

Manifold exploitations: toward an intersectional political economy

Nancy Folbre

To cite this article: Nancy Folbre (2020) Manifold exploitations: toward an intersectional political economy, Review of Social Economy, 78:4, 451-472, DOI: [10.1080/00346764.2020.1798493](https://doi.org/10.1080/00346764.2020.1798493)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346764.2020.1798493>



© 2020 Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 05 Aug 2020.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 1483



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)



Citing articles: 2 View citing articles [↗](#)

Manifold exploitations: toward an intersectional political economy

Nancy Folbre

Political Economy Research Institute, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Amherst, MA, USA

ABSTRACT

The distinction between oppression and exploitation is overstated in traditional Marxian theory. Defined in terms of economic advantages gained from unfair bargaining power, exploitation can take manifold forms, characterized by intersections, overlaps, and interactions within complex hierarchical systems in which actors often find themselves in somewhat contradictory positions.

ARTICLE HISTORY Received 17 April 2020; Accepted 15 July 2020

KEYWORDS Marxian theory; exploitation; intersectionality

The word ‘intersectional,’ which has long peppered progressive political discourse in the United States, is now formally recognized in the Merriam-Webster dictionary (2019).

1a: of or relating to intersectionality. //Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated. (Kimberlé Crenshaw)

b: involving members of multiple social categories . . . //I was near my home, in the midst of a multiracial, multigenerational, intersectional protest. I joined hundreds of others in the streets. (Kira Banks)

Many sociologists have directly engaged with intersectional complexities.¹ Economists, however, have largely avoided them, for reasons deeply embedded in the intellectual history of the discipline. The neoclassical tradition largely avoids issues of collective conflict while the Marxian tradition places class conflict front and center. The institutionalist tradition has broader ambitions but leans more toward descriptive than theoretical accounts. Economists in

CONTACT Nancy Folbre  folbre@econs.umass.edu

¹ Among sociologists, see, for instance, Mary Romero (2017).

general tend to focus on market transactions, and, in addressing issues of inequality, on the labor market in particular. As a result, inequalities rooted in the community (such as racial/ethnic residential segregation), the household (such as the gender division of labor), and the polity (such as immigration policies) often fade into the background.

Ambivalence toward consideration of such inequalities extends to the political arena, manifest in tensions between intersectional 'identity politics' versus 'class politics' or between cultural and psychological grievances versus economic grievances often considered more tangible, if not more objective. Even Marxist Erik Olin Wright, a fierce critic of all unjust inequalities, draws a bright line between political oppression and economic exploitation, reserving the latter term for the appropriation of surplus value within capitalist wage employment (1997).

This paper challenges the oppression/exploitation binary within Marxian political economy, proposing a broader definition of exploitation that can take manifold forms, intersecting, overlapping, and interacting within complex hierarchical systems where actors often find themselves in somewhat contradictory positions. Insights from feminist theory, critical race theory, and stratification economics are melded into an analysis of institutional structures of collective power that shape processes of cooperation and conflict that reach beyond capitalist dynamics. This approach generalizes the Marxian analysis of class to all socially assigned groups that share at least some common identities and interests, calling attention to social division, but also encouraging the explicit negotiation of alliances based on principles of economic justice.

In the following sections a brief review of some antecedents of intersectional political economy leads to an expanded definition of 'the economy' that extends beyond commodity production, which in turn leads to a definition of exploitation that facilitates attention to its complex interactive forms. This discussion raises a crucial question that cannot be fully answered here: Can this theoretical framework advance efforts to build political coalitions for progressive change?

Antecedents

Socialist activists have long recognized conflicting group interests as fault-lines of political mobilization, but their visceral dislike of many varieties of oppression has often been overshadowed by emphasis on the *economic* centrality of class. The Marxist geographer David Harvey notes, for instance, that capitalism is permeated with race and gender oppression, but that the 'logic of capital' is not affected by them (2014). He makes no mention of any 'logic' of race or of gender. Some Marxist-feminist scholars, such as Lise Vogel, explicitly reject the notion that class, race, and gender are comparable categories of difference with potentially equal causal weight (2017). Nancy Fraser proposes a

softer distinction, describing struggles around race and gender as struggles for recognition more than redistribution and contrasting group identity with class interests (1995; Fraser & Honneth, 2003).

Ironically, the classics of Marxian political economy sometimes offer a more ecumenical view, more consistent with the intersectional logic of contradictory group interests. Marx himself described the ordinary English worker of his day as susceptible to co-optation:

In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalist of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself . . . his attitude towards him is much the same as that of the 'poor whites' to the 'niggers' in the former slave states of the U.S.A.²

Vladimir Lenin further developed the concept of an aristocracy of labor which, he believed, shifted the epicenter of potential revolution toward less economically developed countries such as Russia (1999).

