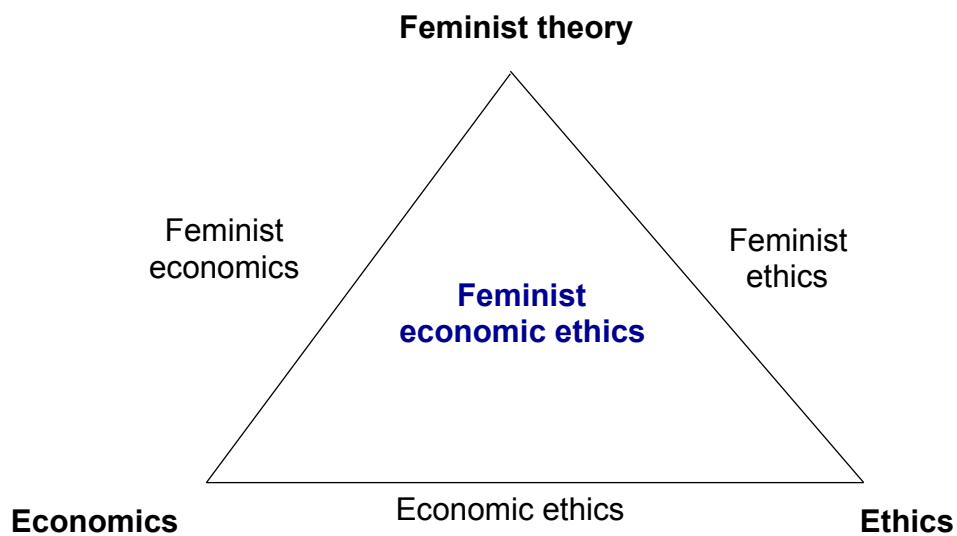


IAFFE Annual Conference
Berlin, 15-18 July, 2015

Ethics of Feminist Economics

Ulrike Knobloch

University of Fribourg, Switzerland
ulrike.knobloch@unifr.ch



Economics: Plurality of approaches

Micro – macro

Neoclassical / Neoliberal = mainstream

Institutional, old and new

Political economy, old and new

Marxian

Keynesian

Monetarist

Ethics and economics

Care economics

Queer economics

And more

⇒ PLURALISM instead of IDEOLOGY

Questions

What are the current paradigmatic battles and how deal feminist economists with the old ones, e.g. *Methoden-, Werturteils-, Positivismusstreit*?

Which role plays feminist economics in the movement *Pluralism in Economics*?

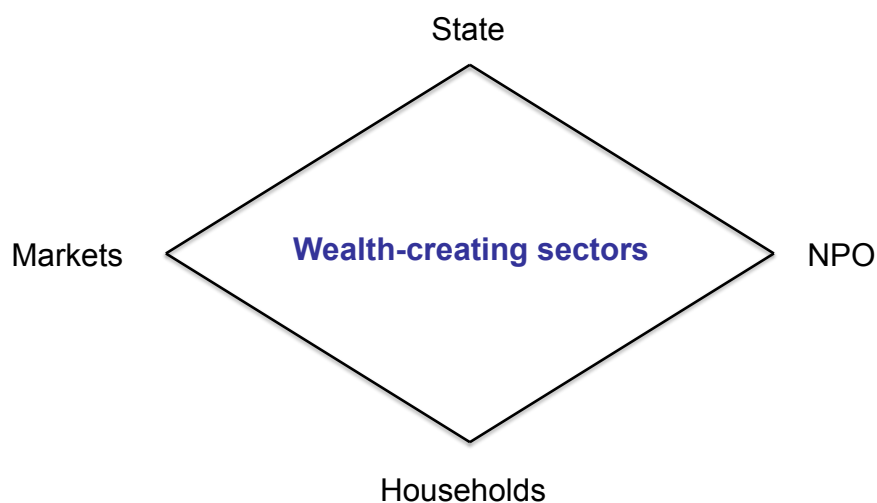
Which influence has feminist economics on these battles and in these movements and vice versa?

