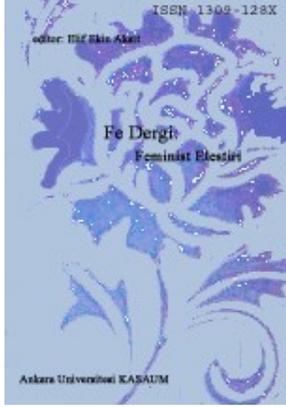


Yayınlayan: Ankara Üniversitesi KASAUM  
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Fe Dergi: Feminist Eleştiri Cilt 3 Sayı 2  
Erişim bilgileri, makale sunumu ve ayrıntılar için:  
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**Feminist Economics and Its Continued Leap**  
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Çevrimiçi yayına başlama tarihi: 25 Aralık 2011

Bu makaleyi alıntılanmak için: *Hande Toğrul and Emel Memiş*, "Feminist Economics and Its Continued Leap," *Fe Dergi* 3, sayı 2 (2011), 4-18.

URL: [http://cins.ankara.edu.tr/6\\_2.html](http://cins.ankara.edu.tr/6_2.html)

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## Feminist Economics<sup>1</sup> and Its Continued Leap

Hande Toğrul\* and Emel Memiş\*\*

*Feminist economists have sought to revolutionize economics discipline particularly by incorporating multidisciplinary methods, methodologies and philosophies into the field. As this article shortly summarizes, so much has been done. Feminist economists have dreamed big and created powerful foundation for desirable economics. There are clear achievements, yet the job is not done, dream is continuing. The continued leap for feminist economists is to bring together the accumulated literature and new knowledge while pursuing their solid feminist pedagogy in teaching and learning economics without wavering. Such a path will provide liberation for the oppression inside and outside the education system and keep social provisioning and well-being at the center of economic research and teaching. There are still massive obstacles on the path. However, these obstacles can be used as a motivation for building on the innovative path to continue revolutionizing the economics discipline.*

*Keywords: feminist economics, pedagogy, methodology, method, gender*

### **Feminist İktisat ve Süregelen Atılımı**

*Feminist iktisatçılar iktisat disiplinini çok disiplinli yöntem, yöntembilim ve düşünce sistemlerini alana dâhil ederek tamamen değiştirmeyi amaçlamışlardır. Feminist iktisat alanında bu makalede ancak kısaca özetleyebildiğimiz pek çok çalışma yapılmış ve uzun yollar kat edilmiştir. Feminist iktisatçılar büyük hayaller kurdular ve arzu edilen bir iktisatın güçlü temellerini oluşturdular. Elde edilen başarılar çok açıktır, ancak halen süreç bitmiş değildir, arzu edilene özlem devam etmektedir. Feminist iktisatçıların devam eden sıçrayışı, iktisat eğitiminde feminist pedagojiyi benimserken yazında bugüne değin oluşmuş bilgi birikimini ve yeni bilgileri bir araya getirmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu yol, eğitim sistemi içerisinde ve dışında var olan baskıdan kurtulmayı sağlayacak; toplumsal ihtiyaçların karşılanmasını ve toplumsal refahı iktisadi araştırmaların ve eğitiminin merkezinde tutacaktır. Önümüzdeki engeller büyüktür. Ancak, bu engeller iktisat disiplinini dönüştürmede yaratıcı araçların inşasında kullanılabilir.*

*Anahtar Kelimeler: feminist iktisat, pedagoji, yöntembilim, yöntem, toplumsal cinsiyet*

### **Introduction**

Feminist economists have sought to revolutionize economics discipline particularly by incorporating multidisciplinary methods, methodologies and philosophies into the field. Such effort immediately requires the redefinition of economics as a discipline that explores social provisioning for well-being of all, including the ecology. Feminist economists' perception of economics is distinctive. Feminist economics reflects unity in human life with respect to economic system providing human needs.

Feminist economists have been analyzing the intricate relations between factors of production, namely capital, labor, land, technology, and their connection to reproduction, a sphere, which is neglected in other economic paradigms. In analyzing these relations, linking paid and unpaid labor has been a major task to understand and reveal class, gender, and race based relations. Such endeavor opens a can of worms: this requires questioning the economic theory and its toolbox to its core along with creating a new toolbox that is not traditionally used neither in neoclassical nor in other heterodox economics with few exceptions. The contributions in this journal are clear evidences for some achievements and ongoing battles; the positive relationship between gender equality and economic growth, application of innovative tools such as gender-sensitive budget analysis around the world, contribution of feminist economists in trade theory, and complexities of women's employment in Turkey.

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This paper is a part of our long term project on “dreaming about desirable economics” that emphasizes the highly internalized logic of current economic theory. Dreaming denotes the hardship in breaking the current systems, structures while “desirable”, alludes that act of breaking is sought-after, appealing, beneficial. Articles in this issue in fact present recipes for the latter. Feminist social scientists have been supporting and working towards the dream of desirable economics for decades. Feminist literature validates the dreaming process and shows how complex relations between gender, class, race, age, and sexual orientation slow down the achievement of well-being for all. In this process, feminist economists raise attention to the organic link between content, pedagogy, methodology and methods. Majority of economists have always been producing work from their comfortable chairs. Many feminist economists have found taken themselves outside the mainstream research methods to search meanings, and listen to people’s experiences. Economists ought to spend time at fieldwork and listen to those whom they are trying to solve problems for. Humane and caring approach is needed for “desirable” economics. A desirable economics is beneficial for peoples’ flourishing, social justice, happiness, well-being of societies and connectedness with the ecosystem.