More modern examples of collective cooptation come to mind. In the 1960s, a surge of interest in the after-effects of colonialism and imperialism led to claims that trade with rich countries was impeding the economic development of the global periphery, making it easy for capitalists to collaborate with foreign capital rather than generate self-sustaining investments. Some Marxists argued that workers in the advanced capitalist countries were direct recipients of surplus extracted through a process of unequal exchange in which citizenship could trump class (Emmanuel, 1972; Frank, 1966). Such arguments influenced the political strategies of militant organizations in the United States, such as the Weather Underground in the 1970s, which discounted the likelihood that U.S. workers could ever become a progressive force for change. Similarly, some feminist scholars have expressed concern that campaigns against sweatshop conditions of women's employment in the global South help protect workers in affluent countries from competition.³ The institutional economist William Dugger's has described diverse inequalities in terms of 'top dogs' and 'under-dogs,' and many other institutionalists have addressed the convergence of group identities and interests (Davis, 2006; Dugger, 1996, 1998; Figart, 1997; Waller & Jennings, 1990).

The political economy of race has long emphasized multiple, interacting inequalities. In the early twentieth century, W.E.B. DuBois wrote eloquently of the 'double consciousness' of people who identified themselves both as Americans and as Negroes (1907, 1969). B.R. Ambedkar applied Marxian reasoning when he lambasted Indian Marxists for their failure to recognize similarities between class and caste (2004). More recently, Charles Mills has described a

² Karl Marx, Letter to Meyer and Vogt, cited in Jon Elster (1985).

³ See, for instance, Naila Kabeer (2004).

racial contract as a coercive aspect of the larger social contract that enforces racialized inequalities on both international and national levels (1999).

Many of these precedents maintain binary distinctions in which only class is repeated more than once: class and gender, class and nation, class and race, class and caste.

The African-American Marxist Angela Davis, however, called attention to what is now termed intersectionality when she noted that capitalists, men and whites became codependent beneficiaries of the exploitation of disempowered groups. While she sharply criticized the white feminist movement of the 1970s for its narrow focus on gender inequality, she also targeted those who focused on class alone (without attention to race and gender) or on race alone (without attention to gender and class) (Davis, 1983).

The importance of intersectionality has been more explicitly developed by African-American legal scholars and sociologists, including Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Patricia Hill Collins (Collins, 1991; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). William Darity contributes to this approach when he emphasizes 'the competitive, and sometimes collaborative, interplay between members of social groups animated by their collective self-interest to attain or maintain relative group position in a social hierarchy' (2005; Darity et al., 2015). Post-colonial and transnational feminist theories bring national allegiances into the picture (Patil, 2013). National borders and immigration policies complicate the meanings of citizenship (Romero, 2008). Self-described radical institutionalist economists, as well as many sociologists, describe parallels among inequalities based on race, gender, class and nation (Dugger, 1996; Tilly, 1999). Feminist economists have also called for more attention to 'multiple identities' and 'multiple-discriminations,' and examination of color and caste in conjunction with class and gender (Brewer et al., 2002; Ruwanpura, 2008).

This intersectional perspective rejects the view that most social conflicts derive from class conflicts, or from capitalist strategies to 'divide and conquer.'⁴ Intra-class economic inequalities cannot be explained as a consequence of heterogeneous labor in capitalist wage relations, because heterogeneity itself requires explanation: why do some workers attain more advantageous skills, assets and preferences than others do?⁵

Intersectionality emphasizes the significance of conflicting interests and divided loyalties that must be partially reconciled, if not completely overcome, in order to effectively challenge any structure of collective power. In this respect, it has the potential to provide theoretical underpinnings for a strategy often intuitively embraced by progressive activists: concerted efforts to ally disempowered groups around common long-run interests. Intersectionality

⁴ For a classic formulation of divide-and-conquer logic, see John E. Roemer (1979).

⁵ For an example of a Marxian analysis of heterogeneous labor, see Veneziani and Yoshihara (2015).

challenges conventional Marxian theory even as it acknowledges the powerful significance of class conflict.

The 'economy'

A narrow definition of 'the economy' leads to a narrow definition of exploitation.

The disjuncture between socialist political commitments to economic justice and Marxian theories of exploitation can be partly explained by the legacy of the labor theory of value, which focuses attention on the extraction of surplus value by capitalists from wage earners and makes a sharp distinction between labor that is 'productive' (of surplus value) and that which is not. The disjuncture has also been exacerbated by the assumption that capitalism is a hegemonic mode of production that constitutes the 'economy' or even the entire 'world system.'⁶ Even new theories of social reproduction advanced by Marxist feminists emphasize the role of women's unpaid work in subsidizing the production of surplus value, designating capitalists as the primary beneficiaries (Battacharya, 2017). State provision of health, education, and social services is typically described as a component of a 'social wage' that reflects class struggle, rather than a process of collective investment shaped by distributional conflict based on gender, race/ethnicity, and citizenship.⁷