Normativity of economic terms

What do we understand by ...

- economics and economy?
- work and labour? Paid and unpaid?
- rationality and choice?
“Rationality is a normative notion. One *ought* to be rational.”
(Hausman & McPherson 1996: 41)
- utility and preferences?
- goods and services? Including household production?
- subsistence and provision?
- productivity and efficiency?
Most important question: Productivity and efficiency for whom?
- markets and the institutionalisation of their rules and regulation?
- competition and profit?

Four-sector model



(Razavi 2007: 21)

Ethics

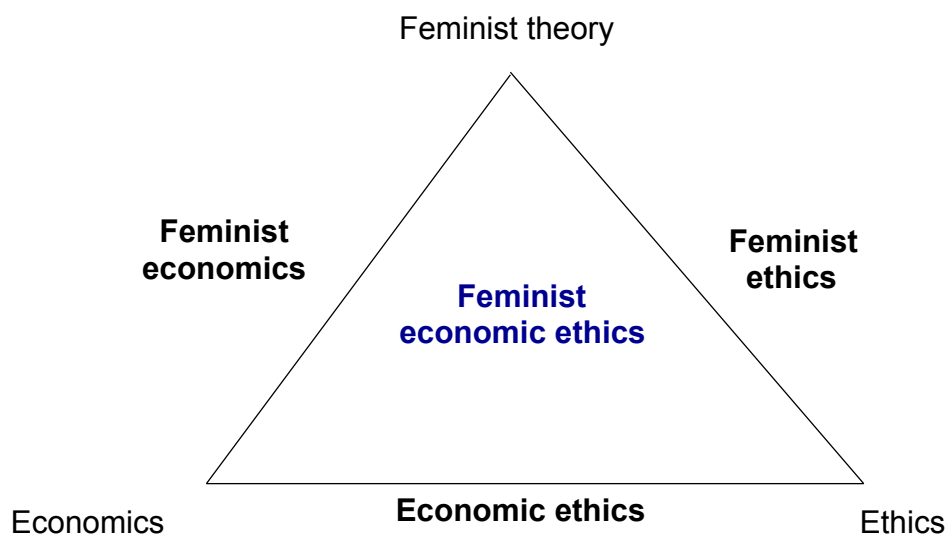
- *Terms*: ethics – ethic, morals – morality, norms – values
- *Methods*: descriptive, normative, ethics as critique: making visible and critique of the normative foundations
- *Dimensions*: teleological, deontological, integration of both: goals and motivation; individual, social, institutional
- *Principles*: Golden Rule, impartial spectator (Adam Smith), categorical imperative (Immanuel Kant)
- *Approaches*:
 - *Utilitarianism*
 - Revolutionary for its time: “one man one vote” (Jeremy Bentham)
 - Qualitative hedonism (John Stuart Mill)
 - Problems of justice!
 - Gender deficits?
 - *Ethics of justice*
 - What is the ethics of Rawls’ theory of justice? Social primary goods!
 - Ethics of justice in a global perspective (Thomas Pogge, Charles Beitz)
 - Task: overcoming the gender deficits of a (global) ethics of justice
 - *Virtue, communitarian ethics and others*

Feminist theory: Development of gender concepts

- Sex-gender distinction
- Gender as social construction
- Doing and undoing gender
- Intersectionality of gender, class, ethnicity / nationality and many more
- Queer / LGBTIQ / diversity and postcolonial studies

Question

- Which of these and other (future) gender concepts are essential for the discussion about the ethics of feminist economics?



Feminist ethics: Development of approaches

- Ethics of care
 - Moral development (Gilligan 1982)
 - Political ethics of care (Tronto 1993, Sevenhuijsen 1998)
 - Global care ethics (Robinson 1999)

⇒ Principle of care, care logic, care motivation
- Discourse ethics and the concrete other (Benhabib 1986)
- Morality of universal respect as an ethics of the good (Pauer-Studer 1996)
- Capabilities approach (Nussbaum 2000, Sen 1999)

⇒ Integration of justice and care?
- And more

Question: Are these approaches contradictory or complementary?

