economic policy since 1989. It is independent organisations that brings together academics 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)

conomic policy.

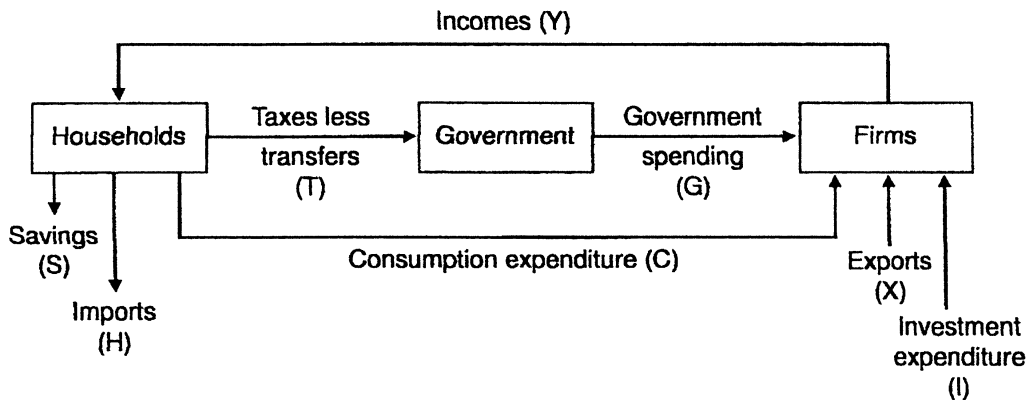


FIGURE 1. The circular flow of national money income.

Source: Elson (1998 : 200)

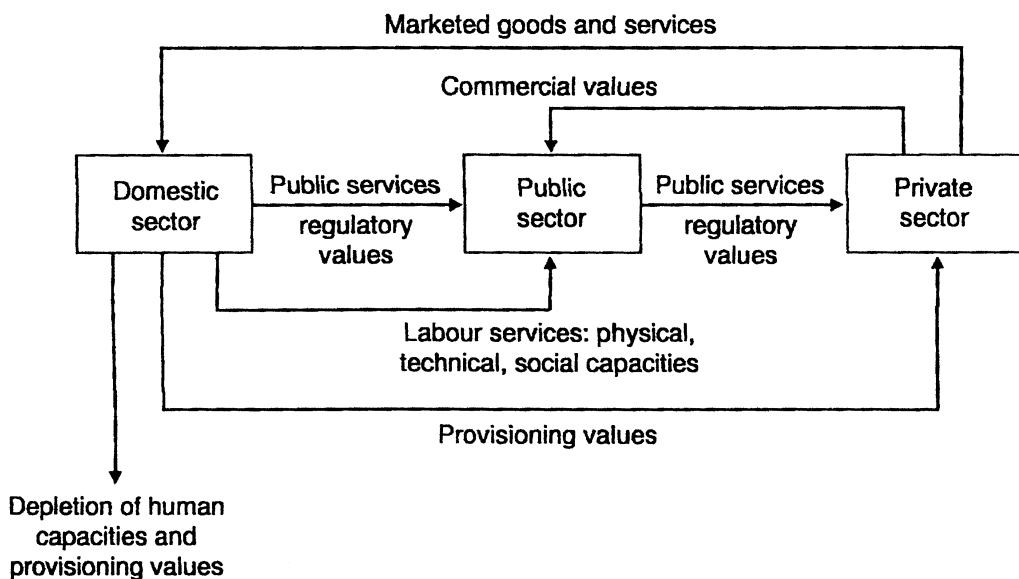


FIGURE 2. The circular flow of output of goods and services

Source: Elson (1998 : 203)

Annalysis of Figure 1

Mainstream macroeconomics analyses the interrelations between the domestic, private and public sectors using 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 the government. Households then spent 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 purchase from taxes and government borrowing.

In the 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 the government and to households, or exported or used for investments are 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 by firms, which it depicts 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 (investments and exports and government expenditure). Taxes minus transfers are a leakage, and government expenditure and injection. Because the interaction takes the form of flows of money, these 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 accounts' (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 uncommodified social norms, and so on) is taken for granted, and it is assumed that neither work nor investment is required to maintain these resources.