Section 1 briefly describes feminist economics. Section 2 elaborates on feminist economists’ contributions on different fronts. Section 3 discusses the methodological-method riddle in feminist economics, while emphasizing the continued leap. Lastly, Section 4 concludes.

### **Feminist economics**

Feminist economics is a protest against the andocentric views and the gender blindness of the economics profession. Starting from the 1870s, with the first feminist economics wave, the effort has been on the incorporation of the unique experiences of women in the economy neglected by other economic paradigms<sup>2</sup>. Feminist economics has contributed to and been influenced by varied feminist theories, green economics, sustainable development paradigm, welfare economics, labor economics, and socialist/Marxist economics.

Even though feminist economics has a long research history, its contemporary form as a field in economics made significant progress since early 1990s. Nevertheless, there is still not a unified theory of feminist economics. Yet a unified goal exists for feminist economists; achievement of gender equity with social, economic, political justice for all. A single theory in economics cannot achieve this complex process. May be a unified theory of feminist economics is not required as long as justice for all is taken very serious in every step of the way. As put by Mutari, contributions within the field illuminate the diversity of women’s experiences and the visions are as broad as women’s life experiences<sup>3</sup>. Some studies aim to add these experiences into the existing systems of thought, others force the boundaries of them questioning their validities and some others target to develop ways to redefine and reconceptualize the core concepts of the discipline. In this space available, it is not possible to do justice to every contribution of feminist economists, thus studies cited along the paper should be taken as examples among others.

Feminist economists put well-being at the center of economic analysis in a holistic way while pushing political and to some extent quantitative limits of measurement. They utterly oppose to analyzing the economic well-being by separating it from the social and political sides for the integrity of human life. Feminist economics redefines the economic sphere of inquiry as provisioning of human life in all possible spheres rather than focusing only on markets<sup>4</sup>. The concept of provisioning re-emphasizes and underlines basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and health care, education in order to survive and flourish. These basic needs are satisfied not only through production in the paid formal and/or informal markets, but also through reproduction and production in unpaid forms within the home, communities and society at large. Beneria and Sen define reproduction in stages: 1) bearing the child and taking care of the child in order to bring her up as an independent person; 2) daily care of the household members and labor power; thus social reproduction carries differences from housework, it is defined both the daily as well as the intergenerational renewal of human resources through the activities mentioned as in the two stages<sup>5</sup>, which are indispensable components of the economy<sup>6</sup>. Later on, Beneria categorizes unpaid work in four distinct ways; subsistence work, informal work, domestic work, volunteer work<sup>7</sup>.

Mainstream as well as heterodox economic analyses do not recognize unpaid work as an economic activity as it does not produce an exchange value. The economy as presumed in conventional analysis reflects exclusively the sphere of production and finance. Disregarding unpaid labor as well as relations of reproduction, these approaches have been criticized immensely by feminist economists. Through feminist research, Brennan investigates selected writings of Adam Smith, Thomas Malthus, Nassau Senior, W. Stanley Jevons, Alfred

Marshall and presents the meanings given to “labor”, “employment”, “income”, “consumption” and “capital” which have paved the way for a production boundary<sup>8</sup>. He argues that historically economic boundaries have never been clear cut and often been in state of flux. Only in recent past, since post the Second World War, “production boundary” that dominates economic inquiry has been rather inert. There have been few revisions such as inclusion of subsistence farming output for own consumption. Feminists have been pushing this boundary, therefore feminist have been following the tradition in history of thought by questioning cultural assumptions.

The significance of the “reproductive” sphere in economy and its linkages with “productive” work becomes much clearer if we think of the work of feminist scholars who have found that women are the most important bearers of the structural adjustment programs (SAPs) designed and implemented in many developing countries since 1980s by the World Bank and the IMF<sup>9</sup>. There are many studies by now confirming that through male-biased macroeconomic policies, the dependence of productive activities on the reproductive sphere has been multiplied in many ways. As put by Elson, “the hidden ‘equilibrating factor’ has been women’s ability to absorb the shocks of stabilization programmes, through more work and ‘making do’ on limited incomes”<sup>10</sup>.

At the very outset, feminist scholars raised attention to the need for conceiving gender as the central analytical category in understanding the system of economic relations along with class and other hierarchical social stratifications such as sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, age, ability, religion-faith and other categories in society<sup>11</sup>. The economy is stratified by gender. Why gender is and should be an analytical category in economic analysis is explicable by the existence of systematic tendencies in the economy. These tendencies lead to unique experiences for women who have also unique economic behavior, which can only be understood by using the category: gender. Feminist economics signifies the gendered structure of economy and have been calling for gendered analysis at all levels; micro, macro and meso. All these levels both in theory and practice given the fact that gender relations permeate all aspects of economic life making economies gendered structures<sup>12</sup>. Thus none of the levels of analyses can be gender-neutral.

However, the distinction between sex and gender is a key concern in feminist thought. Even considered in a very narrow sense, gender goes far beyond the sexual differences which are biological as male and female. According to Peterson and Lewis, gender is socially constructed differences based upon sexual distinctions with no natural basis<sup>13</sup>. It is neither created by human and nor determined by biology whereas sex indicates the biological distinctions. Gender is multifaceted in a way that it is an ideology manifested, produced, reproduced and transformed in social practices. Gender, a hierarchical category, is a designation of masculinity and femininity. The concept of gender helps to investigate, explore, and question issues in health care, education, reproductive rights, laws, labor market, property rights, inheritance, and family relations. Prior to the investigation of these issues, understanding and raising awareness about gender roles is crucial. How biological sexual differences are transformed into gender could better be understood by the concept of patriarchy.