Approaches of Feminist ethics

in combination with:

- reflexive ethics as critique = making gender norms visible
 - queer ethics = critique of heteronormativity
- ⇒ Critique of the two-gender system and heterosexual normativity as well as the Western white upper class hegemony

Questions

- What is undoing gender in ethics?
Undoing gender norms: “to undo restrictively normative conceptions of sexual and gendered life” (Butler 2004: 2)?
- Is queer ethics radical enough to include
e.g. small children or people with dementia?

Economic ethics

Economic approaches and their institutional and normative foundations:

- *Microeconomic* approaches:
Explanation of market behaviour, preference utilitarianism as ethical basis of most neoclassical economics
- *Macroeconomic* approaches:
Explanation of economic development, GDP, capabilities, respect for human rights or other indicators
- *Institutional* approaches:
History and development of institutions and their critical examination, pragmatism as ethical basis
- *Marxian* approaches:
Is there a Marxian ethics?

Economic ethics

... as applied ethics: *corrective* approach to economic ethics

... as normative economics: *functionalist* approach to economic ethics

... as rational ethics of economic activity: *integrative* approach to economic ethics

(Ulrich 2008: 79 and 109-110)

Feminist economics

“... is uniquely situated at the intersection of economics, feminism, and philosophy.” (Barker & Kuiper 2003: 1)

Feminist-critical approaches to economic theory

- *Critical home economics*
(Reid 1934, Kettschau 1989)
- *Subsistence economy*
(Mies 1990, Bennholdt-Thomsen 2006)
- *Economics of provision*
(Nelson 1996, Brown 2010)
- *Lifeworld economics*
(Jochimsen et al. 2004, 2006)
- *Care economics*
(Plurality of theoretical approaches)

Feminist-critical approaches to care economics

- *Caring economy*
(Busch-Lüty et al. 1994, Biesecker et al. 2000, Netzwerk Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften 2013)
- *Careful Economics*
(Jochimsen 2003)
- *Political Economy of Care*
(Himmelweit 1995, 2002; Madörin 2006, 2010; Razavi 2007)
- *Institutional approaches*
(Folbre 1994, 2001)
- *Marxian approaches*
(Haug 2011; Chorus 2013)

Questions

What is economics and what is economics about?

What are the aims or goals of economic agency?

What are the different roles of the economic subject?

- Economic citizen (Peter Ulrich)
- Employee, worker: paid – unpaid
- Entrepreneur, employer
- Investor, consumer
- Household manager
- And more?

What is undoing gender in economics?

My own approach (Knobloch 2009, 2013)

Three (and not only one) paradigm shifts or shifts in perspective:

- **METHOD**
Feminist critical-normative theory:
Feminist economic ethics integrating feminist theory, ethics and economics
- **SUBJECT MATTER**
Economic theory of paid and unpaid work:
Paid and unpaid work in companies, households, state and non-profit sector
- **HUMAN AGENCY**
Integration of justice and care:
Cooperation, relatedness and care
embedding competition, profit-making and the evolvement of preferences

Paradigm shift concerning the METHOD

- Method of the integrative approach to economic ethics:
Making visible the norms and values in market economy
- “Werterhellung” (Peter Ulrich) as the first systematic task of integrative economic ethics (economic ethics ≠ business ethics !)
- Based on Jürgen Habermas' discursive ethics, John Rawls' political philosophy and the human rights approach including socio-economic rights

Paradigm shift concerning the METHOD (cont.)

