

# **Globalisation and the Male/Female Divide: An Overview**

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## **Who made Adam Smith's dinner? Feminist critiques of the International Political Economy**

Feminist economic theorists throw the basis of traditional economic thinking, the idea of rational economic man, into doubt. Traditional economics is based upon two main patriarchal assumptions. It is based upon the way in which men in western societies, and in their institutions and systems of government, make their livings and create wealth. Caroline Sweetman, editor of the Oxfam journal, *Gender and Development*, expresses it this way, 'Homo Economicus is nominally asexual, but inhabits a very male world of paid work and priced leisure' (Sweetman, 2008). Women do not fit in. Feminist critics have pointed out that women's work, mostly unpaid and unrecognised 'counts for nothing' in malestream systems of accounting (Waring, 1988). Traditional economics is based, also, on an idea that men are 'rational' and seek to maximise self interest, an idea severely challenged by the behaviour in the finance industry which led to the global financial crisis. This chapter will present feminist criticisms of the concept of 'rational economic man'.

Feminist international relations theorist, Jan Pettman, argues, 'Many aspects of the IPE do not make any sense if we do not gender the account' (Pettman, 1996: 160). Yet, despite three decades of feminist critique of the international political economy (Mies, 1986; Enloe, 1989), however, even leftwing critics show no awareness that their discipline could be gendered. Thus the collection, *American Empire and the Political Economy of Global Finance*, republished in 2009 with an added chapter on the global financial crisis, contains one woman amongst its ten contributors and does not have 'woman/women', 'gender', or 'feminism' in its index (Panitsch and Konings, 2009). The book takes account of economic class but not sex class. In contrast to such texts this chapter will focus on sex class, and look at the ways in which men, masculinity, and male domination, have constructed global capitalism, and particularly finance capitalism. The global financial crisis needs to be gendered and this chapter will offer a starting point for this task.

### **Economic accounting and women's work**

The main problem in traditional malestream interpretations of political economy, according to feminist economic theorists, is the way in which economic accounting takes place. GDP, for instance, counts only that which is in the paid economy. It does not take into account subsistence, unpaid work, or exploitation of nature as a 'free' good (Bennholdt-Thomson and Mies, 1999). Bennholdt-Thomson and Mies, for instance, point out in their 'Iceberg Model of Capitalist Patriarchal Economics', that only a very small part of the world's work is in the 'visible' economy, just the tip of the iceberg. The vast majority of the iceberg which is under the surface of the water contains all of the rest of the economic activity taking place in the

world, including that performed by housewives, homeworkers, the informal sector, child labour, subsistence peasants, and the exploitation of colonies (external and internal), the South, Eastern Europe, etc, and Nature, which is regarded as a free good to be mined, fished and destroyed (Bennholdt-Thomson and Mies, 1999: 31).

The vast majority of women's work is not in the visible economy, including unpaid work in the home, domestic labour, unpaid work in the marketplace, labour in bearing and rearing children, and unpaid sexual and emotional labour. This unpaid work of women constitutes the unrecognised foundation of all that which is actually counted in traditional economics. The very idea of 'work', as something that takes place outside the home for a set number of hours per day, is constructed from the interests of men, whose lunchboxes are packed by their wives (Pateman, 1988). Wives are a vital necessity for the male worker. Wives buy and cook food, buy sheets and place clean ones on the bed, organise clean clothes for male family members. But they do much more than these more tangible activities, providing emotional sustenance or 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1983), and contributing to the wages that their husbands gain in market labour.

The issue of how women's unpaid domestic labour should be understood in Marxist and feminist theory has been an important discussion since the early 1970s. Maria Mies explains that it was the issue of women's unpaid labour that animated the debate about how capitalism and patriarchy were entwined to create 'capitalist patriarchy' (Mies, 1998). It became clear in the 1980s, she says, that 'women's unpaid caring and nurturing work in the household was subsidizing not only the male wage but also capital accumulation' (Mies, 1998: ix). The importance of this work was obscured by constructing the woman as 'mother, wife and housewife', which was the 'trick by which 50 per cent of human labour was defined as a free good' (Mies, 1998: ix). Marxist feminist and radical or materialist feminist theorists approach this issue in different ways. Christine Delphy and Diana Leonard offer a most useful summary of the debates and a sharp analysis of the place of domestic labour in what they call 'materialist' feminist theory (Delphy and Leonard, 1992). They explain that the main flaw in the 'domestic labour' debates is that socialist feminist theorists tend to see women's unpaid work as being performed for 'capitalism' rather than for individual men. Delphy and Leonard rework the idea of exploitation, usually understood as the appropriation of the fruits of labour by others. They explain that women are exploited 'not because the factory or field in which you work belongs to someone else, but more simply because your labour belongs to someone else – because you do not own your own ability to work (your own labour power)' (Delphy and Leonard, 1992: 43). It is the male heads of the family who own women's labour, as they explain, 'Owning the means of production is unnecessary if you own slaves or serfs or wives or children' (Ibid).