Analysis of Figure 2

Figure 2 shows a circular flow of output and values among 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 emphasises not financial income and expenditure, but the production of goods and services and values. It highlights 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 citizens.¹⁰ This is in contrast with Figure 1, where firms are the source of output, while the government simply redistributes income through taxation, benefits and expenditure, and households simply consume. Instead, there it is recognized 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. Conventional national accounts do measure the output from the public sector as well as from private sector, but they exclude the output from the domestic sector.

As we mentioned above, the differences between the ordinary budget and the gender budget are indubitably important. The production of labour capacities (physical, technical and social) depletes human energies, which must be replenished 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 and provisioning values will be destroyed and they will drain away from the circular flow, as shown in Figure 2.

It should also be acknowledged that there are losses and gains in macro level analysis of government budgets. A macro economic approach can treat aggregate stocks and flows of

¹⁰ Gardiner (1998) suggested that we might be able to adopt a concept of human capital to domestic unpaid labour in a household with reference to the implication of this sentence.

money, goods and services as relatively autonomous from any particular characterization of agency (Elson 1998: 191). Therefore, it is particularly important to complement such analysis with micro level analysis. Humphries (1998) pointed out that, although, children have ‘public good’ characteristics, parents do not have children in order to produce a labour force for the public and private sectors. However they cannot exclude the state and business from the benefits deriving from the availability of a future labour force. These benefits spill over from the domestic sector and are not channeled by the circuit of the market of the tax-and-benefit system. The relationship among family, market and state and the relative autonomy of the family, is also important (Humphries and Rubery 1984, see also Hara 2004).

3. Use of time and care-giving responsibility

Gender budgets entail ‘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 may be fundamental in determining budgetary impacts (Sharp 2001).

Susan Himmelweit notes that 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, namely, the dichotomy that still pervades neoclassical 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 and 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 from unpaid care-giving work as a resource (warranting measurement).

Not recognizing domestic time as a resource is implicitly to treat women’s and men’s unpaid work in the household as a free resource for 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 the ‘social fabric’, the 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 work 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 the family or the mode 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 household (lone mothers, working mothers, house-wives or a combination of these) tend to respond differently to incentives in the form of resources and policy. Welfare policy must consequently integrate employment and care-responsibility (Rubery et al. 2001) and take account of different sorts of responses to proposed policy.

4. The relative autonomy of the family

As mentioned above, the allocation of tasks within the family and care work has a tenacity of its own and cannot be seen as merely responsive to the demands of the labour market: it should also be viewed as reactive to it. This problem links with the form taken by the relationship between the family and the market economy. I consequently advocate here the relative autonomy approach to the roll of family in the production system as a whole, an approach was proposed by Humphries (1977) and Humphries and Rubery (1984).¹¹

Humphries and Rubery (1984) have examined the main approaches to the analysis of the family system from the methodological point of view, using the criterion of methodological consistency. They show that across the whole spectrum of theoretical approaches, from neo-classical to Marxist and feminist, broadly similar methodologies have been employed to analyse the relationship between the spheres of production and reproduction have been employed (ibid. : 331). According to Humphries and Rubery, the existing literature applies two opposing but equally inappropriate approaches to analysis of the family system: approaches which they label as *absolute autonomy* and *an reductionist/functionalist*. In the former approach, the family is taken as 'given' and independent of the production system, which must adapt to and operate within its constraints. In the latter approach, the family is an integral and adaptable part of the broader production system and is essentially a dependent variable within the economic system. Humphries and Rubery views the relative autonomous approach as the appropriate one with which to analyse the relationship between the spheres of production and reproduction.

Thus, this approach's validity is paradoxically assumed on the basis of the failure of existing studies "to apply their *absolute autonomy or reductionist/functionalist* approaches consistently or plausibly" (ibid. : 332) Humphries and Rubery maintain that the '*ad hoc adjustment*' of existing studies leads to swings between one methodology and another in order to make sense of empirical realities. The questioning here is which approach is able to explain the role of the family in shaping the structure and the development of the economic system from the methodological point of view.