Ironically, such Marxian definitions of the economy suffer from the very commodity fetishism he describes in Volume 1 of *Capital* (Marx, 1990). Market wages are taken as the primary indicator of working-class consumption, with little or no consideration of the value of non-market work or the costs of caring for dependents (Folbre, 1994a). Feminist scholars, in particular, have argued forcefully for broader attention to provisioning that includes both unpaid work and transfers made with families, communities, and the state (Power, 2004). The concept of 'production' can be widened to include both 'reproduction' defined as the production, development and maintenance of human capabilities – and 'social reproduction,' – defined as the production, development and maintenance of social groups in which individuals identify to some extent with one another and are able to successfully pursue some common interests.

Reproduction and social reproduction have particularly important implications for the evolution of patriarchal institutions that long predate capitalism. These activities, unlike the production of goods for own consumption – typified by Robinson Crusoe's initial survival on his desert island – can never be purely individual endeavors (Grapard, 1995). Care for dependents cannot

⁶ See, for instance, Wallerstein (1974, 1983).

⁷ See, for instance, Moos (2019).

be organized entirely in terms of voluntary exchange, since dependents, by definition, have limited agency. Families and larger groups organize reproduction (defined here as the production and maintenance of human capabilities) in ways that help perpetuate themselves as groups (defined here as social reproduction), relying heavily on cross-cutting institutional constraints.⁸

Reproduction, like production, can generate a surplus, realized through increases in the size or capabilities of a population, rather than accumulated material wealth. Reproduction includes but goes well beyond the self-investment emphasized in neoclassical economic theory, which often describes individuals as autonomous entrepreneurs of human capital. It also goes beyond the reproduction of labor power emphasized in some modern versions of Marxian theory as a process primarily benefiting a ruling class.

The production and maintenance of human capabilities is a necessary – and costly – aspect of all economic systems. Individuals and groups may bargain over the distribution of its costs, which are often unequally distributed. Like production, reproduction can create externalities or spillovers – the largely unpriced and often unanticipated side effects of individual decisions. In the long run, the social reproduction of any group is shaped not merely by its productive prowess but also by its ability to replenish and enhance its membership over time and its success in – or defense against – violent appropriation.

From John Locke to the present, liberal political theory has extolled the economic virtues of two private property rights: self-ownership and control over the products of one's labor. These two rights cannot, however, be easily applied to reproduction: Parents produce children but cannot own them without violating children's self-ownership as adults. Reproductive commitments are sometimes described as metaphorical investments (as in 'investing in children') but their future economic payoff is difficult for parents, as metaphorical investors, to claim. Nor is there a close relationship between the effort invested and the rate of return.

Caregivers derive some economic benefits from reciprocity and mutual aid, but the more diffuse public benefits they generate add up to a far greater sum (Folbre, 1994a; Wolf et al., 2011). Reproductive work pays forward more richly than it pays back, as when children grow up and rear children of their own. Caregivers often gain intrinsic satisfaction, or, in neoclassical terms, psychic income, but this is less reliable and less fungible than monetary payback. In the vocabulary of game theory, caregivers suffer from a first-mover disadvantage: payback is difficult to ensure through voluntary or contractual exchange. Neither tiny babies nor seriously wounded soldiers can bargain over the terms of their care or make binding contractual agreements.

⁸ These definitions are similar to those specified by Lourdes Benería (1979). For a longer discussion, see Folbre (2021).

The devaluation of reproductive labor pervades economic discourse. Only one specific and relatively brief episode of parenting – the painful passage of a baby through the mothers' birth canal – is commonly referred to as labor. In the U.S., the regular estimates of parental expenditures on children are published by the Department of Agriculture do not include a full valuation of parental time – either what its reallocation from potential income-earning activities would cost or how much money would be required to hire a substitute for parental supervision and care (Lino et al., 2017). Likewise, public allowances set for foster parents are determined largely by estimates of the cost of children's food and clothing alone.

Reproductive labor should not be taken for granted in this way. Whether paid or unpaid, it is labor that should be valued in economic as well as moral terms. On the other hand, reproduction cannot be reduced to labor alone. The production and maintenance of human capabilities also requires capital, time, and energy, combined in ways influenced by technological change but often requiring close personal connection, or nurturant care. Like production, reproduction can be an important source of intrinsic satisfaction and emotional connection, and also create significant social benefits and/or costs. So defined, reproduction is not confined to women or to families. It includes both paid and unpaid activities and responsibilities fulfilled in a variety of sites, including homes, communities, private firms, and the public sector.