As another crucial social phenomenon for feminist economists that has been under investigation patriarchy is a historical material construct of gender and class relations. Patriarchy emphasizes the material basis of subordination of what is referred as feminine determined and ruled by masculine<sup>14</sup>. Patriarchal rules are determined by gender relations and sustained by social norms as well as practices: male breadwinner traditional households, unions, rules, regulations. Patriarchy, as an institution, sustains itself with individual’s and/or group’s conscious or unconscious choices every day. Hartmann shows the deep gender division of labor in the workplace and the role of male workers in labor market discrimination as well as perpetuation of patriarchy<sup>15</sup>. The argument that sexuality and gender roles have a material basis has remained the hallmark of feminist economics.

Gender relations and sexual identities are deeply ingrained in human psyche and manifest themselves in everyday life. Gender roles and relations are taught through socialization almost from the first day of baby’s birth if not before, and internalized as individuals grow up. Male and female roles and relations become norm, logic, rational, standard, etc. These roles are embedded in the material conditions of everyday people such as their survival, subsistence and accumulation. Furthermore, these roles are intertwined with other social categories such ethnicity, race, age, and marital status which are historically constructed as well.

As mentioned above, feminist approach is about expanding the boundaries of economics while redefining it. Feminist economists contribute to and benefit from the existing critical approaches in social sciences. Political and social movements of 1960s have definitely contributed to the discussion of gender inequality in labor market. Perhaps, a more thorough understanding why these analytical constructs are crucial

for economic analysis can be provided with an outline of the history of the contributions into the feminist economics dialogue.

The political movements in 1960s gave momentum to investigate gender discrimination in the labor market in economic discipline. Economic analysis of discrimination has been investigating mainly the disparities in well-being identified as the labor market outcomes based upon racial and gender lines. Feminist scholars have started to document the outcomes and raise awareness inside and outside the feminist circles. They researched the underlying reasons behind discrimination in the labor market. Since 1960s, this has become one crucial strand of the feminist economists' agenda. In order to trace some of these different sources of inequalities many scholars have provided evidence for i) gap in different sources of income between men and women: gender wage-gap as well as looking at income inequality beyond wage-gap<sup>16</sup>, ii) gender-bias in the patterns of work both in the market as well as unpaid sphere of the economy<sup>17</sup> where the latter is usually associated with women's labor, iii) inequalities in distribution of resources (beyond money income) not only by gender but also by a complex web of social stratifications including race, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation<sup>18</sup>. Feminist scholars have repeatedly argued that gender inequality can only be understood if conceived as having a multidimensional source based on patriarchal relations, which also refer to socially constructed power asymmetries. Preventing inequalities not only create gender equity in different spheres but also impact outcomes on well-being based on poverty, mortality, nutritional foundation, health and education.

In mid-1970s, during the period of which major economic instabilities were faced across the globe, disparities in well-being as the outcome of gender based discrimination have remained to be a major concern<sup>19</sup>. As well as the gender-based differences in paid employment<sup>20</sup>, some feminist scholars have also raised attention to the interplay of these differences with the inequalities within the households<sup>21</sup>. The power relations in the household and in the labor market form an unfavorable situation particularly for women. Again in 1970s and more extensively in 1980s and 1990s till now, feminist scholars have also started to question why gender based and patriarchal relations were ignored in economic analysis before. Thus, attention to discrimination and gender inequalities formerly situated at the center of the debates leaned towards the critique of existing paradigms at the theoretical level.

Pointing out the sexist bias in economic theory, many studies have criticized the existing analysis of the household and problematized the nature and the definition of work<sup>22</sup>. By the end of 1980s, feminist critique has become more mature criticizing both the gendered assumptions at the microeconomic level mainly around the concept of rational economic man<sup>23</sup> but also bringing a critique against gender biased analysis of structure of the economy at the macroeconomic level. Though the early attempts were taken in late 1980s, 'engendered macroeconomics' was a much faster growing field in 1990s. In 1994, the Gender and Macro International Working Group (GEM-IWG), an international network of economists, was formed for the purpose of promoting research, teaching, policy making and advocacy on gender-equitable approaches to macroeconomics, international economics and globalization<sup>24</sup>. Members of this network have been challenging the conceptualization of the economy at the macro level by raising attention to the sphere of reproduction which is missing in the conventional economic approach. This implies a certain starting point for engendering macroeconomics as to the valuing of housework and of unpaid work as a part of the economy that would result in a more accurate estimation of overall economic activity<sup>25</sup>. Over the last few years, GEM- Latin America and GEM- South-East Asia groups have grown and developed their regional initiatives where more local power and knowledge could flourish.

On the achievements of feminist scholars forming feminist economics as a field; one should recognize the role of organizations that bring together not only academic researchers but also activists as well as policy makers who share a common aim challenging male bias in the field of economics. The International Association for Feminist Economics (IAFFE) which was formed in 1992 has been a locomotive for feminist social scientists. IAFFE launched its journal *Feminist Economics*<sup>26</sup> a few years after its establishment. In 1995, feminist economics as a field was acknowledged even in a journal of American Economic Association<sup>27</sup>. In 1999 an encyclopedia of feminist economics was published covering surveys of women's history for many countries and regions as well as describing core concepts and issues debated<sup>28</sup>. All these developments in the emergence and expansion of the field are also surveyed by Ferber and Nelson (2003)<sup>29</sup>.