- *Feminist*
(see slide 7)
“Thinking from women's lives” (Harding 1991): “Feminism begins with a sense of moral outrage at how women are treated in both word and deed.” (253)
 - *Critical-normative*
historically and socially contextualized reflection:
“Critical theory presumes that the normative ideals used to criticize a society are rooted in experience of an reflection on that very society, and that norms can come from nowhere else.” (Young 1990: 5)
- ⇒ **Feminist economic ethics:**
Making visible gender norms in economics

Paradigm shift concerning the SUBJECT MATTER

Subject matter of economic theory: including unpaid work

- *Supply of and demand for unpaid work*
Who did and who does unpaid work?
For whom was and is unpaid work done?
- *Dependencies and transfers between unpaid and paid work*
→ shifts of activities between paid and unpaid sectors of the economy
→ transfer between women of different classes and nationalities

⇒ **Lifeworld economics** (Jochimsen et al. 2004, 2006)

Paradigm shift concerning HUMAN AGENCY

Principles that are assumed to guide human agency:

- *Market economy*
 - Independence
 - Autonomy
 - Symmetrical relationships
 - Exchange: bilateral two-way transfers
- *Careful economics* (Jochimsen 2003)
 - Mutual dependence
 - Limited autonomy and limited capacity to act
 - Potential and actual asymmetries
 - Multilateral one-way transfers

⇒ **Sustainable economy of provision**

Conclusion

- ⇒ We need a feminist, critical normative economic theory of paid and unpaid work.
- ⇒ There are a lot of very fundamental open questions, I would like to discuss:
 - What is the new norm for household incomes in relation to the old breadwinner model: 100, 150 or 200 percent?
 - How much unpaid work do individuals and society need and which services should be offered without payment?
 - Who will and who should do the necessary unpaid work in the future?
 - Which forms of the division and distribution of labour are gender-neutral and do not reinforce inequalities due to other categories like class, nationality or age?
- ⇒ Visions and ideals
 - Concerning distribution of paid and unpaid work:
 - Universal earner and universal carer models
 - What can we learn from single and queer households?

References I

- Barker, Drucilla K. & Edith Kuiper (2003): *Toward a Feminist Philosophy of Economics*, London: Routledge.
- Benhabib, Seyla (1986): *The Generalized and the Concrete Other. The Kohlberg-Gilligan Controversy and Feminist Theory*, *Praxis International* 5(4), 402-424.
- Bennholdt-Thomsen, Veronika (2006): *Subsistenzwirtschaft, Globalwirtschaft, Regionalwirtschaft*, in: Maren A. Jochimsen & Ulrike Knobloch (eds.): *Lebensweltökonomie in Zeiten wirtschaftlicher Globalisierung*, Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag, 65-87.
- Biesecker, Adelheid, Maite Mathes, Susanne Schön & Babette Scurrall (eds.) (2000): *Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften. Auf dem Weg zu einer Ökonomie des Guten Lebens*, Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag.
- Brown, Marvin T. (2010): *Civilizing the Economy. A New Economics of Provision*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Busch-Lüty, Christiane, Maren A. Jochimsen, Ulrike Knobloch & Irmi Seidl (Hg.) (1994): *Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften. Frauen auf dem Weg zu einer Ökonomie der Nachhaltigkeit*, *Politische Ökologie*, Sonderheft 6, München: oekom.
- Butler, Judith (2004): *Undoing Gender*, New York: Routledge.
- Chorus, Silke (2013): *Care-Ökonomie im Postfordismus. Perspektiven einer integralen Ökonomie-Theorie*, Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot.
- Folbre, Nancy (2001): *The Invisible Heart. Economics and Family Values*, New York: The New Press.
- Folbre, Nancy (1994): *Who Pays for the Kids? Gender and the Structures of Constraint*, New York: Routledge.
- Gilligan, Carol (1982): *In a Different Voice. Psychological Theory and Women's Development*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Harding, Sandra (1991): *Whose Science? Whose Knowledge? Thinking from Women's Lives*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Haug, Frigga (2011): *Das Care-Syndrom. Ohne Geschichte hat die Frauenbewegung keine Perspektive*, *Das Argument* 292/2011, 345-364.

