The most valuable of all Capitall; a gender reading of economics texts
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Chapter 8

Summary and conclusions

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis has been to analyze the gendered character of economic texts and to further theorize the relationship between gender and economics. To achieve this objective, it contains an exercise in gender reading of historical and more recent economic texts, and endeavors to develop an analytical framework to analyze the results. The rereading of economic texts from a feminist and gender perspective provided new insights into the content and meanings ascribed to gender differences, into 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and into the economic content of the various texts.

To investigate the gendered character of economic texts such as those of Becker (1981) and Pencavel (1986), considerable attention was paid to the text and to the context in which major concepts and theories were introduced and defined. In addressing the intertextual and contextual character of original and historic economic texts written in various periods in the history of economic science, attention was also paid to the standardization of economic concepts and the role gender plays here. In assessing the impact of gender on the economic content of the texts, the contribution of these established concepts to the reproduction and construction of gender in economic texts was also addressed.

Section 8.2 of this concluding chapter contains a summary of the preceding chapters. Section 8.3 evaluates the analytical framework proposed and developed in Chapter 4. Section 8.4 and 8.5 take stock respectively of the empirical and the theoretical results produced in this thesis and section 8.6 provides suggestions for further research and ways to arrive at a gender-aware perspective on economics.

8.2 Summary

Four parts constitute this thesis that addresses as central question 'Are economic texts gendered? If so, how, and so what?'

Part I provides the reader with an introduction, an elaboration of the central question and a first reading of two mainstream economic texts, Becker (1981) and Pencavel (1986). Part II contains an analytical framework and its further elaboration in the investigation of four historical economic texts from two periods: early political economy and early neoclassical
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economics. Part III brings together the findings so far and applies these in the further analysis of the texts addressed in Part I, and contains the conclusions.

Part I consists of the first three chapters. Chapter 1 positions the project in relation to various fields of study comprising the philosophy and history of economics, women's studies and feminist economics. The central question is elaborated into five sub-questions, which are dealt with in the subsequent chapters. Central concepts such as 'sex', 'gender', 'hierarchical and asymmetrical dualisms' and 'masculine or feminist perspectives' are explained and the structure of this thesis is outlined.

In Part II, Chapters 2 and 3 focus on answering the first two subquestions 'Are economic texts linked to biological or cultural concepts of gender, and if so how?' and 'How are "femininity" and "masculinity" given content in economic texts?' Chapter 2 contains a first, feminist reading of Becker's *Treatise on the Family* (1981). Becker's reasoning was followed throughout the book and the construction of his argument was analyzed together with the redefinition of gender that went along with it. In his book Becker starts from the consumer behavior model and posits the equality (in the sense of identity) of women and men as economic agents. He uses this as the basis to construct his model on the division of time and labor within the family. He was shown to apply both a biological concept of gender and a masculine perspective. Based on the link between 'household and other activities' and women, and 'market and other activities' and men, and his distinction between the value of household-time and market-time, Becker was shown to explain the (relative) value of household time and the market behavior of women and men. In general it emerges that throughout his book Becker constructs gender as a complementary, hierarchical and asymmetrical dualism, and postulates specialization between time spent on market activities and on household activities as based on a biological concept of gender differences. In addition to his use of a biological concept of gender differences, abstract reasoning, and his use of confirming empirical data, it is his definition of 'basic economic assumptions' and other established economic concepts that provides Becker with a theoretical basis for his economic theory of family behavior that is in his view universally applicable.

In chapter 3 John Pencavel's 'Labor Supply of Men: A Survey' (1986), the first chapter of *The Handbook of Labor Economics* (Ashenfelter & Layard, eds) was read from a feminist perspective. This reading showed that Pencavel, like Becker, applies in this text both a biological concept of gender differences and a masculine perspective. This chapter shows that throughout his article Pencavel applies a dualist approach in his discussion of data, stylized facts, standardized theory and research conducted in the field of labor economics. This results in the construction of a specific model of behavior on the labor market; a model that coincides with the identity of an American prime-age and middle-class married man (with children and a spouse who stays at home to take care of them). Pencavel links this model of behavior to 'the individual'; the economic agent of the 'canonical' theoretical model outlined in Pencavel's text. As Pencavel indicates, hardly any theory testing takes place in this field - the theory would not survive it - and its predictive force for groups other than the one indicated above is rather limited. However, the theoretical and practical set up of *The Handbook* and the research conducted in the field both provide Pencavel with the required material and determine the limits within which he has to work. In addition to the use of gender in the two texts, the readings show the role of established concepts and theories in the reproduction and construction of gender and the need for an analytical Gender concept and theoretical
framework for analysis of the relation between gender and economic science.