### **Key tenets of feminist economics**

Many feminist economists were finding that traditional, formal choice-theoretic modeling and a narrow focus on mathematical and econometric methods were feeding into masculine knowledge building<sup>30</sup>. Yet, they were also aware of the masculine requirements for tenured positions and research funds. Given the institutional and systemic difficulties, as mentioned above, feminist economists established their own knowledge building processes and foundations for a desirable economics.

Publication of *Beyond Economic Man* by Ferber and Nelson in 1993 presents how feminist economists furthered their efforts. Relying upon methodological individualism, mainstream economics regards rational economic man, as a universal category of human being for all economic behaviors. Individuals are assumed to behave self-interested. “.....defining the subject of economics as individual choice makes the detached cogito, not the material world or real persons in the material world, the center of study, the emphasis on the scarcity of means suggests that nature is static, stingy, and hostile, a view of nature perhaps still based on a conception of man as dominating feminine nature, which while dominated and passive is still able to frighten” (Nelson, 2005 p.26)<sup>31</sup>.

Further to the conceptualization of human relations, feminist critique pointed out the bias in mainstream economics on the market economy: everything relevant to the “market” is overvalued and all other activities are taken as not-essential and for granted. Feminist economics has been challenging this conceptualization by raising attention to the sphere of reproduction and undervaluation of certain economic activities. The housework, the caring for children, elderly, and disabled, shortly the activities that have been the women’s part are ignored, if not undervalued<sup>32</sup>.

Feminist scholars were dissatisfied also with the description of how the “invisible hand” worked in the market system in mainstream analysis. If there was not intervention by any institution, usually government, the market would work itself harmoniously given certain assumptions about the economic man. These assumptions are based on well-informed, insatiable individual who is sure about her preferences. The insights of feminist critique to this perception of the market and individual behavior can be understood more clearly when it comes to the analysis of the labor market. Feminist scholars have been arguing for the fact that understanding the effects of power asymmetries on economies is crucial to grasp the actual functioning of markets, especially labor markets. Mainstream economics considers the labor relations as mutually beneficial exchange - where workers supply their labor while employers demand labor in a vacuum - ignoring the power relations. Understanding power and patriarchy, however, helps to explore how male-dominated institutions work and why women are subordinated in the workplace. An underlying reason behind the subordination of women in paid employment is envisioning of “productive” activities apart from “unproductive” activities. The latter is largely composed of reproductive activities, that have usually been ignored for being un-productive; a major conundrum of mainstream economics<sup>33</sup>. Feminist economists argue that social norms form institutional processes that allocate groups of workers to the various sectors and wages rather than the competitive market price-clearing. Unlike mainstream analysts, feminists emphasize the importance of power relations for establishing institutions, and regard the market as one institution among others.

Feminist economists, similar to heterodox economists, argue that worker’s productivity is linked to her command over resources, which in turn depends on her access to those resources, taking into account that behavior is determined by social roles. Material basis for conflict stems from the unequal opportunities and access to resources. Conflict among different groups can occur directly in the work place, in the political process over the role of government or in other forms in the social, political and economic processes in a society.

Analysis of distribution of resources in mainstream framework sets an important domain that has been criticized widely by feminist economists. First, taking endowments as given and as the underlying regulatory factor in determining who gets what in an economy has been problematized. Counter arguments are mainly based on the entitlements framework introduced by Amartya Sen (1981a; 1995)<sup>34</sup>. An individual’s entitlement characterizes her overall command over resources. It has two dimensions: endowment and exchange. At the outset, an individual is endowed with a set of resources including both material and social resources, which enhances the availability of economic and social options. At this point, the role of institutional and/or economic factors becomes very significant.

Depending on their nature, institutions such as laws, norms and state regulations improve entitlements or lead to entitlement failures. In extending Sen’s ideas, it is the development of capabilities what measures well-being rather than utility gained or resources attained. Capabilities, while closely related to entitlements, are what people are actually able to do and to be<sup>35</sup> (Sen 1981). The central criticism from the feminist perspective against

the utilitarian framework has been its failure to challenge gender-based inequalities, given the adaptive nature of women's preferences, i.e. the possibility that women's preferences are adjusted to their second-class status<sup>36</sup>. Feminist economists argue that social norms form institutional processes that allocate groups of workers to the various sectors and wages rather than the competitive market price-clearing. Unlike mainstream analysts, feminists emphasize the importance of power relations for establishing institutions, and regard the market as one institution among others.

Feminist analysis emphasizes the fact that people's preferences are shaped by inequitable initial conditions. Assessing a life under poverty just by looking at whether the person is satisfied or not by her life leads to misleading results if that person has never known the possibility of a different life. The capabilities approach also criticizes normative evaluations based exclusively on commodities and material resources. Resources, as Robeyns puts it, are only a means to improve one's well-being<sup>37</sup>. However, the more crucial issue that matters is people's functionings and capabilities. This latter does not necessarily mean that resources are not important; rather inequalities in resources are significant contributors to the causes of gender inequalities in capabilities<sup>38</sup>.

Another feminist economist critique is that the distribution studies focus narrowly on household income distribution. There is evidence that a number of countries having very equitable distributions of income have wide gender wage gaps, suggesting that empirical growth analyses which rely only on household income inequality fail to identify an important source of inequality and its relationship to growth<sup>39</sup>.