Feminist theorising of the international political economy can be unreasonably euphemistic in order to avoid mentioning male domination and women's oppression. A 2010 article in an issue of the important feminist journal *Signs* that is devoted to analysis of the IPE, uses the term 'difference' rather than having to refer to men or women at all. Jennifer Bair's account investigates the 'relationship between difference and capital' (Bair, 2010: 224). Use of this euphemism effectively obscures the existence of male domination and the ways in which men, or any powerful groups may profit from the labour of the less powerful. Oppression, exploitation and subordination, good strong political terms that describe inequality are disappeared by 'difference'. 'Difference' cannot explain why women perform a wide variety of tasks directly for the betterment of the men they live with.

Delphy and Leonard are critical of domestic labour theorists for concentrating on a narrow understanding of domestic labour, such matters as cleaning, cooking, childcare, and failing to acknowledge the wide variety of unpaid work that wives perform, such as that done for 'their husbands' occupations', for men's leisure activities, and for their emotional and sexual well-being' (Delphy and Leonard, 1992: 226). This latter form of work, they say, 'gets completely lost sight of because it is so varied, so personalized and so intimate' (Delphy and Leonard, 1992: 226). They explain that husbands use their wives' labour for their own economic gain. Wives take bookings for husbands who are plumbers, for instance, work in the shop and on the family farm, and they 'calculate, type and send out estimates and bills to clients' (Ibid). When men are employed wives are often part of the deal for employers, in jobs such as the diplomatic services, the rural police force, and running a pub. In pubs wives have the position of 'institutionalised consort' through being a hostess or cooking meals, or 'looking decorative' behind a counter. Wives also help with husbands' voluntary and leisure activities. They have to clean leisure clothing and equipment, and run fund-raising for Boy Scout troops. They may help husbands run for political office and provide 'hospitality'. Wives often take over when husbands are absent, in a crisis, or when he is busy. The wives of academics may type up research reports and do other research and administrative tasks. Clergymen's wives have to support constituents and make appointments. Farmers' wives may have to run the farm when their husband is away. Moreover, Delphy and Leonard state, 'Most of these activities can be done even if the wife herself has paid employment' (Delphy and Leonard: 231). The aspect of the unpaid work of wives which directly services the man's income generating activities has gained a little more recognition from scholars since the early 1990s when the Delphy and Leonard book was written. Lisa Philipps calls it 'unpaid market labour' (Philipps, 2008). She defines this as 'the involvement of family members in bread-winning activities that are the official responsibility of only one person in the household' (Philipps, 2008: 37). Philipps chides feminist work in political economy for positing that industrial capitalism 'split waged work in the market from unwaged work in the household' (Philipps, 2008: 51). Rather, she argues, unpaid and paid market labour are interdependent.

Another less well recognised aspect of the work of wives is the provision of 'moral' support to husbands, and caring for their wellbeing. Wives have the role of informal therapists, to whom husbands can 'unburden' themselves. They have 'an important role as providers of trouble-free sex – which is why employers may encourage men to take their wives with them on jobs abroad' (Delphy and Leonard, 1992: 232). Wives also 'make a house a home' (Delphy and Leonard, 1992: 233). They smile and keep cheerful, 'flatter, excuse, boost, sympathize, and pay attention to men' which 'gives men a sense of belonging, of empowerment, and of general well-being' (Ibid). The care that wives deliver to men, Anthony McMahon remarks in *Taking Care of Men*, is hidden under ideas of biological destiny or romantic love, and the idea that this care might serve men's interests is often strongly refuted (McMahon, 1999). But he considers it important to recognise the scale and significance of the caring for men that women do, and the way in which it constructs men's success and achievement in the marketplace.