The next three chapters that together constitute Part III elaborate the conceptualization of the relation between gender and economic science, thus addressing the third sub-question ‘How can we conceptualize the changing relationship between gender and economics, more specifically economic texts?’ This framework is subsequently applied in the analysis of several pivotal historical texts in economic science.

Chapter 4 contains the development of a theoretical framework that is a) based on the acknowledgement of the social and historical character of economic science, b) perceives economic texts as both a means and a result of negotiations over the definition of gender and economic concepts, which may turn out differently in science than in society at large, and c) acknowledges the process of standardization of gendered concepts in economics. In the social context, gender was distinguished at the symbolic, the conceptual, the structural and the individual level. In the academic context gender is distinguished at the same levels. At all these levels gender - whether or not as a means to power - is conceived as being continuously redefined and under negotiation. This happens in affirmation and/or in contradiction of gender at other levels, and its results can thus only be assessed a posteriori. This framework was further operationalized and subsequently applied in the analysis of seminal historical economic texts in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5 and 6 not only addressed the first two research questions on the use of sex/gender distinction and perceptions of gender, but also dealt with the fourth question 'What is the impact of the applied conceptualization of gender on the economic content of the text?' Chapter 5 focused on early political economy texts by William Petty (1623-1687) and Adam Smith (1723-1790). These two founders of the economic discipline applied a biological concept of gender and reasoned from a masculine perspective, which resulted in a focus on men's activities. The analysis showed that sometimes Petty's texts as published in *The Economic Writings of Sir William Petty* (1899) also applied the concept of 'Man' to women (together with men). However, when he reasoned in the abstract he consistently used this term in reference to persons with masculine characteristics only. Part of the scientific experimental movement of the late 17th century and as one of the first political economists, Petty had a relatively independent academic and social position. This position enabled him to conduct his research and to associate himself with the then emerging and flourishing sciences, such as mathematics and medicine. In this context Petty regarded it as useful to refer to authorities such as Francis Bacon. He used data from established practices of tax levy, from the bills of mortality in London, and he developed his own system of accounting a nation's production, the gendered character of which was indicated. Petty addressed the questions he considered of interest for those in power, and stressed his use of the scientific method to confer authority on his investigations. On the one hand Petty appeared to make use of the academic definition of man established by philosophers such as Hobbes and Bacon. On the other hand he also used a social gender metaphor as a basis for his explanation and elaboration of his theory of value ('Labor is the Father and Land the Mother'). In his investigations he used not only data and symbols, but also definitions (of productivity, professions, etc.) as part of the social gender structure. Various levels were indicated in his texts where gender was reproduced and constructed, both affirming and contradicting one another. At the level of gender identity Petty did not seem to contribute to or apply any new gender notions. All in all, the result was shown to be a hierarchical and asymmetrical concept of gender and specific limitations on
Petty's economic accounts, especially his conceptualization of labor as the producer of value.

The texts by Adam Smith, the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) and *An Inquiry into the Causes and Nature of the Wealth of Nature* (1776) were published in a century and in a country in which considerable social change was occurring. Moreover, considerable progress was made in this period in sciences such as physics and political philosophy. Unlike Petty, Smith writes at some length on the relationship between God and man and individual behavior. In addition to elaborated and well-thought-through arguments and his own personal experience, Smith seeks guidance and authority for his writings in the works of ancient Greek philosophers. Gendered dichotomies, standardized in science and in society at large, were shown to be used by Smith as building blocks in both the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (TMS) and the *Wealth of Nations* (WN). More specifically, the moral behavior of men, while including the masculine pole of these dichotomies (e.g. the public, the ratio, the subject), was articulated as masculine (as aiming at identification with the impartial spectator and the attainment of self-command), and elaborated in opposition to 'Nature', 'Fortune' and 'weak women'. This perception of gender identity figured as basis for his economic treatise, the *Wealth of Nations*. The social shifts in the understanding and conceptualization of the deity, nature, man, labor, etc. are reproduced and constructed in Smith's texts. 'Man' and his labor occupy a central position in the analysis. Implicit and explicit references to the gender structure emerged. In the direct social context it appeared that women, for instance, had no access to universities. In the conceptualization and use of the changing organization of the family, marriage legislation and social norms in the context of gender relations are an implicit part of Smith's definitions of 'labor', 'equality of men', 'specialization', 'market relations', 'independence' and 'productivity'. Smith described a society based on market relations.

