

ON HEIDI GOTTFRIED, GENDER, WORK, AND ECONOMY: UNPACKING THE GLOBAL ECONOMY (2012, POLITY PRESS, PP. 327)

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Gottfried², as the title indicates, challenges the central conceptions of economic sociology on work since she claims it is too narrow for use in understanding the more hidden consequences of the current economic crisis. Instead, the author clearly suggests using a feminist perspective. She argues that feminist theory and economic policy must go together if we want to understand that productive work does not occur accidentally somewhere in random time and space, out of the vacuum of economy. Similarly, a worker, let it be a woman or a man, is not a carefree person without the responsibilities of the private sphere. The image of the ideal (male) worker who only has a career and no private life still exists at workplaces. It is therefore necessary to use a broader and more gender-sensitive concept when analyzing the economy to see how the world of economy functions and how economic processes of labor activity work. In order to broaden and complete the definition of economy, the social reproduction that is typically performed by women in every corner of the globe has to be taken into account.

Gottfried not only gives a gendered analysis of work and economy, both empirically and theoretically, but facilitates understanding of how the gendered processes of economy evolve in a globalizing world. Gottfried uses the frame of social geography and adapts the concept of space and the spatial dimension of work in order to consider issues like migration processes, urbanization, and industrialization. The complex relationship between gender, work and

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economy is illustrated by showing how the long processes of change in the world of work, including the consequences of the economic crisis at the global level, impact locally, and what the effects of this are on gender and on class relations as well.

Case studies are included to assist with a discussion of the issue of the global economy and the increasing impact of global interconnections. There are case studies from the developed industrialized world, such as New York, London, Tokyo, and, of course, developing countries and recently-emerging global cities such as Kolkata, Beijing or Dubai are brought into the analysis. Finally, by including the different gendered aspects of work such as care work and emotional work, the book helps us to better understand the ongoing global shift towards a service-dominated economy.

The book contains four main parts; it starts with an introduction (Chapter 1), which is followed by three longer sections. The introduction includes a brief note about studying gender at work in the global economy by answering the two basic but yet complicated questions: ‘why study gender?’, and, ‘why make it global?’ This section explains why gender-neutral theories are not enough to fully understand examples from the economic crisis and introduce the mechanisms which systematically disadvantage women in work. Gottfried raises her theoretical points about gender which she then emphasizes through the whole book, using relevant examples. According to this theoretical perspective gender is not only useful for juxtaposing men and women’s different work experiences but, on the contrary, gender is more complicated in the sense that differences and disadvantages based on gender (and structured by gender) not only exist between men and women, but among women and men as well. Another crucial theoretical point is that gender-based differences depend on and intersect with other categories as well, such as class, race and national origin. It is emphasized that when applying the concept of gender, only discussing women’s experiences and ignoring men’s, places a limitation on our understanding of work and economy.

Part I. contains two chapters. First, Chapter 2 reconsiders the theoretical work of the classics, Marx and Weber, since they are the founders of the sociological theory of work and economy. By revisiting the theoretical legacy of Marx and Weber, the author wants to highlight their influence on the contemporary sociology of work and economy and to demonstrate that they use a vocabulary of non-gendered classes, institutions and work organizations. The use of the historical example of the Victorian woman is a good choice for demonstrating the gender perspective that is missing from economic theories, because it not only recaptures the image of women at that time (they were thought to be too fragile and delicate to do paid work, or,

additionally, participate in politics), but this image also shows that this 'ideal' image of women depended on the unacknowledged labor of working-class women and women of color. In providing this rather historical outline it is essential to understand the general assumption that work has been, and still is, captured in theories that do not consider gender to be an implicit masculine standard that is based on the notion of the different natures of men and women. The chapter ends by focusing on the three waves of feminism and takes into account their contributions to creating an analytical framework for examining gender relations.

Chapter 3 elaborates third wave feminism in more detail and seeks to answer the question why the private sphere must be analyzed to understand the economy in a wider sense. This section therefore gives an outline of how care work and domestic labor performed in the household is linked to the economy.