As Debra Satz put in her comments on an earlier draft of this paper, the 'currency of unfair advantage is not limited to income and wealth.' The organization of reproduction is profoundly influenced by complex forms of distributional conflict reflecting collective efforts to advance the well-being of specific social groups at the expense of others. Class conflict represents one very important dimension of this larger process of contestation, but it is not the only dimension. Groups defined by race/ethnicity, gender, and citizenship (among others) also establish institutional structures that determine access to economic assets, including rights over bodies, protection against violence and harassment, rights to health care and education, and access to employment and retirement benefits. Membership in an economically advantaged group is itself an economic asset, linking group identities with group interests.

As Marxist scholars have long recognized, it is difficult to reach consensus on the operational meaning of class.⁹ It is equally, if not more difficult to reach consensus on the definition of other aspects of socially assigned (as distinct from individually chosen) group membership. Yet this is an important task. Multidimensional forms of distributional conflict imply that individuals often find themselves in contradictory positions, operating within complex strategic environments where actions that work to their advantage in some respects may disadvantage them in others.

⁹ See, for instance, Wright (1997).

To reflexively describe allegiance to groups other than those defined by class as a form of false consciousness based on identity rather than economic interests can itself be a form of false consciousness – a failure to accurately identify economic interests. An expanded definition of the economy highlights the need to develop a more unified analysis of the economic concomitants of social division.

Exploitations

If the Marxian theory of exploitation is misleading, one might ask, why seek to modify and expand it, rather than dispense with it altogether? At least three important reasons come to mind. First, this theory offers a clear way of explaining group-based economic inequalities. Unlike much liberal philosophical discourse, it goes beyond interrogation of individual interactions, such as ‘Does Person A Exploit Person B in Situation X?’ to ask how strong groups can exploit weak groups, with consequences for the individuals within them. Second, it explains why people may voluntarily consent to exploitation – because their next best option is even worse. Structural constraints give exploitation a distinctly impersonal, even anonymous character (Wollner, 2019).

Most importantly, Marxian theory insists on the potential for collective action to transform structural constraints in ways that advance democracy, equality, and human flourishing. Indeed, it suggests that exploitative social relations often come to fetter technological change, creating new incentives to replace them and unleashing a dialectical process of change. In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels seemed convinced that capitalist development would rapidly weaken both patriarchal and race-based institutions. However over-optimistic their account, it is quite consistent with an emphasis on shifting alliances among groups exploited in different ways at different times, and it certainly helps explain global changes in both patriarchal law and norms.¹⁰

Cooperation, conflict, and power

The dialectic between efficiency and distribution is neatly illustrated by a diagram that highlights the distribution of collaboratively produced output. This diagram, featured in John Rawls’ *Theory of Justice* and in many models of household bargaining, provides a way of visualizing both the causes and the effects of institutional power (1971). John Rawls, Amartya Sen and others have referred to this process as ‘cooperative conflict,’ since it describes interactions between two parties who can potentially benefit more from cooperation than from exiting the relationship (1989). Charles Mills correctly points out that this wording

¹⁰ For a more detailed account, see Folbre (2021).

makes the process seem altogether benign and consensual (1999). Sometimes the more apt term is coerced cooperation.

The altered wording highlights disparities created by structures of collective power that cannot be reduced to mere differences in wealth or income. Strategies of negotiation over institutional arrangements are shaped by fallback positions, next-best alternatives, or exit options that influence success in making distributional claims. Groups that gain institutional advantage – whether by legitimate or illegitimate means – can lock in claims to a larger share of the gains from cooperation, which, in turn, reinforce their collective power over social institutions.¹¹ This approach to collective conflict subsumes both the neoclassically influenced concept of rent-seeking and the Marxian theory of surplus extraction under a larger rubric.¹²

Picture two agents (be they individuals or groups) who are collaborating in ways that go beyond exchange in a competitive market. Imagine also that there are significant gains from cooperation, but it is difficult to measure individual contributions because they are contingent on synergies with others, unpriced resources, or public goods that cannot be neatly priced.¹³ Note also that, as emphasized in the earlier discussion of reproduction and social reproduction, human capabilities are themselves produced. Who, then, deserves the credit for what they create? In this context, the distribution of gains from cooperation is determined by a process of bargaining.¹⁴

Gains are defined here as economic resources, broadly defined, but similar analysis could apply with more specific metrics such as income, utility, social status, or leisure time. Figure 1 pictures a downwardly sloping line, labeled P, representing all possible allocations of a fixed resource between agents A and B – a kind of cooperative frontier that they have jointly achieved (technically dubbed a Pareto frontier). The vertical axis represents the resources available to A. If A receives all the gains from cooperation, its resources are represented by A_1 . The resources available to B can be read off the horizontal axis. If B receives all the gains from cooperation, its resources are represented by B_1 . All the points in the space between P and the axes represent allocations in which either agent could increase its resources without making the other worse off. All the points on P are efficient in the sense that no resources are ‘left on the table.’ On this line, the only way for either to increase its resources is to reduce those available to the other.