In Chapter 6 texts by William Stanley Jevons (1835-1882) and Alfred Marshall (1842-1924) were addressed. Like those of Petty and Smith, the texts of both these English founders of neoclassical theory apply a biological concept of gender differences and reason from a masculine perspective, while redefining economic science. In the context of a by then well-established academic tradition, Jevons strongly opposed the then dominant tradition of Ricardo and Mill. In the *Theory of Political Economy* (1871) he redefines economic science in dualist logical and mathematical terms. To stress and articulate the scientific character of economics, Jevons refers to the standardized concept of 'Man' and his relation to nature, thereby reproducing the hierarchical and asymmetrical relationship between man and nature at the philosophical level. Against the background of well-established capitalist social relations - including the strict sex-segregation of labor - Jevons redefines economic theory, the economic agent and the definition of the boundaries of economic science from a masculine perspective. Moral considerations are linked to the family and the burden it represents, and placed in opposition to self-interest. Household work is conceptualized as capital and as performed by men. Jevons suggests developing economics by dividing the research into various sub fields in which specialized research is conducted based on one coherent approach to economics.

Marshall (1890) elaborated in his *Principles of Economics* (1890) the marginalist approach and made it accessible to a broader public, especially businessmen. At the same time, he redefined 'Man' and his relation to 'Nature' in reference to current academic discussions on evolution in biology and sociology. The - English gentle - 'Man' (married, with a spouse at home to take care of the children) thus becomes the highest form of development. 'Nature' is there to be compelled and controlled. To acquire guidance and status for his work,
Marshall explicitly places himself in the economic scientific tradition and, in addition to detailed arguments and references to other scholars, founds his work in assertions of what is 'normal' over what is 'true'. Against the background of active social movements and the manifestly dark side of capitalism, Marshall aimed to elevate the male worker. The field of economic science is redefined as the study of the business life of men, restating the equality of men, 'dismissing' women's work in the household as 'Capital of the highest value'. As he was personally acquainted with the women's movement in academia, there are signs that his perception of gender identity is a step towards the acknowledgement of women as economic, independent agents; he does acknowledge in his text (1890) the importance of household work and women's economic contribution. However, the references to current conceptualizations of 'Motherhood' as based on biological instincts largely confirms the hierarchical and asymmetrical perception of gender, as his economics only account for men's activities.

Part IV consists of this Chapter and Chapter 7, which revisits the texts by Pencavel (1986) and Becker (1981) against the background of the findings of Part II, and provides an epilogue on Becker (1991) and on Ashenfelter & Layard (eds) (1999). The gendered character of Pencavel (1986) and Becker (1981) were discussed as part of their academic and social context, taking into account the findings on the standardization of gendered concepts in Chapter 5 and 6. Both texts were shown to reproduce academic and social notions of gender at various levels of the text while making use of central concepts and definitions that became standardized over decades and even centuries. At the philosophical level Becker's redefinition of economic science is not achieved by reference to 'Man' (in relation to nature) but by reference to 'Economic Man' as part of established scientific theory. This enables him to restate masculine identity in modern terms and to extend economic theory to a field that used to lie outside economics, without making many references to non-standard entities such as women and/or 'femininity'. Pencavel is able to refer successfully to the Popperian philosophy of science, to standardized economic theory and to stylized facts as value-free approaches to reality.

The attention paid throughout the thesis to the fifth subquestion 'How can a feminist perspective and/or a gender-aware approach contribute to the reading of economic texts?' is here brought together in this 8th Chapter. An discussion on options for change and for the integration of gender in economic analysis completes this chapter.

8.3 The analytical framework evaluated

The analytical framework proposed and elaborated in this thesis provides a means of analyzing and explaining the way gender enters economic reasoning, including the texts that are generally regarded as gender neutral, since these 'do not address women'. It gives economists and others an instrument for investigating and tracing the various implicit valuations and definitions of gender in the texts at hand. The premise underlying this framework is that gender - the notions of masculinity and femininity - constitutes an aspect of economic scientific knowledge that has been neglected, if not denied, for a long time and for various reasons. As such, the framework does not address the relation of gender to class and race and other characteristics by which people distinguish and value themselves and other
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people. The framework brings together textual analysis and historical investigations. The focus on seminal texts provides the reader with concrete and limited empirical material, and makes the research conducted here repeatable. It can be applied by (many) others on other texts, which will provide us with a clearer and more detailed picture of the relation between gender & economics.