Feminist economists question mainstream and heterodox economists for their silence about persistent inequalities within the household. While some disregard these inequalities within household and others assume these relations as given. In both cases, household inequalities are kept outside research boundaries. For instance, Marxian system of analysis taking class as the main analytical category that is determinant of economic relations does not pay enough attention to the gender and racial differences. Domestic labor is taken a given category in Marxian economics. The distinctive social relations of domestic labor are usually ignored when analysis is limited to wage labor versus capital under capitalism. When activities are not paid, they are not included in the economics analysis in all schools of thought other than feminist economics.

Significant amount of criticism from feminist economics stems from the fact that mainstream and heterodox economists are wedded to certain methodological approaches applied by certain methods where many aspects of social and political relations rest outside of their analysis. Feminist economists have been questioning the mainstream methods, methodologies and pedagogical approaches while pushing the boundaries of economic knowledge. In many instances, feminist economists introduce deeply challenging concepts that create deep contradictions within majority of economists intellectual world. In other words, feminist economists introduce riddles for economists that eventually question the credibility of economics discipline overall. By doing so, feminist economists put themselves at risk within the riddle. They risk their own credibility within the current economics discipline where they build their own career given existing rules, norms, and assessment tools to become "credible" economists in the boys' playground.

### **Methodological and pedagogical riddle in feminist economics**

A methodology is a way of approaching a particular research question or a research idea to understand and explain it with the data, chosen methods and pre-analytical philosophical stand. All these aspects motivate the research and teaching process to produce knowledge. The differentiation between methods and methodology is of utmost importance. Different methodological approaches may use the same methods; for instance, a neoclassical economist and a feminist economist may join the same fieldwork project, yet each of them will approach to their information collection and interpretation with a different pre-analytical stand. Another example is positivist grounded theorists versus constructivist grounded theorists. Positivist theory uses the method as an end; all you learn about the phenomenon is out there in your data. Constructivist however uses method as a means to get the information but allow interpretation. It is important to emphasize here that given numeric or narrative data what all researchers do is interpretation at the end of the day. It is crucial to find a balance between one's interpretation and what really is happening out there. Feminist research has been seeking this balance as well as the details of research process rather than abstract discussions on the philosophy that underlies. Importance of abstraction is undeniable but the need for the raw information is almost urgent.

Opening up the research process starts with the sensibility of the researcher as well as innovations in alternative pedagogical approaches. Pedagogy, simply put, is the process of teaching and how to be a teacher.

Academic training in almost all disciplines gives content and builds the knowledge base, yet how to teach the material is not a real concern across different social science departments. The root of the word pedagogy comes from the Greek as “how to lead a child.” The concept of “leading a child” situates the adult teacher as the knowledge “barrier” and the student the knowledge “receiver.” Knowledge is something out there and it is transmitted within a classroom setting using books, lectures, and tests as tools and assessments. The top-down teaching approach supported by standardized assessments organizes and sustains the education system as well as economic system. These systems have evolved in a way that they need serious overhaul. They need fundamental transformation.

Since emergence of economics as an academic discipline, not more than 100 years ago, gradual move from interpretation toward explanation has been dominating the discipline. Positivist empiricism has created nothing but vicious cycle for economists. Social scientists must be grounded in the behavior and attitudes of individuals embedded in a society. The dialectic between the individual and the society, inseparability of these two aspects must be studied seriously. A major problem with neoclassical economics, which is based on positivism, stems from the lack of effort towards understanding this dialectic. Neoclassical economists put the individual at the center of their analysis given unrealistic assumptions about individual behavior. Methodological individualism is the foundation for this approach i.e. whole is sum of its parts, isolated individuals interacting mechanically without social, political relations. Rational economic man is a universal category of human beings for all economic behaviors. Origins of this paradigm rest on modernism. As known, with modernism science is assigned to be the expression of truth and legitimizes this by imposing ‘science’ as being free of subjective beliefs and its attributing rational behaviors to societies. Positivism, which provides the most excellent grounds for modernism sets science with its unique methods that are totally detached from human reality in the name of universalism; in order to be value-neutral, to be objective and universal<sup>40</sup>. On the contrary, individuals co-exist with society; they shape and are shaped by the society and social values. Feminist economists have strongly been criticizing the privileged view of universalism for making scientists unable to recognize how their views are detached from reality. They emphasize how such a view defects the whole realm of science, hence the process of knowledge production.

There are various approaches in studying economics; institutional economics, radical economics, evolutionary economics, social economics, behavioral economics, experimental economics are all efforts to transform economics to a methodological sphere that is beneficial for development of human capacities, human development. In challenging the definition of economic development, feminist scholars have raised attention to the concept of development around human development i.e. human well-being and capabilities<sup>41</sup>. Heterodox economists share the attempt to use full diversity of contributions in structure-agent theory in the social sciences such as Pierre Bourdieu’s genetic structuralism or Antony Giddens’s structuration theory. Feminists (Folbre<sup>42</sup>, Nelson<sup>43</sup>) have been dwelling on this issue while benefitting from both approaches; especially Giddens’s approach has been used quite often in feminist economists’ work.