Relative autonomy approach

In what does the relative autonomy approach consist? In contrast to the absolute autonomy and reductionsit/functionalist approaches, Humphries and Rubery assert that the aim of the relative autonomy approach is to develop an appropriate historical treatment of the family, in which the productive system is one important conditioning factor. The four fundamental principles of the relative autonomy approaches are stated by Humphries and Rubery as follows

¹¹ This part is largely based on Hara (2004: 98-100).

(ibid. : 339):

The first principle is that the family is articulated to the production sphere and is an integral part of the economy. The demand-side structure of the labour market, i.e. market economy, cannot be conceived independently of its supply-side structure, i.e. family. The latter is not autonomously determined, as under patriarchy, nor it does smoothly respond, predictably and accommodatingly to demand-side impulses.

The second principle is that the supply-side structure is relatively independent of the sphere of production and that both the demand-side and the supply-side structures must adapt to each other.

The third principle is that the relationship between the spheres of production system and the family system can only be understood historically and is not predetermined.

The fourth principle is that the relationship must be analysed within a non-functionalist perspective: that is, a perspective in which the family system can and does adapt to the benefit of both capital and labour, and to the benefit or cost of different elements within the working class.

These principles allow for the development of a historical and dynamic analysis of the interaction between the spheres of production and reproduction.

The relative autonomy approach in practice

Humphries and Rubery also examine the practical meanings of the four principles of the relative autonomy of the family. The most important theoretical implication, I believe, is that the family is a core element in economic analysis and that its existence, therefore, serves to be severe the direct linkage between the wage level and the standard of living, i.e. the level of welfare for family member. Indeed, as Humphries and Rubery write, “theories of value and distribution need to take into account the structures and organization of the family as well as that of the labour market” (Humphries and Rubery 1984: 341).

Furthermore, Humphries’ study (1977) on the struggle over the real wages in the late nineteenth century suggests that the family played an important role by protecting the individual against the harshness of the market economy, and by providing a basis on which the working class could organize itself to raise its standard of living, both by protecting real wages on the labour market and by increasing domestic care labour.¹²

The family as an institution, has been shaped by people’s aspirations for personalized non-market methods of distribution and social interaction. To ignore the role that these aspiration and beliefs have played in guiding human conduct and in shaping the class struggle is to fail to understand the working class family and its persistency. (Humphries 1977)

This consideration of the relative autonomy approach to family introduces its significance in practice.

First the organization of consumption on a family basis means that participation in the labour market and the share of non-waged and waged work within the family can be varied, and potentially controlled, by the family unit (Humphries and Rubery 1984, 341. see also Picchio del Mersato 1981). Thus the relative autonomous system of social reproduction is able to shape the path of economic development.

Second, the theory of value and distribution should take account of the structure and

¹² The controversy on the family wage between Humphries and Hartmann (Hartmann 1976, Humphries 1977) should, I think, be revised today in terms of care economy. Humphries emphasized that the family wage was formed through the struggle over real wage at that time.

organization of the family as well as those of the labour market. Neglect of the family sphere of the economic system is “surprising in view of the need within the major economic paradigms for a theory of distribution” (ibid., 339). Here, the family is not necessarily the modern family, but a network of social relationship which must be produced and sustained by social practices reinforcing reciprocal kinship relations.

Conclusion

The provisioning of caring service is a social as well as an economic issue (Jochimsen 2003). It has long left its original realm and is performed in all domains of the economy – in the individually private sector (family), in the civil society, in the public sector and in an increasingly large fraction of 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 question the wisdom of continuing to neglect this area of study.

