

By unravelling the political and economic history of numerous clinical techniques and tests in use in the early nineteenth century, Pfeffer shows the sexism of gynaecological science, medical practice and state policy. For instance, whether the tests for fertility/infertility were based on physical characteristics like pitch of voice and facial hair, or physiological characteristics based on x-rays, or bioassays of semen and vaginal mucus, a view of women's bodies as passive and men's as active is continually reinforced. While it may appear that involuntary childlessness is principally a concern for women, many tests which have been used to assess men's fertility are also discussed in considerable detail. The evidence that is cited makes it obvious that the scientific and social basis of fertility and infertility is still poorly understood.

In the context of British reproductive medicine, the implementation of the National Health Service in the late 1940s, its gradual erosion since the 1980s, and increasingly evident private medicine in the 1990s, have had striking effects on the services and treatment of infertility and involuntary childlessness. Pfeffer identifies the links between the doctors, the National Health Service and the pharmaceutical industry, with the increased interest in and market for hormonal and technological treatment for both contraception and conception. While Pfeffer generally limits her critique to Britain, the analysis of the effect of privatization of the health care system is particularly relevant to the current Canadian context, where privatization of parts of the health care system is under consideration.

On the one hand, in the 1970s and 1980s state policies regulated the use of hormones for contraception, and the use of artificial insemination for infertile heterosexual couples. On the other hand, since the 1980s the use of assisted conception technologies, or new reproductive technologies, to provide services for childless couples has been a key element of the privati-

zation of medicine in Britain. These services are, therefore, largely outside the limits of state policy which can protect women and men from being unfairly exploited by unethical doctors and the commercial interests of pharmaceutical companies. In this political and economic history, Pfeffer also makes it clear that assisted conception technologies once again place the responsibility for infertility on women; whereas, in the 1970s and 1980s interventions like artificial insemination had more explicitly included men as contributors to the issue of infertility.

The Stork and the Syringe is an important contribution to the sociological and historical literature on women and reproduction which effectively accounts for gender and class, even though analysis of 'race' and ethnicity are less explicit. Pfeffer provides a complex analysis of the political economy of reproductive medicine in Britain that links science and technology, medical practice, state policies and commercial interests, with women's and men's experiences of infertility and involuntary childlessness.

THE STRATEGIC SILENCE: GENDER AND ECONOMIC POLICY

Isabella Bakker, editor. Published by Zed Books Ltd. with the North and South Institute, 1994.

by Ana Isla

We are at the stage where we must reconstruct our notion of progress on a just and ecologically sound basis in concert with new forms of political and social relations or face the continuing destitution of the majority of women and the world's people and inevitable environmental catastrophe.

To overcome the present economic and social inequalities that serve as a pretext to maintain the dominant patriarchal structures, women need to achieve an equitable and autonomous co-existence.

From a feminist perspective, we have no choice but to resist Neoclassical General Equilibrium Economics (NGEE) and its neoclassical economic theory, the inspiration of the policy-makers, for the following reasons: it is profit centred, not life centred; it masks the fact the workers in the labour market reproduce their own value and produce a surplus-value; it suffers from gender blindness because it obscures the link between production and reproduction and mystifies the link between household production and the so-called formal sector production; it ignores the exclusion of large segments of the population based on race and the discrimination within the labour market; it fails to acknowledge the value of nature and the goods and services produced, mainly by women, outside the market; it downplays ecological stress, which can not be measured in a system which accords no value to nature, laying too much emphasis on the role of individuals while ignoring institutional factors, such as the treadmill of production

- It ignores power in gender relations, based on a hierarchy of access to resources and unequal terms of exchange between women and men
- It legitimizes the coercive power that is used to protect the dominant structure, especially power relations among nations and the domestic and international interest of corporations.

Even if we conclude that NGEE, is solid as an exercise in logic but inadequate for resolving social questions such as gender inequity, the best way to empower women is by refuting its presumptions, and supporting the search for economic alternatives.

Although not written specifically to counter prevailing economic theory, this book helps to explain feminist concerns regarding Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) and Restructuring and why they need to be reformed or challenged.