It is not 'rational' for women to perform any of this labour, which services the betterment of their menfolk and gives them no monetary reward. Women's unpaid labour constitutes a powerful challenge to the idea of rational economic man that underlies traditional economic theory. Feminist theorist Lourdes Beneria explains that, 'Economic rationality is based on the expectation that human beings behave in such ways as to achieve maximum gains' (Beneria, 1999: 64). She says that in this way of thinking, 'the entrepreneur seeks to maximize profits, the employee seeks to attain the highest earnings possible, and the consumer to maximize his

or her utility' (Beneria, 1999: 64). This basic idea of 'rational economic man', Beneria says, has been embodied in neo-classical theory, 'Economic rationality is assumed to be the norm in human behaviour' (Beneria, 1999: 64). The fact that women engage in so much unpaid work is not clearly in their self interest, and provides a rather damning criticism of the idea of rational economic man. Adam Smith in the eighteenth century is the economic theorist most usually identified as the originator of the idea that the 'selfish pursuit of individual gain' was positively linked to the 'wealth of nations through the invisible hand of the market' (Beneria, 1999: 64). Marilyn Waring quotes Adam Smith illustrating his idea of how self interest works, to show the male bias it represents. He says, 'It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest' (quoted in Waring, p. 19). Waring pithily sums up the crucial and foundational flaw in this analysis. In fact Smith would not have got his dinner without the unpaid work of his wife who was clearly not motivated by self interest, and Smith, like other men, relies on the lack of self interest on the part of women in order for him to act in the marketplace at all:

If Adam Smith was fed daily by Mrs Smith, he omitted to notice or to mention it. He did not, of course, pay her. What *her* interest was in feeding him we can only guess, for Adam Smith saw no "value" in what she did. (Waring, 1988: 19)

The issue of women's unpaid labour has been crucial to feminist understandings of how the international political economy operates.

## **Women and globalisation**

Feminist theorists have produced a considerable body of work examining the way in which women have been affected by the globalisation of the economy (Enloe, 1989). Maria Mies explains that her important analysis of the position of women in globalisation was spurred by the need to extend feminist understanding of the importance of women's unpaid labour in the west to women in the rest of the world, where women's 'housewifized' labour, i.e. labour that was seen as secondary, and easily exploitable, was a foundational component of what was coming to be called 'globalisation' (Mies, 1998). Her *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (1986) is a tour de force which shows how women are mobilized around the world to enable capitalist accumulation. She shows how women in the rich and poor worlds are linked. This linkage occurs through the creation of Export Processing Zones, for example, in which women constitute the overwhelming majority of workers in the production of clothing and shoes in cheap labour enclaves in countries such as Indonesia and Vietnam. Women in the rich world can buy very cheap clothes and shoes because they are manufactured from the labour of women who are paid a pittance and work in poor conditions. Women are attractive as workers because they are considered docile, dextrous and cheap, and because their cultural relegation to subordinate roles as housewives in the new production sites, so that paid employment can be seen as secondary, facilitates their exploitation (Bair, 2010). As companies in rich countries seek to reduce their costs in order to compete with the cheap goods allowed in by neo-liberal free trade policies and the reduction of tariff barriers, women are entering low paid and exploitative work in very large numbers in less developed countries (Mies, 1998).

Christa Wichterich explains that it was cheap women's labour that offered the main element in the 'comparative advantage' that caused the shift in production from the industrial heartlands of old to poor countries in Europe and then to South East Asia (Wichterich, 2000: 1). This shift, she says, revolutionised world trade. There were other elements that made such

a shift attractive, such as general low pay without 'secondary wage-costs', weak trade unions, and fiscal and investment incentives, but women's labour-power was the 'most important 'natural' resource' (Ibid). Wichterich, like Maria Mies, points out that alongside this outsourcing to poor countries, there are colonies in the west, in which women are engaged in low paid and unprotected 'homeworking', to produce clothing, footwear and other goods. She explains that the role of woman in the international political economy is to produce the profits of multinational companies through outsourcing, and to provide the shock absorbers for the brutal exigencies of the economic changes being forced through by neo-liberal economic ideologies and practices. As countries are pitted against each other in 'fierce undercutting' she says, "'globalized woman' is burnt up as a natural fuel; she is the piece-rate worker in export industries, the worker living abroad who sends back foreign currency, the prostitute or catalogue bride on the international body and marriage markets, and the voluntary worker who helps to absorb the shock of social cutbacks and structural adjustment' (Wichterich, 2000: 167).