Part II consists of five chapters (Chapter 4-8), and investigates those fields where the gender ratio of men and women significantly impacts their lives and hence their contributions to the economy; moreover, it illustrates these economic activities using several case studies about the work women and men perform in the private and public sphere as well. The gender dimension of political institutions and work organizations is discussed here as well, as they are key factors in increasing women's participation in the labor force.

Chapter 4, being more specific, tackles the questions 'why do males, even if they work in 'typically' female jobs, earn more than women who do the same work?' This part examines the vertical and horizontal segregation in the US from many different angles; for instance, historical roots and cultural and organizational mechanisms and their drivers. The current characteristics of segregation are discussed too. The author even deals with the segregations using a historical perspective so is able to address topics such as how occupations change gender compositions, or why some employment categories exclusively remain male-typed or female-typed. For example, she tells the story of how the male-typed clerical jobs in banks became female-typed occupations. The point in every case is that the gender composition of work affects its value to men and women differently.

Through an analysis of a comparative case study, Gottfried reveals the cross-national patterns of gender segregation in every type of country, and agrees that while increasing numbers of women are entering the labor force, the characteristics of segregation remain relatively constant and women and men continue to dominate certain occupations. There are variations among countries but it is acknowledged that gender segregation appears to be higher in developed capitalist economies. The consequences that derive from

segregation include unequal labor market participation for women and their weaker economic independence. One important conclusion is that service-dominated economies continues to shape and contribute to vertical and horizontal segregation.

Chapter 5 explores the new form of employment of the 21th century: service work. An increasing proportion of workers now perform service activities. Service work has become a prominent feature of the global economy, in line with the commercialization of more and more daily activities. The majority of women are employed in service-related jobs in the US, Europe and Australia and the distribution and the content of these service jobs are shaped by gender – it is demonstrated that female employees dominate the low-wage personal service industry and men the higher-end business services (such as knowledge-intensive services). The nature of service employment is examined in this chapter through the examples of employees who work in huge service-oriented corporations such as McDonald's and Walmart, and through jobs such as being a flight attendant.

Emotional work contributes to the gender coding of service jobs and reproduce gender and class inequality as well. This is why it is important to tackle this issue. Emotional work requires specific tasks from employees: they have to mobilize emotional expressivity during their work which may affect them personally and their world of work as well, and hence the economy as a whole. This is easy to understand if we think about the different emotional requirements of jobs that are associated with women's and men's work. For example, the emotional traits associated with hegemonic masculinity (for example, aggression) which is valued in positions of great authority which are mainly occupied by men. If we think again using a global perspective, service-dominated economies are creating new forms of inequality, not only based on gender but on race, class or immigration status.

Gottfried argues in Chapter 6 that care work is a global issue and an important element in immigration processes. She also emphasizes that it is only if we examine care and reproductive labor and pay it adequate analytical attention that we will obtain a more holistic picture of the new service economy, as was theoretically outlined in the introductory chapters. It is partly for this reason that quite a detailed definition of care and reproductive labor is provided: to elaborate how feminist political economists understand it.

Additionally, we also get an interesting historical introduction into the phenomenon of housework. Gottfried states that care work is either paid for (paid domestic service) or is not, but it is increasingly important for the economy as a whole (as it is part of the economy), and, besides care and reproductive work, is one the factors which shapes gender relations. Since

care work is still unequally shared, and women bear the primary responsibility for children as well, care work and child care contribute significantly to the intensity of women's participation in the labour market.

Investigating care work and reproductive work is also essentially important in a time when more and more features of our private lives are being commercialized and shaped by state politics through organizational and institutional support. Care work and reproductive work is being moved out of the house to the market, with the same gendered context: it is devalued work, and has invisible content such as emotional work or knowledge. On the one hand it is highlighted that care work and reproductive work are low paid, devalued and feminized forms of work, while on the other hand it is demonstrated that these services are also heavily racialized. The author provides a closer look into the organization of care work by giving an in-depth analysis in a case study about domestic services in Calcutta ('Kolkata' in the book).

Chapter 7 highlights the importance of welfare states both as a political institution (as the state is a provider and organizer of social services) and as an employer (the state as an employer of service workers). The state plays an important role for women in shaping the intensification of their participation in labor and affects their economic security, especially when women have to do care-giving. On the other hand, policies have certain consequences for gender and class inequality if we think of, for example, the cost of reproduction, the valuation of reproductive work, the size of the gender pay gap and the patterns of gender segregation.