Articles in Part II document the outcomes of SAPs in the North and the South. Empirical research and case studies show the effects on women, Barbara Evers explains that

the effect of restructuring depends on the level of industrialization, employment, development of safety nets and the nature of the gendered division of labour. Martha MacDonald's case study of fishery in Atlantic Canada shows that restructuring has worsened conditions for the workforce, increased feminization of the plant workforce and lead to the emergence of new household and community relationships. Nilufer Cagatay on the Turkish economy, says women of all categories suffered from higher unemployment rates, but a process of feminization took place in the urban areas, in home-working clothes production. Antonietta Barron's case study, shows how the internationalization of agricultural production, especially in fruits and vegetable enabled rural Mexican women to become wage earners. But women's access to wages higher than the national minimum was contrabanced by the deterioration of their living and working conditions, imposed by the economic and social reform, which prevented them from carrying out reproductive labour.

Articles in Part I deal theoretically with the developments documented in Part II. The authors recognize that global restructuring is occurring in a gendered terrain and that macro-economic policy needs to be engendered. They make the case that linking a gender-relation analysis to the economic policy framework may help curtail differential material outcomes for women and men. They discuss the inclusion of non-market relations into the economic discourse and propose elements of gender-aware economics in the wave of restructuring. Focusing on mechanisms that exclude or diminish benefits due to gender asymmetries, Isabella Bakker, for instance, develops three levels of argument: to recognize the influence of markets in standard economies as institutions imbued with structural power relations and having an asymmetrical gender dimension;- to consider the interdependence of market and non-market activity at aggregate

levels of macro-economics; to distinguish the differential impact and feedback on a gendered basis under Structural Adjustment policies which involve micro and macro-initiatives.

The neoclassical paradigm is used, by Diane Elson, to examine how social institutions and monetary relationships become gender barriers. She says "if [the meso institution and macro-policy instruments] operate in ways that are detrimental to women, then this is fundamentally due to the characteristic of individuals at the micro-level, and in particular to prejudice against women". For her, the appropriate response is equal-opportunities legislation, education to combat prejudice and 'safety nets' for women denied gainful employment—not a restructuring of meso institutions and a rethinking of macro-policy reforms.

The inclusion of non-market relations into the economic discourse, promoted by Bakker, Elson and others in the book, demands a strong state to channel resources to women. The assumption is that correct policies can be made and effectively implemented by the technocrats if state institutions are devised in such a way as to defend the interests of women as revealed through gender-relation analysis.

Two of the articles in Part I, however, go further. Working with a critical paradigm they engage the need to engender economic not just economic policy and to go beyond simply curbing the worst gender effects of this system. Janine Brodie says that gendered dimensions of restructuring extend far beyond the economic. Marjory Williams points to the need to define two key concepts: productivity and efficiency. These articles bring an important dimension to this collection.

For feminist proposals for state policy to mitigate the worst effects of destructive and unjust capitalist and patriarchal economic arrangements which do not challenge these structures at the deepest level, are doomed to failure. They overlook the fact that

as long as neo-classical economic theory prevails, its devaluation of nature and women's and community reproductive work will mean that this activity cannot be adequately recognized or supported in policy. They also fail to take the power relations between countries into account. Third World states (the military, the police, the security forces, the courts, the corporate elite) are limited only to initiatives which are consistent with the interests of international elites. No Third World government, for instance, has been able to resist the imposition of Structural Adjustment Programs. These programmes forcibly restructure local economies to produce for export rather than local needs in order to earn the foreign currency to pay of the nation's external debt. They are being imposed on the population of South and North, through the IMF and the World Bank, by the Group of 7 (G7) governments of the powerful and wealthy industrial nations to the benefit of transnational capital. If we fail to challenge the neoclassical market theory that justifies this global restructuring our proposals for gender sensitive policy may simply result in more efficient exploitation of women.

PALESTINIAN WOMEN: IDENTITY AND EXPERIENCE

Ebba Augustin, Ed. London: Zed Books, 1993.

by Aida Farrag Graff

Fifteen out of sixteen essays in this book are by Palestinian women, and are divided into two parts: "Women in Palestinian Society and Politics," and "Women in the Intifada." They all ring with the passion of those engaged in a fight for survival—as when we read the appeal of sixty year old Umm Mohammed whose two sons are slated for deportation; or the accounts of women who have been imprisoned by the Israeli forces; or of