Maria Mies has developed the useful concept of 'housewifization' to describe what she sees as the destruction of properly remunerated jobs with benefits that male workers in the west had come to expect before the ravages of globalisation in the 1980s onwards (Mies, 1998). Women were 'housewifized', she says, during the industrial revolution as a strict division between public and private worlds was created and women of the middle classes were removed from the public world to be imprisoned in the role of housewife within the home. Women were permitted 'housewifized' jobs in the twentieth century, which were part time, poorly paid and without benefits, on the grounds that their husbands were the main breadwinners and women were not really workers but housewives. During the last decades of the twentieth century as neo-liberal globalization took hold, she contends, more and more jobs, including those usually done by men, were housewifized, i.e. casualized, to the extent that many workers, male and female, had to take more than one job and juggle them to survive financially. The jobs that have been created in these countries are housewifized jobs. They are badly paid, part-time, casual, without the protection of labour laws, non-unionised, short-term, atomised. There is a great deal of homeworking, the exploitation of which is nowadays camouflaged by concepts like 'self-employment' or 'entrepreneurship', 'Much of what is included in this service sector is nothing but commodified housework' (Bennholdt-Thomson and Mies, 1999: 47). Mies is able to powerfully adapt language and concepts derived from feminist ideas to explain broader processes in the world. She does this in her concept of 'colonies of the white man' too. She places all parts of the 'submerged "hidden economy"...nature, women and colonized people and territories' within the category of 'Colonies of White Men' where 'White Men stands here for the western industrial system' (Mies, 1996: 6). As the shock absorbers of neo-liberal economic policies and the forces of globalisation, it is likely that women have experienced severe harms from the global financial crisis which are gendered, i.e. different, in many cases, from those experienced by men.

## **Gendering the global financial crisis**

The global financial crisis is a powerful example for the feminist argument that 'economic man' is not rational at all. In an Australian public television show on the financial crisis, Dr John Coates, who has made a reputation from his work on testosterone levels in financial traders, commented, 'Yeah - we have to build a model that shows how people are systematically non-rational and unfortunately non rational at the points at which it's most dangerous', and the narrator, Jonica Newby reinforced the point, 'Perhaps not extinction yet, but for Homo economicus, it is time to evolve' (Newby, 2009). Since the global financial

crisis occurred in 2007 there have been a few critical articles in the media in the US and Australia pointing out that the GFC has a masculine face, and that blame for the crisis needs to be sheeted home to those who created it, overwhelmingly men, and elite men in particular. Ruth Sunderland, business editor of the UK's *Observer* newspaper has been particularly involved in this gendering of the crisis, by pointing out that international economic deliberations are overwhelmingly dominated by men. Of the World Economic Forum she stated, 'It's ludicrous that men dominated the debate in Davos. The single biggest force for economic growth is being ignored' (Sunderland, 2009), and points out that the crisis will have particularly devastating effects on women. The theme of the WEF was 'Shaping the Post-Crisis World' but half the population was excluded and the 'male Davos elite remains mired in its own preening self-regard and complacency', 'They have wrecked the world economy, but seem oblivious to the idea they may not be the best people to rebuild it'. She points out that crisis was caused by a 'macho, tooth- and-claw brand of capitalism'. There were five women on the abridged list of 170 'business leaders' present, and Sunderland had to trawl through 20 names of invitees before finding a woman, Her Highness the Begum Aga Khan. Sunderland comments that the news media 'have broadcast a steady stream of masculine voices, to the extent that it is remarkable to see or hear a woman'. She points out that the international banks that should be playing a role in resolving the crisis are almost entirely male too, 'The Bank for International Settlements has no female directors; the IMF has one woman executive and the World Bank has two out of 10 executive directors. It's disgraceful'.