References II

- Hausman, Daniel M. & Michael S. McPherson (1996): *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Himmelweit, Susan (2002): Making Visible the Hidden Economy: The Case for Gender-Impact Analysis of Economic Policy, *Feminist Economics* 8(1), 49-70.
- Himmelweit, Susan (1995): The Discovery of 'Unpaid Work': The Social Consequences of the Expansion of 'Work', *Feminist Economics* 1(2), 109-19.
- Hoppe, Hella (2002): *Feministische Ökonomik. Gender in Wirtschaftstheorien und ihren Methoden*, Berlin: Edition Sigma.
- Jochimsen, Maren A. (2003): *Careful Economics. Integrating Caring Activities and Economic Science*, Dordrecht et al.: Kluwer.
- Jochimsen, Maren A. & Knobloch, Ulrike (eds.) (2006): *Lebensweltökonomie in Zeiten wirtschaftlicher Globalisierung*, Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag.
- Jochimsen, Maren A., Stefan Kesting & Ulrike Knobloch (eds.) (2004): *Lebensweltökonomie*, Kleine Verlag: Bielefeld.
- Jochimsen, Maren A. & Knobloch, Ulrike (1997): Making the Hidden Visible: The Importance of Caring Activities and their Principles for Any Economy, *Ecological Economics* 20(2): 107-112.
- Kettschau, Irmhild (1989): Zur Theorie und gesellschaftlichen Bedeutung der Hausarbeit, in: Gerda Tornieperth (ed.): *Arbeitsplatz Haushalt. Zur Theorie und Ökologie der Hausarbeit*, 2. Aufl., Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, 98-114.
- Knobloch, Ulrike (2013): *Juggling with Times. Economic Theory of Paid and Unpaid Work* (unpublished manuscript, available by mail: ulrike.knobloch@unifr.ch).
- Knobloch, Ulrike (2009): *Sorgeökonomie als allgemeine Wirtschaftstheorie*, Olympe. *Feministische Arbeitshefte zur Politik*, Heft 30, 27-36.
- Madörin, Mascha (2010): Care Ökonomie – eine Herausforderung für die Wirtschaftswissenschaften, in: Christine Bauhardt & Gülay Çaglar (eds.): *Gender and Economics*, Wiesbaden: VS, 81-104.

References III

- Madörin, Mascha (2006): Plädoyer für eine eigenständige Theorie der Care-Ökonomie, in: Torsten Niechoj & Marco Tullney (eds.): *Geschlechterverhältnisse in der Ökonomie*, Marburg: Metropolis, 277-297.
- Mies, Maria (1986): *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour*, London: Zed Books.
- Netzwerk Vorsorgendes Wirtschaften (ed.) (2013): *Wege Vorsorgenden Wirtschaftens*, Marburg: Metropolis.
- Nelson, Julie A. (1996): *Feminism, Objectivity and Economics*, New York: Routledge.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. (2000): *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pauer-Studer, Herlinde (1996): *Das Andere der Gerechtigkeit. Moraltheorie im Kontext der Geschlechterdifferenz*, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag.
- Razavi, Shahra (2007): *The Political and Social Economy of Care in a Development Context. Conceptual Issues, Research Questions and Policy Options*, Gender and Development Programme Paper Number 3, Genf: UNRISD.
- Reid, Margaret G. (1934): *Economics of Household Production*, New York: John Wiley.
- Sen, Amartya K. (1999): *Development as Freedom*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sevenhuijsen, Selma (1998): *Citizenship and the Ethics of Care. Feminist Considerations on Justice, Morality and Politics*, New York: Routledge.
- Robinson, Fiona (1999): *Globalizing Care. Ethics, Feminist Theory, and International Relations*, Boulder CO: Westview Press.
- Tronto, Joan (1993): *Moral Boundaries. A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*, New York: Routledge.
- Ulrich, Peter (2008): *Integrative Economic Ethics. Foundations of a Civilized Market Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Young, Iris Marion (1990): *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.