Since feminist economists have been seeking to revolutionize the discipline, they explicitly emphasize the need to transform standard economic education by adopting the pedagogical insights suggested by educators and researchers working on how students learn<sup>44</sup>. They have been advocating greater use of alternative teaching and learning methods. Feminist objective of teaching, very close to Paula Freire’s, is the liberation of the oppressed, which can be achieved by use of dialogue techniques rather than debate<sup>45</sup>. Moreover, building self-awareness among faculty and staff has to be taken seriously. Feminist economists need a strong community to flourish. One of the first steps for community building through awareness-raising is to build a safe environment where different voices can be heard. In this process, students have to be at the center of all awareness raising, teaching and learning. Top down lecture style must be replaced by interactive activities where sitting style is restructured from rows to gathering in circles style sitting where everyone can be seen and connected to. Also students and faculty must effectively connect with communities and businesses in their locality.

Feminist economists advocate greater use of dialogue inside the classroom, more reliance on primary data collection and analysis, and incorporation of emotional components into the process of learning. Even if numbers are few, there are heterodox economists who are interested in and working on alternative pedagogies. Publication of the *International Journal of Pluralism and Economics Education* is a collaborative effort by heterodox economists since 2009. According to a survey by Maier et. al. conducted among 137 members of four different online list servers for economists; nearly 40% believed that significant barriers exist for economists to integrate alternative pedagogies. The types of barriers that are cited most frequently are the following: 1) the

opportunity cost of time to learn and adopt, 2) perceived trade-offs by topic coverage, 3) inertia, 4) lack of incentives for change, and 5) lack of textbook and other course materials not readily adaptable to changes in pedagogy<sup>46</sup>. The upcoming publication of the International Handbook of Learning and Teaching is the first comprehensive survey on alternative pedagogies and practice<sup>47</sup>.

Feminist critique on economic methodology was developed further with the conference held in Amsterdam in 1993<sup>48</sup>. Feminist critique involves discussions on the epistemological foundations of economic theory. Aerni et. al discusses feminist pedagogy as a tool to bring critical thinking and creativity to the economics classroom; situating the learning of economics as social action rather than something given to learn from textbooks<sup>49</sup>. They provide a model for the application of feminist pedagogy and illustrate the approach with classroom-tested examples. Feminist economists more often and clearly show how content can be altered to be more inclusive to promote informed citizens. They signify the fact that gendered thought processes and the inherently gendered nature of the social life commonly exclude women and the feminine values from privileged social spheres including science. Furthermore, they inform that such metaphors are asymmetrical in the sense that the masculine -feminine dualisms are hierarchical i.e. masculine values are universal; they subordinate and marginalize feminine values. Thus, feminist thinking, uncovering the gendered relations in analysis, improves science by freeing it from the straitjacket of masculine mythology. Feminist philosophy of knowledge production process refers us to go over the discussions in the literature of sociology of knowledge<sup>50</sup>. Feminist philosophy strives to understand why people have thought as they have and by doing so it provides us with objectivity in science and better interpretations of human society.

Majority of economists, compared to other social scientists, become much alienated to their subject of study. Fascination with “science”, doing “scientific” research removed majority of economists from understanding social reality. Certain techniques to investigate phenomena and accumulate knowledge are called “scientific”. It is usually based on empirical evidence that is measurable and put through reasoning. Reasoning is indeed interpretation through logic, mathematics, psychology, and philosophy. Process of reasoning contains perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. However, economists argue that since their major method is mathematical, for reasoning they are free from softer dimensions of reasoning. Feminist economists have been pushing these boundaries by deconstruction, which is used widely in feminist theory<sup>51</sup>. Nelson identifies dichotomies under different headings; 1- public-private, individual agent-society, institution, efficiency-equity under the domain of economics; 2- rigorous-intuitive, precise-vague, objective-subjective, scientific/non-scientific, detached-committed, mathematical-verbal, formal-informal, general-particular under methods of economics; 3-individual-social, self-interested/other-interested, autonomous-dependent, rational-emotional, acts-by choice/acts by nature as key assumptions; 4- masculine-feminine, men-women as in gender/sex association<sup>52</sup>.

This dualistic pattern of science reproduces itself continuously, yet worse, strengthening the detachments from reality through knowledge production. Thus there comes out an epistemological responsibility on all the scholars to be careful in reflecting their social setup in their theories. This Sandra Harding calls is strong reflexivity<sup>53</sup>, strong in a sense that the dominant standing might be a gain into the production of knowledge with reflexivity. Only by this way, objectivity can be maximized. This is totally opposite to what modern science imply with neutrality. It requires a struggle against the illiteracy of the elite i.e. illiteracy about what they are doing and thinking that the way they are doing is the only way it could be. Reflexivity is particularly essential in teaching. Knowledge changes the world and beyond that knowledge changes itself. Feminist knowledge claims strong objectivity in sciences. As put by Harding “...[f]eminist work in economics and other social sciences, as well as in biology and the humanities, has made its greatest contributions to the growth of knowledge when it has been able to step outside the preoccupations of the disciplines and, from the perspective of one or another of the diverse political discourses constructed from the perspective of women’s lives and interests, take a fresh look at nature, social relations and the ways the dominant discourses have presented them...” (1995: 27-28).

### **Conclusion:**

The most general conclusion of this article is that the feminist economists have created powerful foundation for a desirable economics. At the very outset, feminist economists argue that economic relations can only be understood when gender is considered as a hierarchical analytical category and that the hierarchical relations are

regulated by patriarchy. They redefine economics around social provisioning and reconceptualized fundamental notions analyzed within the discipline. This study aims to summarize some of these contributions provided under the umbrella of feminist economics and present continuing leaps.