The men generally pinpointed as bearing most responsibility for the global financial crisis are those in the finance industry and banking. There is an increasing literature demonstrating the problematic ideology and practice of these men. They represent not just everyday masculinity but hypermasculinity, superpowered by aggressive sexism. Linda McDowell's study of the gendered nature of the banking industry in the city of London (1997) found that men overwhelmingly outnumbered women in managerial grades (88%), with women clustered in clerical roles. She found that the masculine culture of the workplace was represented in language, 'to 'lift your skirts' means to reveal your position, a rising market is referred to as a 'hard-on' and a successful trade is greeted with cries of 'bollocks out'. Another example is 'to rape the cards' which means to exaggerate expenses claims...A number of interviewees suggested that work/deals are as good as/better than orgasm' (McDowell, 1997: 148). Military and sporting images were common, as well as talk of jungles, races and battles. She found the most extreme versions of masculine language in the inner sanctum of hypermasculinity, the trading floors and the dealing rooms, where 'a rougher, tougher type of everyday exchange was more common than in the elite atmosphere of the capital markets and corporate finance divisions' (McDowell, 1997: 151).

McDowell was inspired by the global financial crisis to write a brief article explaining how the masculine culture she identified in 1997 was still dominant in the finance industry, and that this needed to be a part of the explanation for the crisis (2010). In fact, she says, she wonders whether she 'had underestimated this masculine tendency to exaggerate their own abilities' amongst the patriarchs of investment banking (McDowell, 2010: 654). In dealing rooms, she says, a sexualized culture continues, with practices that elevate hypermasculinity and exclude women, such as, 'Exaggerated forms of masculinized language and behaviour... Horseplay, sexualized banter, loud and aggressive talk, as well as forms of sexual harassment'. In this arena, 'women are often forced into the position of unwilling arbiters of boundaries or less than willing participants in the sexualized banter'. Women cannot be equal in this sphere of the finance industry because, 'Social exchanges are still commonly set in

masculinized arenas, including in golf clubs or hospitality suites at major football clubs as well as the lap dancing clubs' (McDowell, 2010: 653). Unfortunately McDowell admits to being impressed by the work of John Coates on the role played by increased levels of testosterone in dealing rooms, and this rather undermines her hitherto determinedly social constructionist approach to the finance industry.

### **Risk taking in the finance industry?**

Neither classical nor left analysis of the international political economy is critical of the ways in which masculinity constructs the ideology and practices, of corporations, of banks, and of the finance industry. Even within feminist theory the necessity of socially constructed masculinity to the workings of the malestream economy is little discussed. There is good research on the masculine cultures of workplaces within corporations and banks, but no wider theoretical interest in the way in which the social construction of masculinity around aggression, competition and risk taking forms the crucial underpinning of the economic system. These three components are highlighted in men's studies accounts of how masculinity is created, as the key elements in its construction. In relation to the global financial crisis, it is risk taking that is most implicated in what took place. Men's studies theorists have sought to explain the ways in which risk taking is created in boys and young men, and documented the harmful results for those men themselves, in suicide, car accidents, drug taking, dangerous sexual practices, and higher mortality rates (Mansdotter, Lundin, Falkstedt and Hemmingsson, 2009). They see competitive sport as playing a central role in inuring boys to be risktakers. Theorists such as Don Sabo and Michael Messner explain how pressuring boys to engage in sports that are painful and can create lifelong injury, particularly to the head, creates a training in carelessness towards the body, and willingness to take risks (McKay, 2000). There are other key aspects to this training, including adventure sports, such as bungee jumping, which have developed into considerable industries in the last two decades (Morrissey, 2008), and inculcation in war culture through toys and games.

The results of the creation of risk taking as such an important element in socially constructed masculinity are serious physical harms to the boys and men themselves, such as in the practice by boys of reckless driving, with young men between 17 and 25 in New South Wales, Australia, having four times as many serious speed-related casualty crashes as young women (Walker, Butland and Connell, 2000). The role of risk taking in the construction of masculinity has been examined in relation to HIV risk in particular. Researchers concerned to lower the intensity of the HIV epidemic have argued that the risk taking element in masculinity must be transformed if HIV is to be contained in Africa (Foreman, 1999). One study, related to HIV risk in the west, examines the relationship of masculinity and risk taking amongst gay men who take part in 'bareback sex' i.e. anal penetration without condoms, either reckless as to risk, or with the risk playing an important part in the pleasure and satisfaction of the behaviour (Holmes, Gastaldo, O'Byrne and Lombard, 2008).