Both A and B have fallback positions that represent the resources available to them if they decline to cooperate or exit a cooperative agreement, labeled

¹¹ For a discerning explanation of lock-in, see W. Brian Arthur (1988).

¹² On rent-seeking, see Buchanan et al. (1980).

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of ‘just deserts’ and its imbrications in the neoclassically theory of marginal productivity, see Folbre (2016).

¹⁴ In technical terms, the model outlined here represents a cooperative Nash-bargaining approach, described in more detail in Chapter 4 of Ferguson (2013).

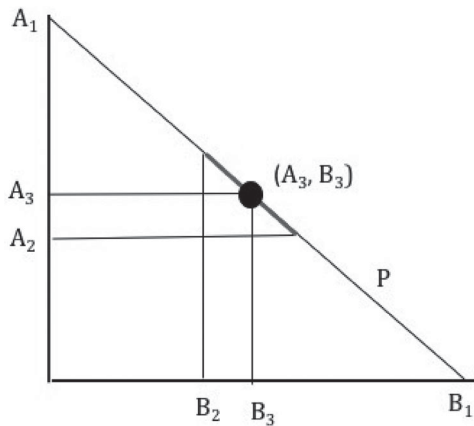


Figure 1. Bargaining with equal fallbacks.

A_2 and B_2 , respectively. Neither is likely to agree to an allocation of gains from cooperation that leaves them worse off than they would be on their own, so the range of feasible outcomes lies on bold section of P between the two fallback positions, A_2 and B_2 . That both can potentially gain from cooperation does not deter them from bargaining over the distribution of these gains. In Figure 1, their fallback positions are identical, which explains why the division represented by the point (A_3, B_3) is an egalitarian one, and each player gets an equal share of the resources available.

A slight modification of Figure 1 illustrates the implications of unequal fallback positions. In Figure 2, player A has a much stronger fallback than player B. As a result, the range of feasible outcomes (those which would leave both players better off) does not even include the possibility of equal division. Even if both players equally share the gains from cooperation – at point S on line P – player B receives a much smaller share. Indeed, player A is likely to do even better, claiming a share of the gains proportional to the difference in fallback positions.¹⁵

Figures 1 and 2 offer a static picture; in reality, bargaining is a dynamic process. The distribution of gains in an initial round can alter the position of P in a second round, by influencing either ability or incentives to cooperate to the fullest. Suppose that B's fallback is unknown or undetermined, and A offers B a specific distribution of the gains from cooperation, including one that is quite unequal (such as a much higher level of A_2 and a much lower level of B_2). An authoritarian leader might be able to dictate shares at the point of a gun, but would need to impose a penalty, or threat of punishment for exit in order for cooperation to continue, and this could be costly. If a first mover, A might

¹⁵ See discussion in Ferguson (2013, Chapter 4).

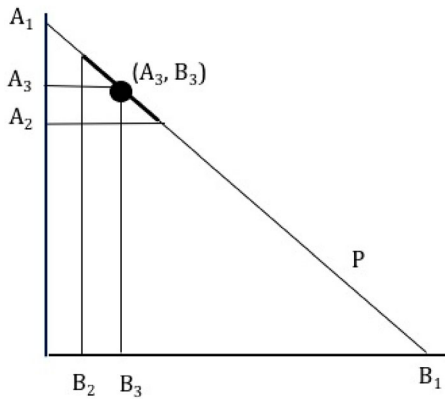


Figure 2. Bargaining with unequal fallbacks.

also take subsistence constraints into consideration, ensuring that B receives a level of resources adequate to survival and continued voluntary or involuntary cooperation.

This incentive structure suggests a rough lower bound on the distribution of gains to the least empowered participant: a slaveholder has a vested interest in not beating or starving all his slaves to death; a capitalist must pay enough to ensure workers' subsistence; a patriarch wants to ensure his sons' survival. However, forms of violence and neglect that are costly on the individual level may prove cost-effective in the aggregate, because they, as noted earlier, they exert a disciplinary effect. Resources are sometimes allocated by fiat, rather than by bargaining. Nonetheless, the authority to rule by fiat is usually the outcome of process of allocation determined by an earlier round of bargaining.

Unfair bargaining power

Under what conditions might the unequal distribution of gains from cooperation credibly be termed 'exploitation?' A simple criterion would be if the resulting distribution is unfair (Arneson, 2016). Alternatively (or in addition), the process by which the distribution was achieved may be deemed unfair. Of course, these criteria kick the can down the road. How should 'unfair' be defined? Traditional Marxian theory largely sidesteps this question by asserting that wage labor is inherently exploitative, an assertion challenged by many modern analytical Marxists, including John Roemer (1982).