The welfare system intervenes in the field of social care work and the extent of the intervention affects whether or not care work and social reproductive work remains in the household or is shifted to the market, to the civil society or to the state. In order to show the gender dimension of political institutions the author analyses the policy processes and structures of different countries (but mainly the US, GB, Germany, France, Japan and Australia) using a comparative perspective, with the aim of showing how regulations frame, reinforce and maintain differences between men and women and thus the systematic patterns of gender and class. Necessarily, Esping-Andersen's welfare typology is analyzed from a gender perspective, then alternative feminist comparative approaches are introduced. Each of them consider gender to be a significant factor in political institutions and social care policies; one which can be identified behind the differences and varieties across countries. The feminist typologies conclude that by revealing the relations between family, state and economy, we can get a deeper and more meaningful understanding of the differences that explain gender and

class inequalities across countries.

Chapter 8 reflects on the new forms of work-related organizations which address women's issues in more efficient ways than traditional worker unions (although women's membership in traditional labor organizations has increased). The new forms of labor organizations have a greater ability to advocate for gender justice. In order to see the differences between the two, the author starts by discussing the logic behind workers' collective action in capitalist states, then she briefly introduces the history of unions with a focus on explaining the reasons that women have been underrepresented in terms of their participation and leadership in unions for most of the 20th century. The level of overall union membership of women is affected by the type of welfare state and its level of socialized reproduction, as well as by the union's policies and practices towards gender issues. She demonstrates how different employment relation systems have disadvantaged women in industrial unions through an in-depth comparative analysis of US and Japan. Males numerically dominate and are over-represented in unions in both countries; however the gender gap has widened in Japan and narrowed in US.

We are now witnessing the birth of new forms of labor organizations for women across different welfare states, as well as in global cities. These new and hybrid forms (as they are called by the author) differ from traditional unions in many ways, but mainly in two. They represent those workers (i.e.: immigrants, part time and temporary workers) who are excluded from traditional enterprise-based unions, and they advocate their interests and concerns in more effective ways. One of the new types of organizations is the workers' center, which is introduced in more detail. These organizations are generally community-based, community-organized networks that address multiple issues and identities. They don't focus only on workplace interests; they rather promote interest into a combination of employment, citizenship status and gender relations. These centers use new organizational strategies (campaigns and collective activities), including nationwide and global professional associations. The chapter concludes that both increasing women's memberships in traditional unions, and the formation of new workers' associations are important factors in improving women's working conditions and in empowering them economically and politically.

The following four chapters in Part III explore the global context of work and the labor market and examine how gender is shaped by global economic processes. The consequences of economic globalization are again examined through a feminist lens, and once again a number of non-feminist and feminist theories are discussed with the aim of highlighting what we lose when we do not take gender and the new power relations into consideration. Feminist

theories are not simply listed, but the way these theories have framed the narratives on globalization is also described (recent works by Joan Acker, Carla Freeman, and Leslie Salzinger are detailed). Both Chapter 9 and Chapter 10 provide basic and well-summarized content about the matter of globalization; Chapter 9 deals more with definitions and theories while Chapter 10 tackles certain globalization phenomenon (the mobility of people and production processes) with a focus on gendered processes.

Chapter 9 starts by explaining why understanding global processes is important for identifying the current changes wrought by economic transformation; for example, the transition to service-dominated economies. As such, it is necessary to distinguish between globalization and internalization because they have different effects on local, regional and global scales. The author agrees that globalization intensifies connections between peoples, political institutions, politics and transnational production processes. The integration of gender into the analysis provides a deeper view of the impact of globalization on work and workers, on the concrete working patterns and practices of men and women and on new social dynamics (a topic which is further elaborated on in Chapter 10 with its focus on migrant women) or on new types of inequalities.

Feminist theories about globalization examine the linkages between production and social reproduction, between the macro level and micro-level of economic relationships; they analyze both the gender and class relations that take place inside and outside of households and hence the non-market activities of women are considered as well. However, it is important to note that feminist approaches not only examine the multiple effects of globalization on women and their work, but also consider how globalization is itself gendered and they document the different and unequal consequences of globalization on different groups of women and men.