In the last decade neuroscientists have sought to explain the risk taking behaviour of men in the finance industry. Feminist economic theorists have mostly been worried by the implications of this sort of biological essentialism. Kate Bedford and Shirin M. Rai, comment, 'We have seen a proliferation of reductionist biological explanations rather than rigorous analysis' of 'gendered realities' (Bedford and Rai, 2010: 2). Neuroscience takes the approach of evolutionary psychology in seeking to explain behaviour through biology, and male and female hormones. These researchers explain the behaviour of men as resulting from their natural biological difference from women. Neuroscientists provide the 'hard' science for

the claims of evolutionary psychologists, by testing hormone levels. This form of testing is now going on apace to explain the irrationality of male finance workers, and why women are averse to 'risk' and therefore less suited to employment in the finance industry or to investment in what Susan George calls 'casino' capitalism, in particular (1986). A 2007 study, published in the prestigious Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, which appeared immediately before the global financial crisis was recognised to be in motion, studies the 'endocrine system in financial risktaking' (Coates and Herbert, 2008: 6167). John Coates and his collaborator examined the testosterone level in male finance industry traders at 11 in the morning and at 4 in the afternoon to assess whether higher levels of testosterone were associated with greater financial success, 'we predicted that testosterone would rise on days when traders made an above-average gain in the markets' (Ibid: 6167). They found that this hypothesis was correct. They decided that 'high morning testosterone predicts greater profitability for the rest of the day' (Ibid: 6168). However if testosterone levels remained elevated, they considered, this could have very negative effects, causing traders to engage in unreasonably risky behaviour which 'could cause financial markets to deviate from the predictions of rational choice theory' (Ibid: 6170). As John Coates puts it: 'We don't think biochemistry explains what starts a bubble or a crash. We do think however that steroids can exaggerate a bull market and turn it into a bubble. A bull market can almost be seen as a market with roid rage' (Newby, 2009). This research gives the lie to the idea that rational economic man is in charge in the finance industry, rather, according to their accounts, the economic futures of investors, governments, pensioners, are captive to men's testosterone levels.

A similar biologicistic approach is employed in relation to women's 'risk aversion' in the same journal. This article states 'Women are generally more risk averse than men' (Sapienza, Zingales and Maestripieri, 2009). The research studies testosterone levels in men and women in relation to being risk averse and choosing risky financial careers. They found that high levels of testosterone were associated with a tendency towards risk taking in both men and women. The difficulty with studies of this kind, is that they do not take social context into account. The construction of masculinity is not considered because, for such researchers, male behaviour is based upon testosterone. They also do not take into account the possibility that anticipation may affect hormonal levels, although the study on male traders did mention that testosterone rises, 'in athletes preparing for a competition and rises even further in the winning athlete, while falling in the losing one' (Coates and Herbert, 2008: 6167). This could be seen an argument for the effect of social context and behaviour on hormones and not the other way around, i.e. social constructionist rather than biologicistic.

## **Hypermasculinity and sex industry use in trader behaviour**

The hypermasculinity of the finance industry is illustrated by the ways in which male finance executives utilise the sex industry. Masculinity and femininity are constructed in relation to each other and make no sense on their own (Connell, 1995). Men understand themselves as masculine to the extent that they are not feminine and masculine practices are designed to achieve this understanding and self-presentation. One of the most straightforward ways in which men can establish their difference is through the sex industry, in which women are presented and used as sexual subordinates, servicing the male sex right (Pateman, 1988). In this respect in particular there is copious evidence that men in the finance industry are hypermasculine. The men who are supposed to regulate the finance industry in the US, those in the Securities Exchange Commission represent this addiction to the construction of hypermasculinity. Whilst the global financial system was collapsing the SEC enforcement

team was using online pornography. An investigation of porn use by the SEC discovered that a senior attorney at SEC headquarters in Washington spent up to 8 hours a day looking at and downloading porn (Harshaw, 2010). An accountant at the SEC was blocked more than 16,000 times a month from visiting porn websites. Seventeen of the employees found to be using a significant amount of porn were at a senior level and earning salaries up to \$222,418. Pornography use escalated as the global financial crisis unfolded in 2008. One S.E.C. employee started his own private porn business using S.E.C. resources.