The analysis makes it possible to trace the hidden gender meanings at various levels in these texts. In order to do this however, knowledge of the historical and academic contexts is required. This was provided by investigations at various levels within the historical contexts in which these texts emerged. The conceptual distinction between the academic, the social, economic and political context proved useful in that it enabled us to address the various uses of gender separately and assess their different uses in economic science. This distinction together with the historical approach applied made it possible to assess and investigate the standardization and use of established gendered economic concepts.

By addressing three different periods, it was possible to indicate the change in both the use and perception of gender, and the definition and use of economic concepts. It also made it possible to analyze the way gendered notions gained ontological status and the reflexive usage as established concepts. The use made of economic and gender concepts that are considered to be established and that are dealt with as naturalized notions, were shown as becoming part of the body of thought available to the scholar as established concepts. Where, for instance, Jevons and Marshall referred to eugenic, sexist and sometimes racist notions about the motives of the laborer, Pencavel could lean on established notions, expressed in mathematical formulae. However, much more research than is feasible in the context of this thesis is required to investigate these aspects of the development of economic thought. The investigations in the academic, social, economic, and personal context - limited and directed as these were to facilitate the search for gender perceptions and meanings - showed the relevance and fruitfulness of such research. The framework helped to bring together the various ways in which gender is given content and meaning and showed the interconnectedness between the different levels in academia and in society at large at which gender can be distinguished.

This framework also provided a place for the personal perceptions of gender and economic science of individual economic scholars, while avoiding the trap of becoming psychological or ascribing unwarranted causes and effects to phenomena. The Popperian position that the context of discovery does not matter loses its relevance when the construction and meaning of texts are being investigated. Especially since it is here that perceptions of gender generally enter scientific (economic) reasoning and produce their specific bias. It makes it possible to acknowledge and show the way economic scholars and societies in general have changing perceptions of what they regard as a universal difference between women and men and to identify the meaning that is ascribed to this perception of gender. The application of this framework has in various instances compelled me, the researcher, to sharpen the analysis. This led in various cases to new ideas and new insights that appeared to be consistent with what I found in the empirical material. Sticking to the analytical framework also helped me to come up with again new findings, thus showing its empirical progressivity.
8.4 Empirical findings and results: gender in economic texts

All the economic texts investigated applied, not unexpectedly, a biological concept of gender differences. What was more surprising was that all these authors wrote from a masculine perspective and focused on the activities of men in their writings. Although initially a distinction was drawn between the application of a masculine perspective and the focus on men and their activities, they appeared to be difficult to separate.

Even more surprising, however, was the observation that Adam Smith and Jevons went so far as almost to deny women's existence. They took women's generative powers for granted and ignored their productive powers in their economic theorizing. Both Smith and Jevons gave the impression that mentioning women in whatever relation to the subject at hand was perceived as weakening the scientific nature of the economic argument.

In the older texts the concept of 'Man' was paramount. Though ambiguous in meaning in reference to real human beings (though never referring to women alone), when used in abstract reasoning in the texts analyzed the term consistently referred to persons with masculine characteristics. In both literary and scientific texts the use of this term vanishes in general around 1960. In economic texts however, it remains in use as 'Economic Man'.

Various cases of canonization were indicated in which references to historical texts were used to affirm and accommodate rather than to understand the historical background of the present discussions.

The definitions of the content and meaning of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' in the analyzed texts, accompanying the redefinition of economic concepts and of economics as a science, shifts over the centuries. This undermines the view expressed by Becker that the roles and features ascribed to women and men across times and cultures are unambiguous. Instead, the texts by the authors here analyzed show a variety of views and uses of gender.

 Petty mainly addressed the activities of men and ascribed women's work to the household (of men); thus it was more his masculine perspective than his specific gender concept that defined his economic concepts. He first referred to a social gender metaphor in which both the masculine (Labor/the Father) and the feminine (Land/the Mother) are conceived as productive. This was later replaced by the concept of 'Labor' as the measure of value, to be measured by the average living costs per day of an average adult man.