As discussed above, the gender budget makes care work visible and its two key principles are the following:

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

Thus the gender budget is a key device for gender mainstreaming. This entails, in particular, the assessment of the differing influences of budgets on women and men, which is important not only for gender equality, but also for the wider goals of policy making. However, we should also acknowledge that the gender budget is only a device for a gender mainstreaming. It is therefore really necessary to analyze the structure of an existing society, as well as to construct a new and gender sensitive political economy (Humphries 1998: 224), namely a political economy of care, and, by so doing, we can recognize more fully the relationship between the market economy and the family, taking account of significance of unpaid care activities for our society. And moreover, I demonstrated above that an appropriate methodology to analyse the relationship between them is ‘the relative autonomy of the family’ approach (Humphries and Rubery 1984).

References

- Alberda, Randy, Susan Himmelweit and Jane Humphries (2004) ‘The Dilemmas of Lone Motherhood: Key Issues for Feminist Economics,’ *Feminist Economics*, Vol.10 (2), 1-7.
- Becker, G (1985) ‘Human Capital, Efforts, and the Sexual Division of labor’, *Journal of labor Economics*, 3 (1), January, Supplement, 33-58.
- Dijkstra, A. Geske and Janneke Plantenga (eds.), *Gender and Economics*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Elson, Diane (1998) “The Economic, the Political and the Domestic: Businesses, States and Households in the Organisation of Production”, *New Political Economy*, Vol.3, No. 2.
- (2001) “Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives: Key Dimensions and Practical Examples”, *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies. Concepts and Experiences*, UNIFEM, 15-29,.
- (2002) “Within a Context of Economic Reform”, in Debbie Budlender, Diane Elson, Guy Hewitt

- and Tanni Mukhopadhyay, *Gender Budget Make Cents: Understanding gender responsive budgets*, Commonwealth Secretariat, 23-48.
- Esping-Andersen, Gøsta (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- (1999) *Social Foundation of Postindustrial Economics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Fine, Ben (1992) *Women's Employment and the Capitalist Family*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Flaser, Nancy (1994) "After the Family Wage", *Political Theory*, Vol.22, No.4, 591-618.
- (1997) *Justice Interruptus*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Folbre, Nancy (1994) *Who pays for the Kids?*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Folbre, Nancy and Heidi Hartmann (1988) "The Rhetoric of self-interest: Ideology and gender in economic theory", in Arjo Klamer, Donald N. McCloskey and Robert M. Solow (eds.), *The consequences of economic rhetoric*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Folbre, Nancy and Julie A. Nelson (2000) "For Love or Money—Or Both", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, Vol.14, Nr.4.
- Folbre, Nancy and Thomas E. Weisskopf (1998) "Did Father know best: Families, markets, and the supply of caring labor", in Avner Ben-Ner and Louis Putterman (eds.), *Economics, values, and organization*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gardiner, Jean (1997) *Gender, Care and Economics*, London: Macmillan Press.
- (1998) "Beyond human capital: Households in the macroeconomy", *New Political Economy*, Vol. 3, No. 2.
- (2000) "Domestic Labour Revisited: a Feminist Critique of Marxist Economics", in *Inside the Household*, Suzan Himmelweit (ed.), London: Macmillan Press, 80-101.
- Gustafsson, Siva (1997) "Feminist Neo-Classical Economics: Some Examples", in A.Geske Dijkstrat and Janneke Plantenga (eds.), *Gender and Economics*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Hara, Nobuko (2004) "Rethinking Market and Family", *Journal of International Economic Studies*, No.18, The Institute of Comparative Studies, Hosei University, 91-102.
- Himmelweit, Susan (1995) "Discovery of 'Unpaid Work': The Social Consequences of the Expansion of 'Work' ", *Feminist Economics* 1 (2), 1-19.
- (2001) "Tools for Budget Impact Analysis: Taxes and Benefits", *Gender Budget Initiatives*, UNIFEM, 62-69.
- (2002a) "Economic Theory, Norms and the Care Gap, or: Why Do Economists Become Parents?" in Alan Carling, Simon Duncan and Rosalind Edwards (eds.), *Analysing Families: Morality and Rationality in Policy and Practice*, London and New York: Routledge.
- (2002b), "Making Visible the Hidden Economy: The Case for Gender-Impact Analysis of Economic Policy", *Feminist Economics*, Vol.8 (1), 49-70.
- (2003) "An evolutionary approach to feminist economics: two different models of caring", in Drucilla K. Barker and Edith Kuiper (eds.), *Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Economics*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Humphries, Jane (1977) "Class struggle and the persistence of the working-class family", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 1, 241-258.
- (ed.) (1995) *Gender and Economics*, Aldershot: Edward Elger.
- (1998) "Towards a family-friendly Economics", *New Political Economy*, Vol.3, No.2, 223-240.
- Humphries, Jane and Jill Rubery (1984) "The reconstruction of the supply side of the labour market: the relative autonomy of social reproduction", *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 331-346.
- Jochimsen, Maren A. (2003) "Integrating vulnerability: on the impact of caring on economic theorizing", in Drucilla K. Barker and Edith Kuiper (eds.), *Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Economics*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Lawson, Tony (1999a) "Feminism, Realism, and Universalism", *Feminist Economics*, 5 (2), 25-59.