Finance industry use of prostitution was depicted in the novel by Tetsuya Ishikawa, a top London employee of the Goldman Sachs bank who was involved in the fraud conducted by the company of selling toxic mortgage investments (Seamark, 2010). Eton and Oxford-educated Tetsuya Ishikawa regularly travelled abroad and admitted: 'The first thing I asked on arriving was, where is the brothel?' The book is based upon his experience of 6 years of the finance industry in London. He 'has admitted in interviews publicising his book that he slept with escorts and regularly visited Spearmint Rhino, the lapdancing club'. His book tells of 'the drugs, prostitutes, strippers, booze and general excessive nightlife' of City bankers in the build-up to the financial crisis. In recent years there has been some exposure of the interrelationship between the sex industry and the finance industry in legal cases taken by women employees who cite discrimination when their male colleagues use sex industry venues for work purposes, reports from the UK feminist organisation the Fawcett Society (Jeffreys, 2010). Feminist theorists have started to argue that this usage constitutes a serious obstacle to the equality of women in the finance industry in particular, but also other businesses in which such practice is being normalised.

## **Financial crisis impact on women**

Most writing on the effects of the GFC on women at this point are speculative, and based upon what has happened to women in previous crises. As Espey, Harper and Jones say in a recent issue of the Oxfam journal *Gender and Development* which is devoted to gendering the crisis, 'The effect of previous economic shocks have been 'poorer nutrition, declining attendance at school (most usually of girls who are considered less worthy of education), longer working hours, and increased strains on adults trying to meet their responsibilities for family care' (Espey, Harper and Jones, 2010: 296). The journal issue is devoted to what is likely to take place rather than what is actually happening on the ground. Dianne Elson explains that the crisis in the global North has been transmitted to developing countries 'through international markets for finance and goods' (Elson, 2010: 204).

The financial crisis is likely to affect women differently from men and in many cases in more severe ways. This is ironic considering that women are the innocent victims of a crisis created by men and masculinity. Before the most recent crisis happened, Irene van Staveren was writing of the way in which men in the finance industry take the risks, and women are forced to bear the burden of them (Staveren, 2002). She explains, 'A shift of financial risk to those who are not responsible for it is costly and unfair. This shift has a significant gender dimension. The generation of excessive financial risk is almost exclusively a male activity. Men are the main decision-makers in finance, men undertake the larger financial transactions, and men are the main speculators. Yet the persons who carry the consequences of global financial crises –especially in the care economy – are predominantly female' (Staveren, 2002: 230). The care economy, she points out, which is mainly female, 'compensate for (mainly male) rent-seeking in financial markets' (Ibid).

One most significant result of the crisis, predicted but still to unfold in many countries, is that women's employment will be the greatest casualty of cutbacks in expenditure as governments seek to make good the very large debts they have run up in order to compensate for the losses caused to the finance industry by men's risk taking. In the UK the unfairness of the cuts that the newly elected government proposes to implement is clear in research carried out by a shadow minister, Yvette Cooper (Asthana, 2010). It shows that 72% of effect of proposed tax and benefit cuts will be suffered by women, and that women will suffer most of the job cuts to the public sector because four in ten of women are in those jobs. Indeed 85.4 per cent of part-time jobs in the civil service are filled by women, and are likely to be those first affected. This has spurred the Fawcett Society, a feminist organisation founded in the nineteenth century, to mount a legal challenge in August 2010 to the budget on the grounds that the cuts will manifestly affect women more than men.

Cuts to public services do not just affect women's jobs. Women suffer doubly, since the care services that were previously state funded have still to be taken care of, and this is now an extra requirement from women's unpaid work. Children, the elderly and the sick have to be cared for by women in the home. Women constitute the reserve army of labour which can be thrown out of work when governments face financial crises. Up til now such policies have tended to affect women in the less developed world more than those in the west. Caroline Sweetman explains that ignoring the reality of women's unpaid work, 'enabled the international institutions that imposed structural adjustment policies on developing countries to ignore the true suffering of women, men and families due to cutbacks in state provision of essential services. Backs to the wall, women struggled – and just about succeeded – in replacing these services and keeping families afloat' (Sweetman, 2008: 1). The present crisis affects women in both rich and poor countries unequally.