In Adam Smith's analysis, the sexual division of labor was taken as an implicit assumption and as such determined the perspective taken in the analysis. Articulating his moral theory, Adam Smith stressed the isolation of men, the importance of self-command and the suppression of extreme personal feelings. In his economic treatise, his focus is on men's activities, the equality and interdependence of men, and the role of money and the market. Women's power to produce children, their economic contribution and the role of the family is denied. At the level of individual gender, of gender structure, of established concepts and gender symbolism, the conceptualization of what was considered as 'feminine' was valued negative and in many cases absent.

Jevons (1871) and Marshall (1890) were published during a period in which gender relations changed radically. Jevons (1871) draws a gender/class distinction and focuses on lower-class men. In Marshall (1890), motherhood is highly valued and the housewife perceived as the cultivator of the house, of bourgeois values and of the human capital of boys. Against the background of the upper-class ideal of masculinity as linked to the ability to earn
income for wife and children, Marshall (1890) defines economics as the science that studies what men do in the business part of their life and how wealth (income) can be improved. The conceptualization of consumption is elaborated from a masculine perspective, extending the concepts developed for the public sphere, the sphere of production by men. Marshall's notion of individual gender however, is innovative and modern, especially when compared to that of Smith. As the work and activities of women play no substantive role in Marshall (1890), women's contribution to the economy becomes less and less visible to economists.

Becker's *A Treatise on the Family* (1981) endeavors to cover the relations and developments in the family in terms of mainstream economic theory. The economic approach provides Becker with an authoritative and supposedly value-neutral and scientific approach to reality as a starting point for his analysis. Based on a redefinition of economic science and references to exact sciences such as biology, Becker provides a hierarchical and asymmetrical reconceptualization of gender that is put forward as being non-cultural and biologically based. When we look at what Becker indicates as 'masculinity' and 'femininity' we see that as 'men's activities' are considered to be 'hunting, soldiering, farming and other market activities', while women's activities are childbearing, raising of children and 'other household activities'. 'Protection' and 'food' or 'supplying necessities' are posted as male activities, and boys as 'biologically oriented towards market activities'. As for the exact content of household and market activities, one has to fill in these concepts oneself as Becker refers here to some assumed common understanding.

Pencavel's 'Labor Supply of Men: A Survey' in *The Handbook of Labor Economics* (1986) edited by O. Ashenfelter & R. Layard, provides a review of the economic research in the field of labor economics. This first chapter of the handbook introduces the base or canonical model in the field and focuses on the labor supply of men. The family model of the husband as the financial provider of the family comes to the fore were the behavior of men on the labor market is mainly discussed in relation to wage. Cases in which the wife also has a job are discussed with non-standard theory as exceptions. The complementary part to this chapter is discussed in chapter two by Killingsworth and Heckman that deals with women's labor market behavior in relation to marriage and fertility issues.

### 8.5 Theoretical findings

It is possible to distill from the findings in this thesis some regularities, which could even be described as a mechanism. Of course 6 seminal texts are not enough to come to a founded or even a grounded theory, but they might suggest more research in this direction. The regular features that came to the fore from this analysis are as follows.

- All authors apply a biological concept of gender differences.
- All authors apply a masculine perspective without reflecting upon it.
- Some authors entirely overlook women's existence and do not include them or their contribution to production and/or wealth in their economic considerations. Thus, alongside a masculine perspective - a partial account from a man's social and economic position - a radical masculine perspective can be distinguished: a radical masculine perspective denies women's existence, their social and economic roles and contributions, which leads to a distorted view of the economy (see e.g. Smith 1776,
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Jevons 1871).

- The concept of 'Man' refers to men rather than to women, it cannot be considered as a gender neutral or generic term.
- Economic concepts in all the texts studied made references to supposedly fixed perceptions of gender at various levels (symbols, established concepts, structures, and identity) in the academic tradition and in society at large.
- The texts show a repeated reconceptualization of the economy within a changing social context from a masculine perspective, together with a continuing standardization of economic concepts and institutionalization of economic science.
- The reconceptualization of the economy within a changing social context from a masculine perspective is accompanied by a restatement of the value-free nature of the researcher's analysis and goes with the restatement standardisation of facts and concepts.
- By addressing human behavior not as culturally, economically or politically determined, but as universal, biologically based and a-historical, economics provides its theories with scientific authority.