- (1999b) “Developments in Economics as Realist Social Theory”, in Steve Fleetwood (ed.) *Critical Realism in Economics*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Lewis, Jane (1992) “Gender and the Development of Welfare Regimes”, *Journal of European Social Policy*, 2 (3).
- (1997) “Gender and Welfare Regimes: Further Thought”, *Social Policies*, Summer 1997, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 160-177.
- (ed.) (1998) *Gender, Social Care and Welfare State Restructuring in Europe*, Ashgate: Aldershot.
- Lewis and Susanna Giullari (2005) “The adult worker model family, gender equality and care: the search for new policy principles and the possibilities and problems of a capabilities approach”, *Economy and Society*, Vol.34, Nr.1, 76-104.
- Mohun, Simon (ed.) (1994) *Debates in Value Theory*, New York: St.Martin’s Press.
- Orloff, A. Shola (1993) “Gender and Social Rights of Citizenship: the Comparative Analysis of Gender Relationships and Welfare States”, *American Sociological Review*, Vol.58.
- Pateman, Carole (1988) *The Sexual Contract*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Picchio, del Mercato (1981) *Social Reproduction*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rake, Katherine (2000) “Into the Mainstream? Why Gender Audit is an Essential Tool for Policymakers”, *New Economy*, 7, Nr.2.
- (2001) “Introducing a Human Dimension to the Economy: Engendering the Budget”, Paper prepared for: A Gender Agenda: Asia-Europe Dialogue, New Visions and Perspectives for Women and Men, Chiba, Japan.
- (2002) “Gender Budget: The Experience of the UK’s Women’s Budget Group”, Paper prepared for the conference “Gender Balance –Equal Finance”, Basel, Switzerland.
- Rubery, Jill, Mark Smith, Dominique Anxo and Lennart Flood (2001) “The Future European Labor Supply: The Critical Role of the Family”, *Feminist Economics*, 7 (3). 33-69.
- Sainsbury, Diane (1999) *Gender and Welfare State Regimes*, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sen, Amartya K. (1990) “Gender and Cooperative Conflicts”, in Irene Tinker (ed.), *Persistent Inequalities*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sharp, Rhonda (2001) “Moving Forward: Multiple Strategies and Guiding Goals”, in UNIFEM, *Gender Budget Initiatives: Strategies, Concepts and Experience*, 87-98.
- (1999) “Women’s Budgets”, in Janice Peterson and Margaret Lewis, *Feminist Economics*, Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar, 764-770.
- Siim, Birte (2000) *Gender and Citizenship*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Strassmann, Dian (1995) “Editorial: Creating a Forum for Feminist Economic Inquiry”, *Feminist Economics* 1 (1).
- Women’s Budget Group (2004) “Response to the 2002 Pre Budget Report by the Women’s Budget Group with the Abstract by Sylvia Walby”, *The Japanese Journal of Evaluation Studies*, Vol.4, No.1, 42-52.