Chapter 10 focuses on more concrete questions when it looks at the current changes and prominent features of globalization. This chapter analyses how work processes and workers are interconnected through commodity chains, and how reproduction is reorganized. There are two new dominant trends; one is that economic globalization is reorganizing the location of work and workers, and the other one is the commodification of feminized services – the fact that labor intensive, low-waged global production takes place in the intimate space of households or through services.

Migration is a complex and many-faced process, it involves an increasing number of people in many different ways. There is globalization of migration among elites, including both males and females, which is related to the migration of women from poorer countries since there is an increasing

demand for service and care work. These migrating women provide a cheap labour force that frees global managers and members of the global male and female elite from taking care of their domestic tasks. We should face up to this feature of globalization as well; the fact that it changes and disrupts older structures of social support. From this example we can see how the feminization of migration and gendered care work link micro-level interactions with macro-level economic processes and how global labor and local employers are connected. The author clearly states that the tendency is that the globalization of migration is becoming feminized. The feminization of migration is based on increasing demand for personal services.

The feminization of jobs and production is explained using the example of factories which were relocated from US to Mexico City to show how location and hiring decisions contribute to the feminization of production. Export processing zones are also mentioned as they are one of the most favored employment opportunities for women; here the number of working women is high and they do the feminized jobs that are reserved for them. It is important to see that there is a contradictory effect occurring between the expansion of work opportunities and class and gender inequality. While women have more and more choices and control over their lives and more and more women have access to paid work, the jobs tend to be concentrated in feminized services and export-oriented manufacturing jobs which do not offer women career opportunities or economic security. This work is degrading, underpaid, undervalued and precarious. Gottfried strongly suggests rethinking the assumption that paid work can automatically can be equated with empowerment. Whatever topic we discuss, we always return back to the problem of established male norms; that paid employment without the responsibility for social reproduction is reserved for males.

The next chapter examines localized processes, individual work and the conditions of employment of the women and man who serve the global economy through a comparative study of two types of global cities. Case studies about global cities are included in Chapter 11.

Global cities serve as clear sources of understanding about how globalization and its consequences and processes act on a local level. Global cities are primary spaces for global economic activities and they attract both high-paid male and female professionals who work in the finance and banking sector and low-wage workers as well, with an increasing number of immigrants among them. Therefore, these global cities provide an insight into how different social locations intersect and demonstrate how concrete social practices produce and reproduce gender, class and race inequalities both on a local and on a global scale.

Two types of global cities are distinguished between: old global cities and financial capitals such as New York, London and Tokyo, which are compared with the new, emerging global cities of Beijing, Shanghai and Dubai. The levels of development and the leading role of the local and national government significantly differentiate these cities from each other. Both older and newer cities attract professionals and simultaneously facilitate the globalization of production and low-cost reproductive work, but the newer global cities states contribute on a bigger scale to the economic processes; there is more local and governmental action beyond these cities.

Chapter 12 looks at the challenges politics and political institutions face and examines the political landscape and institutions of the global economy. New political forms are emerging which are acting not only on an international but on transnational level. Just as we can speak about economic globalization, the same applies to political globalization. A new, transnational space is being created to influence policy which transgresses the nation state. The new transnational agents of the political arena, such as multinational corporations, NGOs, international organizations and institutions, can create legal norms and regulate the standards of nation states. The increasing importance of supra-national political institutions increases the tension for nation states (for example, by fostering new domestic laws or by changing gender relations), but it also facilitates the resilience of national political institutions in response to this tension at the same time. The difficulty of transferring global policy to a national level should be highlighted because transnational policy goals always have to be enacted and enforced by national activities. However, the field of politics is expanded at the same time and feminist movements and women-centric policies and political institutions may take advantage of the greater opportunity to manage gender equality projects or influence the legal norms around gender equality and domestic politics, hence the contribution of supra-national political institutions in the field of human rights and women's rights is quite important.

In sum, the book uses a feminist lens to understand the hidden sides of recent economic change, such as the shift towards a service and knowledge economy, or the commodification of care. Through this feminist lens we can see that the nature of work and life is constantly changing but certain things in the economy have not changed, such as the feminization of service production and segregation according to sex and gender inequality generally.