While the definitional debate cannot be fully resolved here, it is worth noting that it has often dwelt on the issue of 'unequal talents' and the possibility that those simply lucky enough to enjoy superior abilities could blackmail society for their utilization. But to paraphrase Elizabeth Anderson, the point of a theory of exploitation is not to eliminate the impact of brute luck, but to end

exploitation, which, by definition is socially imposed.¹⁶ Feminist theorists and social scientists have long argued that most economically significant differences in the ‘talents’ of men and women are constructed through the very processes of reproduction and social reproduction outlined above, an argument that applies equally well to differences based on race/ethnicity and other dimensions of socially assigned group membership.¹⁷

Feminist theorists have also explicitly challenged the notion that the process of creating and maintaining human and social capabilities is motivated by personal preferences – costly tastes that do not merit social compensation (Folbre, 1994b; Okin, 1989). By this account, virtue is its own reward. As John Roemer puts it, ‘Society should not compensate people for their choice of [a more altruistic, self-sacrificing] path because it owes people no compensation on account of their moral views’ (cited in Anderson, p. 299; Roemer, 1996). The notion that altruism is based on personal preferences or moral views, rather than on the material requirements of sustainable human society can only be considered a parody of Marxian materialism. Economic imperatives to accumulate capital, however historically significant, do not supersede economic imperatives to protect public goods such as demographic and environmental sustainability.

Issues of ‘bad luck’ and ‘self-indulgent preferences,’ however, relevant to discussions of economic justice, have distracted attention from a central political question: how can groups experiencing intersecting, overlapping forms of exploitation make common cause with one another? Surely, a framework that avoids designation of class inequality as ‘economic’ and other inequalities as ‘cultural’ or ‘psychological’ encourages efforts to unite and fight for a fair economy. The definition of ‘unfair’ cannot be deduced through purely philosophical argument. It requires democratic discussion and negotiation, informed by a clear understanding of how unfair inequalities are reproduced over time.

Unfortunately, a circular problem comes into play: perceptions – as well as definitions – of fairness are themselves influenced by collective bargaining power. John Rawls proposed to solve this problem by the imaginary thought experiment of putting decision-makers behind a ‘veil of ignorance’ that blocked knowledge of their own identities and interests (1971). Unfortunately, this veil does not exist, and if it did, powerful groups would have little incentive to cover their eyes with it (especially given its feminine and Islamic connotations).

The more practical Rawlsian insight lies in his implicit recognition of a dialectic between the level of economic output and its distribution. His proposal that forms of inequality that do not leave the worst-off members of society

¹⁶ Elizabeth S. Anderson (1999). Anderson writes of ‘egalitarian justice’ and ‘oppression’ in terms that I consider applicable to ‘exploitation.’

¹⁷ For a classic summary of this feminist argument, see Tavis (1992).

better off should be deemed unfair connects to the Marxian claim that more egalitarian social relations could promote more successful development of the forces of production. Capitalist institutions historically derived much of their legitimacy from the promise of economic growth, as in ‘a rising-tide lifts all boats.’ Attention to manifold exploitations leads to a more complex visualization of the hydraulics: some boats are lifted more than others, and the benefits of ‘trickle-down’ are unequally distributed. In the not so very long run, however, the more serious threat is that rising social inequality, along with rising sea levels, will put most people in the same leaky boat. Cooptation has its limits: Even if and when disempowered groups enjoy increased levels of consumption partly at the expense of other disempowered groups, their potential for democratic participation is impaired, leaving them vulnerable to disaster.

Any effort to define economic justice and fair exchange should acknowledge the importance of the ways in which collective and individual bargaining power are obtained and exercised over time. Examples widely agreed upon in democratic countries are threats of violence, theft and fraud, and exclusion from political representation – violations conceded even by libertarian philosophers such as Robert Nozick (1974). Process clearly matters. Both the direct and indirect effects of force and violence are often crystallized in the social institutions they dictate and enforce, which, in turn, lead to unfair outcomes. Marx described historical processes of expropriation as ‘written in the annals of mankind in letters of blood and fire’ (Marx, 2019).

A precise definition of fairness therefore, may be less important than consideration of the obstacles to the development of a social environment in which truly democratic deliberations can take place. Whether or not such an environment could be created depends largely on the potential for alliances among disparate groups that have experienced many different forms of disempowerment and exploitation. This potential, in turn, may depend on developing a better picture of the ways in which fractured and overlapping forms of collective bargaining power influence economic outcomes.

However simple the diagram in Figure 2 may be, it provides an effective starting point for explaining the effect of institutional power on fallback positions, and hence on the unfair allocation of gains from cooperation. Individuals may be able to overcome group-based disadvantage (or to squander group-based advantage), but their probability of doing so is affected by institutional arrangements beyond their individual control. A structure of patriarchal institutions reduces the fallback position of women. Likewise, a structure of racist institutions reduces the fallback position of groups that are discriminated against, and so on. Since individuals belong to many groups simultaneously, their individual bargaining power is a function of all their group memberships as well as their individual capabilities and effort. Their relative advantages or disadvantages do not necessarily cumulate in an additive or linear way, but

it is usually possible to ascertain the sign of the effect: all else equal, memberships in socially disadvantaged groups contribute to individual economic disadvantage (McCall, 2005).