Since the biological concept of gender differences was generally applied in Western societies, and the concept of gender as such only emerged in the 1970s, the broad use of biological concepts of gender differences in economic texts is not very surprising. It is the ignorance, denial and the radicality of the masculine perspective that requires an explanation. It is not so much 'the real motives' of these authors but rather the regular features and the exceptions concerning the use of gender notions that demand our attention.

The mechanism that is here suggested as being at work in economic science can be posited thus: In economic science there has been a historical connection between the masculine perception of identity, the identification of economists with other men in society, and rather than a striving for universal and objective knowledge, a claiming of that knowledge. This triangle, together with the process of professionalization and institutionalization of economic science, has prevented economists from dealing with problems concerning women and men that are fundamental to their field. Instead these problems have motivated them again and again to restate their science as 'scientific' in accordance with their ideas of what they considered to be successful science.

8.6 Options for change and suggestions for further research

The analyzed texts are old texts, they are fixed and as such cannot be changed (though they can, of course, be read selectively, see e.g. the WN). The way they are read and what is learned from them can, however, be changed. For instance, instead of assuming their generic character, economists can become aware that these texts and the theoretical notions they contain refer to white upper-class Anglo-Saxon (gentle-) men and are linked in no small way to their specific human experience. Reading these texts from a feminist perspective, reading them 'as a woman' changed the meaning of the text at hand: it showed the various ways such texts can be read, that there is not one achieved meaning; it showed the hidden (gender)
meanings in these texts that are also part of their content.

The change from a biological concept to a broader cultural concept of gender and from a hierarchical and asymmetrical to a more balanced perception of gender contains both positive and normative aspects. The positive aspects are that the structuring influence of gender in science and in society at large has to be acknowledged. Its denial is at best motivated by the wish for equality, and in other cases by negligence, ignorance and limited perceptions of self-interest. None of these, however, can be justified as scientific.

Whether consciously or not, a researcher takes up a position in processes in which gender is redefined, and here comes the normative part: where the biological concept of gender differences and the hierarchical and asymmetrical perception of gender are dominant and posited as value free, the researcher who does not take a critical stance in these matters is bound to reproduce and confirm the predominant hierarchical and asymmetrical conceptualization of gender. In order to achieve an understanding and awareness of the workings of gender in various instances in economic science, a critical stance is required. This is not easy however, and requires considerable strength of character, as the institutional arrangement and values in the discipline still go in another direction at present.

The use of gendered dualist reasoning, the repetitive assertion of masculine identity, together with an implicit or explicit claim of generality has resulted in a negative definition of 'femininity'. On the other hand it has also resulted in a unified masculine identity concept. Nowadays, the neoclassical research program is increasingly equated with economics as a science. This state of affairs in economic science hampers the articulation of perceptions of reality that are based on other perceptions of gender or that take another, more feminist perspective. Over the years, however, the boundaries set by academic tradition have become more and more limiting for individual economists. We see now, for instance, the tendency for socio-economic scientific research institutes to be increasingly based on the neoclassical research program, thus excluding other theoretical approaches as a basis for research. As the conceptualization of the economy and its institutionalization continues to take place from a masculine, limited perspective, it is to be expected that economic science will become increasingly internally orientated. But if social and political legitimization is undermined too far, the redefinition of economic concepts and perceptions of gender is required and will (hopefully) occur. The question then, is where do we go? However, the midst of a crisis is not the best time to make such decisions.

The assessment, conceptualization and value of women's agency and contribution to the family and to society at large are major problems for economists. Smith (1776), Jevons (1871), Marshall (1890) and Becker (1981, 1991) all touch upon them but seem to be unable to deal with them properly. For Becker (1981) they are the reason for the success of the efficient family and their absence the cause of all kinds of misery. He implores women to return to the family for the sake of the success of their children, and thereby to give men what they need. Important here is the denial of men's dependence on women, and that of human beings on nature. A similar factor accounts for the failure of Smith (1776), and Marshall (1890), as economists, to analyze the content, role and function of 'the most valuable of all Capital'. Marshall (1890) just demands women's presence and availability in the home. It is time economists discussed these issues extensively, instead of eliminating them by means of
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Feminist economists have taken up this challenge, applying neoclassical, institutional, Marxist and other theoretical approaches. Important work has been done in filling the gap between the data available on men and those on women's economic behavior. Feminist economics addresses a range of issues that cover the whole subject of economics. The progress made in thirty years is astonishing and deserves support. Alternative accounts and explanations that systematically investigate women's behavior and experience and attempt to integrate these in more general economic accounts are presently hindered in their further development as they are considered as either external to economic science and/or as not scientific. Science however, cannot develop where basic notions have attained the status of dogma without turning into an applied approach or computational program. What is self-evident for scholars and scientists from other disciplines needs to be restated for economics as a science. To paraphrase Jevons: heterodoxy is essential if economics is to be a science at all.