Feminist economics given its wide spectrum carry different colors and tones within, and ongoing dialogue among feminist economics enables the field to renew and reproduce itself. One of the aims that are shared by all feminist economists has been to conduct research free from male bias. Recognition of the importance of personal experiences has remained the distinguishing feature of feminist economics. Yet, the dilemmas at practical level for feminist economists are serious. They face patriarchal academic rules and norms, which are internalized and acted on by very same feminist economists every day. Feminist economists face conflicts within and take up challenges against each other. Another significant obstacle is tenured positions at economics departments. Alternative research methods and methodologies that are taken up to investigate complex issues by the feminist economists are not always accepted in (majority of) economics departments. In most, cases topics are categorized as “soft” issues and methods and methodologies are found to be not “rigorous” enough. In most cases, feminist economists face serious conflicts when requirements for tenure positions, acceptance to economic publications, and eligibility for research funds are at stake.

The continued leap for feminist economists is unwaveringly pursuing the solid feminist pedagogy for social provisioning and well-being for all. If power sharing cannot be actualized in the classrooms, departments, research institutes, and in all kind of spaces of co-learning, it cannot be realized and nurtured later on in life and work. Unfortunately, they are still massive obstacles for such an endeavor. Nevertheless, current massive economic crisis and crumbling education systems around the world may be opening a new window for continued introduction and application of feminist pedagogical approaches in economics education. Feminist economists need to nurture their communities and continue to raise self-awareness as well as community awareness in the process of co-learning and teaching. By introducing innovative and creative learning paths, feminist economists will put students at the center of learning process; create safe classrooms for open dialogues; support students in building their own curriculum, empower students in building and re-building knowledge. At the most abstract terms, feminist economists should simply act on the beliefs and values, which help them to dream about desirable economics.

- <sup>1</sup> This article is limited with the US, Canada and Western Europe feminist economics literature. Literature from feminist economists of the rest of the world will definitely enrich the paper in the future.
- <sup>2</sup> Emel Memis and Ozge Ozay, "Essay on Feminist Economics Paradigm Reiterating the Manifestations of Gender Inequalities" Unpublished Manuscript, University of Utah, 2006.
- <sup>3</sup> Ellen Mutari, "...As broad as our life experience: visions of feminist political economy, 1972-1991". *Review of Radical Political Economics*. 33 (2001): 379-399.
- <sup>4</sup> See Marianne A. Ferber, and Julie A. Nelson (eds.), *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory And Economics*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993. Also see Marilyn Power, "Social Provisioning as a Starting Point for Feminist Economics". *Feminist Economics*. 10 (3) (2004): 3-19.; Drucilla K. Barker and Edith Kuiper (ed), "Towards a Feminist Philosophy of Economics. London: Routledge, 2003.
- <sup>5</sup> Lourdes Beneria, and Gita Sen, "Accumulation, Reproduction, and Women's Role in Economic Development: Boserup Revisited." In *Women's Work* edited by Eleanor Leacock and Helen I. Safa, MA: Bergin and Garvey Publishers:141-157, 1986.
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- <sup>7</sup> Lourdes Beneria, *Gender, Development, and Globalization*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- <sup>8</sup> M. D. Brennan, "Defending the indefensible? Culture's Role in the Productive/Unproductive Dichotomy", *Feminist Economics*, 12 (3). (2006).
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- <sup>11</sup> Gayle Rubin, "The traffic in women: Notes on the 'Political economy' of Sex". In *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, edited by Rayna R. Reiter. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975.
- <sup>12</sup> Nilufer Çagatay and Korkut Erturk, "Gender and Globalization: A Macroeconomic Perspective", technical background paper for the Final Report of the World Commission on the Social Dimension of Globalization, *A Fair Globalization: Creating Opportunities For All*, ILO, Geneva, 2004.
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- <sup>15</sup> Heidi Hartmann, 1976.
- <sup>16</sup> William P. Bridges and Robert L. Nelson, "Markets in hierarchies: Organizational and Market Influences on Gender Inequality in a State Pay System". *American Journal of Sociology*. 95. 1989: 616-58. Joan Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A theory of Gendered Organizations". *Gender and Society*. 4 (2). (1990):139-158. Deborah M. Figart, "Discrimination, Theories of". In *The Elgar Companion to Feminist Economics* edited by Janice Peterson and Meg Lewis USA: Edward Elgar. 1999: 107-112.
- <sup>17</sup> Women have traditionally had jobs that are part-time, or less secure jobs at the informal sector and women constitute the lower end of a segregated labour market concentrated in a few occupations.