Such disadvantage means that members of such groups are less able to develop their capabilities or those of their children. It also implies that individual effort is rewarded less generously for some than for others, possibly leading to a reduction in overall effort as well as diverting it toward activities that create social costs rather than benefits. In other words, it probably shifts the production frontier pictured in Figure 2 downward, toward the origin, even as it increases the share of output available to advantaged groups.

Efforts to increase one's share of output, rather than to increase its overall size, are sometimes referred to as rent-seeking, because 'rents' are largely a return to ownership rather than to effort. A more apt and less confusing term is 'gain-seeking.' An increase in total output represents what economists call value creation while an increase in bargaining share, or gain-seeking, represents value extraction – in ordinary language, 'making' creates value and 'taking' redistributes it (Mazzucato, 2018). These terms are ideologically contested: conservatives argue that rich people are makers and poor people, takers, just as they once argued that men were workers and women, dependents.

Unfair bargaining power is a form of value extraction that encompasses what Marx described as exploitation. This usage challenges the distinction between oppression and exploitation. Erik Wright argues that the welfare of the oppressor (unlike that of the exploiter) 'depends simply on the exclusion of the oppressed from access to certain resources, but not on their effort' (1997). Naoki Yoshihara and Roberto Veneziani define exploitation as the unequal exchange of labor (2018). But the mutual dependency of groups – their voluntary or coerced cooperation – need not take the form of direct control of labor; it can take more indirect forms such as contributions to public goods or enforcement of the rule of law, which also create interdependence. Many forms of implicitly coerced cooperation lead to an unfair distribution of the resulting gains – forms of exploitation that are not directly based on labor exchange.

Wright's distinction between exploitation and oppression remains meaningful, and discrimination, also relevant, can affect both. Not all economic interactions can be reduced to bargaining, be it fair or unfair. Some of the most consequential economic interactions take the form of outright theft, expropriation, injury, murder, or genocide. At the other extreme, some take the form of gifts. In between, however, lie many forms of gain-seeking behavior shaped by social institutions established by profoundly undemocratic means. When exploitation is defined as unfair advantage, even apparently innocent and impersonal choices made by those with no evil intent can lead to exploitative outcomes (Ferguson, 2016).

Patriarchal institutions that increase men's bargaining power relative to women in both the family and the labor market lower women's lifetime

incomes, increase their vulnerability to poverty, and lengthen their total workday. Men benefit. Racist institutions that increase the bargaining power of whites diminish the relative access of other racial/ethnic groups to both private wealth and public services.¹⁸ Whites benefit. Partly as a result of imperial legacies, citizens of affluent countries enjoy more purchasing power and political power than citizens of the global South; they are also, as a result, buffered from many of the costs and risks of extreme climate change. And so on. However difficult it may be to locate different forms of institutional power on horizontal and vertical axes, it is easy to understand how collective disadvantages reduce available options.

Attention to structures of collective power expands Marxian accounts of dispossession as a form of primitive accumulation by highlighting the ways in which coercion can be capitalized into a steady stream of economic benefits (Harvey, 2004; Marx, 1976). To ask what slavery cost black Americans as a group, for example, is to ask how much better off they would be if it had never existed or if earlier political promises to compensate for it had been kept (Darity, 2008). Such counterfactual thought experiments offer another way of assessing fairness. Marxist economist John Roemer argues that workers are exploited if they would be better off withdrawing from a capitalist economy with their per capita share of total productive assets.¹⁹

John Roemer defines exploitation exclusively in terms of asset ownership, but his counterfactual reasoning could easily be extended to include a broader set of social institutions. What if men had never established property rights over women? What if women had always had equal access to education, skilled employment, or the franchise? The list of questions could go on, and it points toward institutional arrangements that could encourage greater parity in bargaining power based on gender. Building on Roemer, Robert Goodin aptly proposes a 'feminist withdrawal rule' that pertains especially to the division of labor within partnered households: women are exploited if they work longer hours than they would if they exited the partnership taking with them an equal share of all the value created by it, including valuation of time devoted to family care (2008). Such a rule would be difficult to implement in practice, but it dramatizes the disadvantage many women experience.

Counterfactual reasoning can also be applied to possible future outcomes.

Erik Wright argues that 'capitalism systematically generates unnecessary human suffering – unnecessary in the specific sense that with an appropriate change in socioeconomic relations these deficits could be eliminated' (2010). One could substitute 'patriarchal institutions' or 'racist institutions' (or other coercive institutions) for 'capitalism' in this claim. If everyone could potentially

¹⁸ See, for instance, Darity and Hamilton (2012).