Another effect of the financial crisis that has harmed women, is the increased stress that men feel, as their investments go bad, or they lose jobs or contracts. Men take out their stress upon women, in the form of domestic violence. There is greater sexual exploitation of women and girls into prostitution which exploits women's increased vulnerability, as well as offering men stress relief in this form of abuse. When the 1997 East Asia financial crisis took place there was increased trafficking of women through the Northern Chinese border as well as heightened domestic violence. In South Korea, after the crisis, an estimated one in seven women were involved in prostitution. Caroline Sweetman explains, 'Men's inability to find alternative employment which fulfils their vision of themselves as 'real men' often leads to increased violence against women and children within the home' (Sweetman, 2008: 2). Men who become unemployed do not generally wish to take on extra caring roles in the home as their wives shoulder the burden of earning the family income, often in lowly paid jobs. Instead, 'women often end up doing a double shift while men become depressed and violent' (Ibid: 2). In May 2009 a survey of more than 600 domestic violence shelters in the US found a 75% reported increase in women seeking help since the economic downturn in September 2008 (AWID, 2010: 22). In Australia, too, an increase in violence against women has been reported. There has been a 15-20 per cent increase in cases of domestic violence, physical abuse, and neglect, according to the Australian Childhood Foundation (Massola, 2009). In just two months, post crisis, the number of calls spiked sharply from an average of 220 per month to more than 250 per month.

Men facing financial ruin can go to the lengths of murdering their families out of a sense of shame and damaged masculinity. In 2009 a businessman in Shropshire, UK, who was facing financial ruin killed his wife and daughter (Carter, 2009). Christopher Foster shot dead his

wife and 15 year old daughter in their beds, shot the family dogs, placed a horsebox in the driveway so that the fire services could not get in to help, then set fire to the mansion in which the family lived. He died in the blaze. In 2010 a Hampshire, UK, father was deeply in debt (Taylor, 2010). He killed his wife and daughters before hanging himself. Men who murder their families, and then, usually, themselves, are described as family annihilators. It is men who are the perpetrators and usually in a situation in which their wife has separated from them and the murders are motivated by rage and revenge. There has been no research on the connections between family annihilation and men's financial problems, but it may require an understanding of how men's 'honour' is damaged by losing their role as provider to the point where they must kill the wife and family that might reproach them for their improvidence.

## **Gendering the solution**

Solutions to the problems created by economies organised around men's interests and the exclusion of subsistence and unpaid labour, may require more than a tinkering at the edges to bring a few more women in. When measures to prevent further destabilisation in global financial markets show an awareness of the gender dimension, however, they are most likely to involve liberal feminist solutions such as getting more women into the finance industry. Thus a Treasury Committee report from the UK government in April recommended that there should be more women in top finance jobs to improve corporate governance (Penny, 2010). Charles Goodhart, a former Bank of England policy maker, told the committee at a hearing that the crisis would have been less likely if there were more women at a senior level, 'The longer-term, more cautious tendency with less of the alpha male would be highly beneficial' (Penny, 2010). Bringing women in as watchdogs to try to moderate the excesses of men's behaviour is not likely to offer a substantial solution to the problems caused by the gendered nature of the crisis. There is no challenge to masculine culture here, nor an understanding that the finance industry may be based on problematic premises. Women cannot be transformed so that they acquire the same values and behaviours as men in the banking industry without losing precisely the qualities that keep the hidden economy going, i.e. the selfless performance of unpaid labour. Tinkering is not enough when finance capitalism is founded upon risk taking masculinity.

The critique by feminist theorists of not just the crisis, but the gendered nature of economic accounting and the international political economy, suggests that more root and branch change is required. Mies argues that unpaid work needs to be respected, and asks, 'What would an economy look like in which nature mattered, in which women mattered, in which children, in which people mattered, which would not be based on colonizing and exploiting others?' (Mies and Shiva, 1993: 13). This would require the revaluing of women's unpaid work, 'In an alternative paradigm presently colonized and marginalized actors, activities and values will be put into the core (center), because they are central to ensuring that life can go on in its regeneration and fullness'. So long as unpaid work is unrecognised, national and international economic policies can go on structurally adjusting, and reacting to crises, with the expectation that men's anti-social behaviours must be respected and women will be the shock absorbers of the system.

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