

**Hélène Périvier:** Feminist Economics considers economics from a gender equality perspective. On the one hand this approach interrogates the economics' analytical framework from a feminist standpoint. On the other hand, it contributes to building knowledge to promote gender equality *i.e* by studying and documenting gender differences.

society and this necessitates to describe what we consider as fair). Moreover, feminism has a scientific dimension because it has its own analytical framework and tools to describe and quantify gender inequalities and discriminations. as with any scientific field, many controversies emerge among feminist scholars. Linking economics and feminism is necessary because they are interlinked and bring to one another conceptually.

**WEPS:** *Is Feminist Economics a field that is also defined by the methods it is using ? Does it oppose the neoclassical model?*

**HP:** The feminist perspective is transversal and cannot be restricted to a method, a theoretical frame nor to a specific school of thought. Feminist economics is often defined in opposition to the conceptual framework of the neoclassical model, with a critique of the concept of rationality and of the homo oeconomicus paradigm. But there are neoclassical feminist thinkers using this framework to shed light on gender inequalities .

Nevertheless, one major criticism that can be addressed to the neoclassical model is not the concept of rationality in itself but rather the fact that rationality is taken for granted. The neoclassical conceptual framework rarely questions the conditions in which individuals can exert their rationality. This blind spot does not allow to highlight the different forms domination can take and this is a key contribution with feminist economics. When looking at the methods used in feminist economics studies, we clearly see they are very varied and it gives to this field a subversive dimension!

**WEPS:** *Women economists are quite absent from economic history. How to make their contributions more visible?*

**HP:** There is now much evidence highlighting the contribution of women to economics and aiming to make these contributions more visible (see for instance pioneer research by [Evelyn Forget](#) and her coauthors). In my book, I focus on three French women who worked on economic topics but did not received recognition in the History of Thought.

[Flora Tristan](#), an utopist-socialist, worked on the idea of an international working class association ( before Karl Marx and Friedrich Engel!) and that this should include gender equality.

[Julie-Victoire Daubié](#) was the first woman to pass the baccalaureate and worked a lot on education and training.

Finally, [Clémence Royer](#), was the first to translate Charles Darwin's book *The Origin of Species*. She worked on many economic issues such as taxation and even won a prize before Leon Walras on that topic! Already at their time, these women contributed to producing knowledge and reflecting on gender imbalances and more broadly they contributed to the knowledge in economics. They should be acknowledged for that.

In general, women have often been excluded from academic institutions. But if we consider that economists are the ones pushing the frontier of knowledge and taking part in the scientific controversies of their time, these women truly are part of the field.

**WEPS:** *Today, what kind of barriers to women's recognition or visibility do you identify?*

**HP:** In the first place, women are less visible because they are less numerous, compared to other social sciences. So the question is: *why are there so few women in economics?*

Regularly, the "self-censorship" of women is presented as the main issue : but this is a problematic black box. I believe people are rational, at least at a certain point, and do not simply say "I would like to do that but I won't". If they do not, it is because they feel that the environment is not fully welcoming, that there will be more obstacles. This is well documented by sociology. I think that in economics, young women do not experience the same way as their male colleagues (as shown by [Alice Wu's work](#)).

So, to increase women's visibility, we must act on the number of women in economics, maybe through effective role model policies, but also on the economic environment in itself, in order to offer a safer and more inclusive space, including by producing research on those mechanism.

## Summer readings (and more)

Here are some contents recommended by Hélène and WEPS, to dig deeper into gender economics & women representation (in French and/or English).

### Books:

- **Guillaume Vallet - *Economie politique du genre* (2020)**:  
The book is prefaced by the great feminist economist Julie A. Nelson. A useful handbook on gender economics.
- **Céline Bessière and Sybille Gollac - *Le genre du capital* (2019)**:  
Now a bestseller in the field. Through pieces of lives and detail analysis of practices of layers and "notaires", these two sociologists analyze gender economic inequalities.
- **A Biographical Dictionary of Women Economists - eds Robert W. Dimand, Mary Ann Dimand, and Evelyn L. Forget (2004)**:  
Although not ideal to read by the beach, this book attempts to define economics and include women's work across History.

### Shows:

- **Mrs America (2020)**:  
It is definitely a serie to watch to enter into Reagan's era and see the resistance of conservative women against feminism. A relevant show in the light of the recent conservative backlash in the United States.

### Podcasts:

- **Entendez-vous l'eco - Où sont les femmes économistes? (2022)**:  
Three episodes explaining why women are absent from economics (in French).

## Tips for better co-authoring

Last May, we organized a WEPS breakfast to discuss co-authorship relationships from a gender perspective, with Basak Bayramoglu as our guest. Here is a summary of our discussions.

In line with the literature, during our discussions we have identified two key challenges when it comes to co-authoring. First, the difficulty to share the workload equitably and second, the appreciation of contributions through the order of the authors names.

*It is worth highlighting that participants to our meetings are not representative of the entire profession. They are young female economists, who tend to coauthor more with senior men due to gender imbalances in the discipline.* Nevertheless, several participants highlighted that the workload distribution was problematic especially that they did not felt comfortable asking for a change in this distribution after having started a project.

Second, we discussed appreciation of individual contributions to research projects by peers. This issue is relevant for younger female researchers as recent academic work identifies biases in the appreciation of author's contribution (see [Sarsons et al. \(2021\)](#)). We discussed extensively authors names' order as it is one of the most straightforward way of conveying information on contributions. Despite the literature clearly highlighting how important it is ([Ray and Robson, 2018](#)), authors keep being cited in alphabetical order. Our exchanges highlighted the difficulty for younger researchers to discuss and negotiate with their senior co-authors on this matter.

Potential solutions to both these challenges are: carefully discussing them before engaging in a collaboration and highlighting how they matter. [Ray and Robson \(2018\)](#) also recommend randomizing authors' names and several journals are now asking for [CRediT author statements](#).

### Few useful references along those lines:

- [Boschini and Sjögren \(2007\)](#): Authors find that it women are twice as likely as men to coauthor with women in economics. This pattern is coherent with non-gender neutral preferences in team formation.
- [Ductor et al. \(2018\)](#): From data on the economic literature between 1970 and 2017, authors find that women have 14% less co-authors than men. Their co-authors are also more connected with each other, and they have more repeated collaborations. This difference in network structure explains 20% of the gender output gap on top 5 papers observed by the authors on the period.

• [Lacey and Robson \(2018\)](#): Authors review the literature showing that alphabetical order confers greater benefits on the first author. Lacey develop a model of name-order convention

and show that name randomization has numerous advantages among which acting as a nudge and not being more costly than alphabetical order.

- [Sarsons et al. \(2021\)](#): From academic CV data, authors find an additional co-authored paper increases tenure probability by 7.4% for men and 4.7% for women.

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Next year, we want to improve our communication platforms, build a shared online space, as well as a formal administrative structure. And we are also always looking for fresh ideas and initiatives !

Helping WEPS implies being present at 2 hours events at most every two months, and spending 1/2 day per month on the tasks you choose. It can be writing, leading interviews, reading scientific content, organizing events, ...


If you are interested, contact us at [womeninecon.paris.saclay@gmail.com](mailto:womeninecon.paris.saclay@gmail.com) or on [Twitter](#) !



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