- <sup>18</sup> Lee M. V. Badgett, “The Wage Effects of Sexual Orientation and Discrimination”. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*. 48 (1995): 726–739. Julie A. Matthaehi, “Patriarchy”. In *The Elgar companion to feminist economics* edited by Janice Peterson and Meg Lewis USA: Edward Elgar. 1999:592-600.
- <sup>19</sup> Jane Humphries, “Women: Scapegoats and Safety Valves in the Great Depression”. *Review of Radical Political Economics*. 8 (1) (1976): 98-121.
- <sup>20</sup> Barbara Bergmann, “Occupational Segregation, Wages and Profits When Employers Discriminate by Race or Sex”. *Eastern Economic Journal*. 1 (2/3) (1974):103-10..
- <sup>21</sup> Heidi Hartmann, “Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job segregation by Sex”. *Signs* 1(3) (1976): 137-169.
- <sup>22</sup> Ann Markusen. “Feminist Notes on Introductory Economics”. *Review of Radical Political Economics*. 9 (3) (1976): 1-6. Nancy Folbre, “Patriarchy in Colonial New England”. *Review of Radical Political Economics*. 12 (2) (1980): 4-13. Bergmann, Barbara. “Occupational Segregation, Wages and Profits When Employers Discriminate by Race or Sex”. *Eastern Economic Journal*. 1 (2/3) (1974):103-10. Heidi Hartmann, “Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex”. *Signs* 1(3) (1976): 137-169.
- <sup>23</sup> Julie Nelson, “The Study of Choice or the Study of Provisioning? Gender and the Definition of Economics”. In *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and Economics* edited by Ferber, Marianne A. and Julie A. Nelson. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993
- <sup>24</sup> Nilufer Çagatay, Diane Elson and Caren Grown (eds.). Special Issue on Gender, Adjustment and Macroeconomics. *World Development*. 23 (11) (1995).
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- <sup>28</sup> *The Elgar companion to feminist economics* edited by Janice Peterson and Meg Lewis USA: Edward Elgar.
- <sup>29</sup> Marianne A. Ferber and Julie. A. Nelson (eds.) *Feminist Economics Today: Beyond Economic Man*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003.
- <sup>30</sup> Julie Nelson, “Feminist Economics”. In *The new Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, Palgrave Macmillan edited by Steven N. Durlauf and Larry E. Blume, 2005.
- <sup>31</sup> Julie Nelson, “Feminist Economics”. In *The new Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, Palgrave Macmillan edited by Steven N. Durlauf and Larry E. Blume, 2005.
- <sup>32</sup>Emel Memis and Ozge Ozay, “Eviçi Uğraşlardan İktisatta Karşılıksız Emeğe: Türkiye Üzerine Yapılan Çalışmalara İlişkin Bir Değerlendirme’, in Birkaç Arpa Boyu...21. Yüzyıla Girerken Türkiye’de Feminist Çalışmalar, edited by Serpil Sancar, Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, İstanbul, 2011.
- <sup>33</sup> Emel Memis, *Inter and Intra-class Distribution of Income: Turkish Manufacturing, 1970-2000*, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, 2007.
- <sup>34</sup> Amartya Sen, “Gender Inequality and Theories of Justice”. *Women, Culture and Development* edited by Martha Nussbaum ve Jonathan Glover. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995. Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An essay on Entitlement and Deprivation*, Oxford University Press, 1981.
- <sup>35</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, “Capabilities as Fundamental Entitlements: Sen and Social Justice”. *Feminist Economics*. 9 (2 – 3) (2003): 33-59. Amartya. Sen, “Commodities and Capabilities”, Reprinted in 1999 by Oxford University Press,

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<sup>36</sup> Amartya Sen, "Gender Inequality and Theories of Justice". In *Women, Culture and Development* edited by Martha Nussbaum ve Jonathan Glover. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999.

<sup>37</sup> Ingrid Robeyns, "Sen's Capability Approach and Gender Inequality: Selecting Relevant Capabilities". *Feminist Economics*. 9 (2 – 3) (2003): 61-92.

<sup>38</sup> Bina Agarwal, *A Field of One's Own: Gender and Land Rights in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

<sup>39</sup> See Braunstein, 2011 in this volume.

<sup>40</sup> Emel Memis and Ozge Ozay, "Essay on Feminist Economics Paradigm Reiterating the Manifestations of Gender Inequalities" Unpublished Manuscript, University of Utah, 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Diane Elson (ed.). *Male Bias in the Development Process*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991.

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Bina Agarwal, Jane Humphries and Ingrid Robeyns. Special issue on Amartya Sen's work and ideas. *Feminist Economics*, 9 (2,3) (2003).

<sup>42</sup> Nancy Folbre, *Who Pays for the Kids?* New York: Routledge, 1994.

<sup>43</sup> Julie A. Nelson, 1996. *Feminism, Objectivity, and Economics*. London: Routledge, 1996.

<sup>44</sup> Mary H. Strober, "Review of Walby, Patriarchy at Work". *American Journal of Sociology* (1987). Jean Shackelford. "Exploring the intersections of more inclusive course contents and learning environments: Toward a feminist pedagogy in economics." *Feminist Economics*. 5(1) (1999): 29-44.

<sup>45</sup> Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin, 1996.

<sup>46</sup> Maier H. Mark, Kim McGoldrick, Scott Simkins, Starting Point: Pedagogical Resources for Teaching and Learning Economics, available at: (accessed 5 October 2011). [www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/dee2009/presentations/simkins.pdf](http://www.economicsnetwork.ac.uk/dee2009/presentations/simkins.pdf) (accessed 5 October 2011).

<sup>47</sup> The forthcoming publication is an outcome of the Starting Point Project, a National Science Foundation funded project developed in collaboration with the Science Education Resource Center (SERC) at Carleton College. The Start Point project grew out of the work of three economists - Mark Maier, Scott Simkins and Kim Marie McGoldrick and a geologist Cathy Manduca.

<sup>48</sup> Edith Kuiper and Jolande Sap (eds). *Out of the Margin* Routledge London, 1995.

<sup>49</sup> April Laskey Aerni, McGoldrick, KimMarie (eds). *Valuing us all: Feminist pedagogy and economics*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

<sup>50</sup> Sociology of knowledge is concerned with the origin of ideas, having the assumption that all knowledge is influenced by a particular value system which changes historically and culturally but that is totally different from subjective individual perspectives.

<sup>51</sup> Robeyns, 2003.

<sup>52</sup> Nelson, 1996.

<sup>53</sup> Harding, 1995.

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