

and Rat offer an in-depth historical account that adds an important layer to existing path-dependence studies; that is, agency can have a differential impact on policy change over time. By adding a layer of sociological enquiry to historical institutionalism, the authors successfully highlight how actors ascribe varying degrees of political salience to benefits within a given welfare area. This hierarchy creates a core cluster that is prone to inertia or gradual change and a contingent cluster that is more susceptible to radical change. However, the causal mechanisms are not always fully clear. Some ideas cut across the core and contingent clusters in an unsystematic way, and the balance of power between actors is sometimes ambiguous. However, the book does send out a strong message that critical junctures require further dissecting to analyse welfare state change.

Sergiu Delcea
New Europe College, Bucharest
sergiu.delcea@gmail.com

Nancy Folbre: *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems: An Intersectional Political Economy*
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This book aims to explain the origin and development of patriarchal systems by using perspectives and tools from Marxism, feminist theory, institutional economics, game theory and bargaining models. The special focus is the interaction between patriarchy and capitalism, but the book also draws on other collective conflicts and hierarchies along the lines of age or race/ethnicity. In the first half of the book, Folbre introduces the theoretical tools to conceptualise and apply her model of an intersectional political economy. In the second half, she uses such tools to challenge some of the narratives around patriarchal institutions, capitalism, care and the welfare state, and final-

ly points to possible strategies of coordination for a 'feminism of the 99%' (p. 226).

After offering broad insight into her theoretical foundations and the aims of the book in the first chapter, in the second chapter, Folbre zooms in on the definitions of patriarchy and how they can be understood. Folbre argues that explaining patriarchy needs to go beyond biology or a simple theme of male dominance. Rather, she draws on feminist literature to outline three areas of patriarchal political institutions: 'property rights over women and children' (p. 25), 'restrictions on the individual rights of women, children, and sexually non-conforming individuals' (p. 25) and 'rules of remuneration for time, effort, and resources devoted to the care of others, especially dependents' (p. 25). These explanations form the historical context for understanding patriarchal structures and the undervaluation of care work.

The third chapter deals with gender inequality and questions of agency and structure. Marxist approaches argue that gender inequalities in care work benefit capitalists, who aim to keep wages low. Collective interests and pre-capitalist patriarchal structures are largely ignored. The neoclassical argument relies on differences in preferences and on market efficiency. Discrimination is deemed inefficient, leading the free market to drive out those companies that act discriminatorily, for example, in their hiring decisions. Folbre argues that neither approach can deliver a convincing account, as it overlooks the institutional factors influencing bargaining power, earning possibilities in the market and people's ability to enact change. Folbre introduces the concept of collective agency and argues that multiple identities can complicate collective agency.

The fourth chapter traces shortcomings in more classical economic approaches to undervalued or unpriced goods and services. Incomplete property rights regimes over natural capital lead to an under- or un-

priced appropriation of the natural commons, with potentially devastating social and ecological effects. Furthermore, reproduction is defined as the 'production and maintenance of human capabilities' (p. 65). Similar to natural resources, reproduction is often placed outside the market. However, simply extending the market seems not only misguided but also risks exploitation being directed at other vulnerable groups. Finally, social reproduction is understood as the mechanisms that groups use to manifest their position in society. Chapter 5 addresses hierarchies and the concept of exploitation. Folbre describes the latter as an 'unfair division of the gains from coordination' (p. 82), a definition that goes beyond the simple focus on surplus value in capitalist production. The ideas of bargaining power and fallback positions, which are influenced by institutional structures, are key to this definition of exploitation.

The second half of the book starts with a chapter on the workings of patriarchal systems in different periods of human history to understand how collective power along the lines of gender intersects with other social categories. Folbre presents different arguments relating to gender structures in early human groups and points out the gendered elements of violent conflict—women were often taken as spoils of war. These observations lead to her argument that female slavery might have preceded the more institutionalised practices of slavery regardless of gender. The common elements in the historical explanations of gender inequality are the transition to sedentary agriculture and, in general, the emergence of private property. Regimes of high fertility can lead to advanced labour specialisation between men and women, with the latter specialising in care work and work that is more compatible with it. Property rights over land and goods lead to the need to ensure patrilineal connections. Property rights over offspring represent insurance for old age. Using fur-

ther examples of slavery and feudalism, Folbre illustrates the intersectional elements of exploitation and hierarchies.

In Chapter 7, Folbre focuses on capitalist development and its interactions with gender. Changes in the economic system affect the costs and benefits of reproduction. Declines in fertility, on the other hand, can be argued to have led to a weakening of patriarchal structures. Folbre further shows that there is much disagreement about the concrete value of unpaid work for capitalism. While unpaid care work has been argued to help keep wages down, increasing the labour supply can also weaken the bargaining power of workers. Folbre likewise uses this chapter to elaborate on the ideas of the intersecting structures of collective power and argues that a gender-divided labour market has concrete short-run benefits for male wage earners but could have also prevented the emergence of effective coalitions among the lower and middle classes.

