
Foreword

This excellent handbook goes far beyond mere disaggregation of economic agents by sex to challenge the mainstream definition of economics as the optimum allocation of scarce resources, and to focus instead on economics as a process of provisioning for well-being, shaped by social norms, including gender norms. It clarifies that gender identities are social constructions that are influenced by, and in turn influence, economic life.

The volume includes contributions from leading feminist economists and scholars from related disciplines, covering both theory and policy, which stem from a commitment to use research to improve economic well-being, especially for the most disadvantaged. The book is relevant to both industrialized and industrializing countries and is written in an accessible style that reflects a multidimensional understanding of economic life. As well as labor market and human development issues, the handbook includes analysis of global and national institutions, macroeconomic and financial policies, and global issues such as migration, environment, and conflicts.

This book will be an invaluable resource for courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels that aim to introduce students to a feminist approach to economics, rather than simply adding 'women' or 'gender' to conventional theorizing. It demonstrates how this kind of feminist economics is not just about discrimination, narrowly understood, but about the gendered character of all aspects of economics and economic policies.

No matter what your specific interest, there is something in the handbook that will illuminate the topic. It should inspire a new generation of researchers to use the tools of feminist social science to investigate the contours and contradictions of economic life in a rapidly changing world in which provisioning for the well-being of the many is challenged by maximizing the profits and wealth of the few.

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