Suggestions for further research

A gender-aware perception of economic science will come about supported by a set of social developments and hopefully also by some changes inside the discipline. As Stikker (2000) and others indicate, women will in the coming years take a more prominent and visible social position because of economic developments, the process of globalization and demographic changes. Changes at micro level are expected to end to the organization of university life, as we knew it in the previous centuries. The environment in which a man lived either on a campus or at home, where his daily needs were taken care of by his wife or mother, is no longer available. The number of women who are available for performing the role of supporting housewife is decreasing. As a consequence of this, cooperation and creativity might take the place of isolation and pure rationality, which will lead to other basic assumptions being seen as 'to be evidently true.'

To deal with these changes in society, we will need to use our brains in adapting to these new circumstances. Economists may have the option of sticking to or returning to biological explanations and traditional role models, but that is expected to be insufficient. To get out of Becker's straitjacket and to make progress, we will have to question basic assumptions in economic theory concerning the sexual division of labor and to investigate the scientific significance of sex differences in advance, before applying such assumptions. We will also have to investigate further to what extent and how we are caught in the hierarchical and asymmetrical notions of gender of the past.

Gender and changes in the relations between women and men have to be acknowledged as part of the economy and in economic science. They have enormous, fundamental implications for the way goods and people are allocated, how this allocation is organized and how this is analyzed by economists. As such, changing gender relations are an issue central to economic science.

The assumed link between women as 'people with children' and men 'who are free to choose as they like' has to be abandoned. The same counts for the dualist reasoning applied in a lot of economic theories that goes with the conceptualization of rational behavior and rational economic man. Reality is so much richer than we presently allow ourselves to acknowledge.

Scientific inquiry needs to be uncoupled from the masculine perception of identity.
We need a perception of scientific economic research that acknowledges emotions, the body and institutions, and that deals with reality instead of with imaginary worlds in which there is always a number of equilibria you can deal with. This will enable researchers to acknowledge ambiguities, including those of definitions of gender differences, the workings of gender in the form of habits, tacit knowledge and unconscious behavior, and the negotiations that take place everywhere in society, including economic science.

The current focus of principally male economists on what men do, and their non-identification with women’s work and research topics concerning women’s issues, needs to alter. As was indicated above, sex/gender distinctions and perceptions of gender are restated and redefined at various levels in economic science. When the importance of a gender-aware approach is acknowledged, adjustments and changes are required at all these levels. This is something that is already occurring, but not assessed as such by economists and methodologists.

With the increasing attention and measuring of impact of publications, I would suggest a need for more research on the tendency of male (and female) economists to refer less than is justified to female (and/or feminist) authors than to male authors.

Universities and thus economic departments are at present moving in the direction of more hierarchy and more explicit rules for rewards and achievements. This has a lot to do with scarcity of resources and with the competitiveness that is believed to have a beneficial impact on academic study. Gender should also here be seen as an important aspect of the institution. New and challenging ideas about the way men and women work together as applied in business organization theory can open up the organization to new forms of cooperation and thus new insights. To describe, explain and understand the processes in economic science mentioned here, the development of economic theory and research should be addressed as a social and historical institution.

Feminist economists apply theoretical approaches ranging from the strictly neoclassical, to Marxist and postmodernist. They take up various positions in the economics discipline. This diversity of points of view, approaches and contributions to the discussions, is in my view at least partly responsible for the productivity of this field and essential for its prolonged success.

In the field of feminist economics, I would suggest more research on the history and philosophy of economics from a feminist perspective. Besides being more inspiring - analyzing misogynous texts and being a woman at the same time is not a very cheerful activity - it would also be useful to conduct more analyses on economic work by J.S. Mill and H. Taylor for instance. The economic work by feminist economists such as C. Perkins-Gilman and B. Webb Potter is also expected to produce useful insights in the way more feminist economic texts are structured compared to texts based on a masculine perspective.

This does not detract, however, from the need for genuinely new and original work in conceptualizing an economy in which women and men are acknowledged in their various and changing contributions to common and individual wealth. But then after all, what else does a scholar dream of?