Chapters 8 and 9 take readers closer to the welfare state and the family. In the former, Folbre describes the development of the welfare state and its role in family work and care work. Using the example of the family wage and its eventual decline, Folbre shows how class interests can intersect and conflict with gender. She argues that while the welfare state partly socialises the costs of care through its redistribution machine, there are still substantial externalities in care work. As social investments remain heavily undervalued, we will continue to see under-investments in public goods (for empirical evidence, see Gál R. I., Vanhuyse P., & Vargha L. (2018). Pro-elderly Welfare States within Child-oriented Societies. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(6), 944–958; Vanhuyse P., & Gál R. I. (2021). Intergenerational Resource Transfers as the Cement of Society: The Asymmetric Role of Families and Policies. In M. Daly, B. Pfau-Effinger, N. Gilbert & D. Besharov (eds.), *International Handbook*

of Family Policy: A Life-Course Perspective. Oxford University Press). In Chapter 9, Folbre goes into detail, describing the gender inequalities in care within and outside of marriages, the poverty risks of motherhood, its care penalties and the state of market care work (for empirical evidence, see Gál R. I., Medgyesi M., & Vanhuysse P. (2022). *The Transfer Cost of Parenthood in Europe*. (NTA Working Papers No. 20–1)). In the final chapter, Folbre describes different feminist approaches and highlights the advantages of seeing patriarchal systems through an intersectional lens that helps to understand different interconnected hierarchies and ways to circumvent them. She ends with the argument that only intersectional approaches can form the necessary coalitions with the power to address both growing class differences and the remainder of patriarchal structures.

Folbre's theoretical tools span different approaches to political economy, from Marxism to neoclassical economics, applying insights into class struggle, identity, history, bargaining power and coordination problems. Some of the arguments are traced directly back to Marx, such as the idea of the co-optation of workers by capitalist interests. Folbre looks at collective conflicts in society in terms of gender, race/ethnicity and age to illustrate this point. How much this take on co-optation is an expression of false class consciousness is left unspecified. However, it is this problem of conflicting collective conflicts that is presented as one of the main reasons for the continually strong class divide. This argument is attractive, as it seems applicable to different historical examples. The fear of immigrants taking away jobs is a very common narrative of a distributive conflict that appears narrower than it could be. As Folbre stays relatively close to Marx on this issue, the added value is somewhat limited.

Another centrepiece in the book is the focus on care work and undervalued or un-

priced goods and services, as well as resources. Building on her previous work, Folbre offers a detailed description of care work and presents different theoretical and historical explanations for previous and current gender divisions of market and non-market labour. She convincingly shows how these systems have benefited capitalist modes of production through the cheap—for capitalists—reproduction of human capabilities, whether in population numbers or in their capabilities and productivity. When human capabilities are regarded as public goods to some extent, then we are guilty of underinvestment, argues Folbre, and there is good reason to believe her. By also adding to the discussion the externalities inherent in the appropriation of natural resources, Folbre strengthens the argument that capitalist accumulation profits heavily from undervalued resources and reproductive work, such as care work. In its simplest form, however, this argument is also not new. As Folbre shows, it goes back to Rosa Luxemburg and her take on the importance of pre-capitalist modes of production for capitalism.

It is these two arguments going back mostly to Marx and Luxemburg that build the two central points in Folbre's intersectional political economy and her understanding of the interaction between patriarchal and capitalist systems. This way, Folbre clearly stands on the shoulders of giants in explaining the political economy of capitalism and interacting systems. It also needs to be remarked that while Folbre builds on an old argument, she adds to it by applying different theoretical ideas, such as institutional constraints and (intersectional) collective conflicts, as well as insights from game theory, among other things, offering an innovative take on the study of capitalism and collective conflict. One caveat in the discussion around care work and externalities is the rather economic-historical approach to the topic. Earlier historical accounts offer different

perspectives on the origins of the gender divide in care, and the economist discussion helps readers understand the implications for overall economic gender inequality. However, they fall short of offering a deeper moral account of the issue of care work and of the rights and duties connected with it, as these remain underdefined.

Having discussed the key arguments and main takeaways from Folbre's book, there is also room for more specific criticism. While the main argument can be traced throughout the book, it is also surrounded by many smaller and often unfinished ideas, and the relevance of each of these to the main story is not always clear. In this sense, the book could have profited from a leaner approach that also leaves room to develop ideas in more detail. One example of this is the development of Western economies after the Second World War. This period was characterised by several trends. First, women joined the formal labour force, mostly in addition to their non-market work. Second, real wages across the economy rose. Third, the bargaining power of workers increased. Finally, the economy saw strong increases in the gross domestic product (GDP). Folbre argues that a non-negligible share of the GDP growth can be attributed to the movement of a large amount of labour power (women) moving into the *official* market. What is missing here, however, is a discussion of how these trends fit together. Both Marxist and neo-classical approaches would, at first sight, likely associate rising labour supply with decreases in bargaining power and not the opposite. The matter is obviously more complicated than that, and one could consider trends of technological change, the expansion of education, Keynesian demand politics and other factors. Without much discussion, however, the relevance of these trends is lost. Another example is Folbre's proposition that the undervaluation of care work would continue even in the context of gender equality. While this ar-

gement would continue to subsidise capital accumulation, how this scenario fits into the theoretical model that Folbre constructed is vague. If capitalists benefit from non-class cleavages and 'institutional hierarchies that inhibit the development of class solidarity' (p. 158), it is unclear why the disappearance or weakening of a central cleavage should not affect the ability to coordinate collective efforts.

Overall, *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems* offers a convincing approach to an intersectional political economy that connects different institutional hierarchies and lines of collective conflict. Folbre achieves this by connecting older Marxist ideas with theoretical insights from different streams of economics. While the book remains unfocused at some points, the added value is that it brings to the fore ideas that have been more or less ignored in mainstream economics for the past decades, and it offers a more differentiated perspective on both capitalism and patriarchy. In this capacity, it can be a helpful and educational guide for reformers and scholars alike.

Frederik Pfeiffer
University of Gothenburg
frederik.pfeiffer@gu.se

Minouche Shafik: *What We Owe Each Other: A New Social Contract for a Better Society*

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In this book, Minouche Shafik points to the broken fabric of today's society and offers an outline of a renewed social contract to repair it. She argues in favour of three core principles: a guaranteed minimum income for a decent life for everyone, a maximum investment in citizens' productivity and capabilities, and more collective and effective risk-sharing within society. These ideals are developed throughout the chapters, which are organised according to policy