¹⁹ Roemer (1982). The adjective 'alienable' is relevant here because human capital is also a productive asset, but not one that can be redistributed within a single generation.

benefit from the reform of a particular institutional structure, then it clearly leads to unnecessary human suffering.

Not all oppression leads to exploitation. Nor is exploitation necessarily the more evil of the two. Almost by definition, people gain from entering an exploitative relationship when it represents a better alternative to what they would otherwise fall back upon. This is exactly why fallbacks – and the processes by which they are institutionally influenced – are so important.

The very term fallback has a military feel, connoting the best option for retreat. Socially constructed fortresses of advantage are often built from the prizes of a prior round of bargaining. Just as large firms can gain market share and then take advantage of economies of scale to ward off new entrants, groups can direct their collective winnings toward investments in their own long-run hegemony, whether by influencing laws and ideologies or simply by accumulating wealth. Perhaps this is just another way of saying that bargaining power has many different dimensions, including the power to obfuscate or habituate its deployment.²⁰

The notion that social institutions have intersectional effects on the bargaining power of entire groups of people builds on feminist models of bargaining between husbands and wives in married households. Whether described as ‘extra-environmental parameters,’ ‘gender-specific environmental parameters,’ or as weights placed on individual preferences in a joint utility function, the effect of social institutions on the allocation of household resources is now widely recognized (Chiappori et al., 2002; Folbre, 1998; McElroy, 1990). Yet attention to household/family dynamics also warns against over-emphasis on purely individual interests: love and affection for others both mediates individual bargaining and increases the total gains from cooperation. If I love you, your gain is my gain, at least in part.

Altruism doesn’t eliminate bargaining, but it certainly complicates it. We are all faced with uncertain and uncomfortable strategic choices: How much do we really care about people other than ourselves, and how much do others care about us? How much time and effort should we devote to improving our individual trajectories, how much to challenging – or reinforcing – exploitative institutions that constrain those trajectories? The difficulty of answering these questions demonstrates the limits of formal bargaining models and invites a broader exploration of cultural negotiation.

As advertisements for a prominent business training consultant put it, ‘You don’t get what you deserve. You get what you negotiate.’²¹ Even this slogan is too narrow. Not all bargaining is based on negotiation, and not all games end with contractual agreements. Threats and promises, fakes and feints, persuasion and coercion, coalition and compromise can take place without

²⁰ See discussion in Ferguson (2013, Chapter 4).

²¹ See <http://www.karrass.com>, accessed September 30, 2015.

participants ever sitting down together at a table. Even market exchange is often contested (Bowles & Gintis, 1993).

The process of negotiation probably matters as much as the structure of payoffs (Agarwal, 1997). Effective bargaining may benefit from rational calculation, but is easily undermined by inadequate information, poor communication, and emotional dysfunction. (Military strategists refer to the ‘fog of war’). Explicit bargaining is costly and time-consuming; it can also create resentment and ill will. Economists typically assume that outcomes are efficient in the narrow sense that agents always reach the bargaining frontier – that is, they don’t try to block any move that improves another’s outcome if it comes at no cost to them (Lundberg & Pollak, 2003). In the real world, however, spite often trumps reason, invites retaliation, and leaves both bargainers worse off than they were before: domestic murders are sometimes followed by the perpetrator’s suicide. On the global level, the threat of mutually-assured destruction – whether as a result of all-out nuclear conflict or irreversible environmental damage – continues to loom large.

These difficulties explain why social norms are so important: they offer implicit rules, and sometimes, explicit solutions to costly forms of disagreement. How best to divide a pie? ‘You slice, and I’ll choose.’ Want to avoid a fight? ‘Let’s flip a coin.’ Yet conformity to existing social norms generally favors those in already favored positions.²² Once seized, rights to authority and property are often sanctified by ideology. As Edna Ullmann-Margalit writes, a norm may ‘be conceived of as a sophisticated tool of coercion, used by the favored party in a status quo of inequality to promote its interest in the maintenance of this status quo’ (1977). Just as norms of appropriate femininity can reinforce gender inequality, patriotic norms can justify aggression against countries, racial pride can fuel white supremacy, and elitist values can legitimate class disparities.

Norms are often internalized in ways that affect individual preferences and perceptions. If one bargainer cares more about the other (or about third parties who may be affected), bargaining outcomes will be skewed in favor of the less altruistic or more assertive member. In a generalization of the ‘hidden injuries’ of class, confinement to the bottom of a hierarchy weakens individual and group agency (Ionide, 2015; Sennett & Cobb, 1993). Reminders of inferior social position – known as ‘stereotype threat’ can hamper the performance of those who are stigmatized.²³ Heteronormative values as well as homophobic attitudes undermine the confidence of those labeled deviant. Patriarchal power and colonial power can be poisonously internalized in remarkably similar ways (England, 2016; England & Browne, 1992; Fanon, 1968). The view from the top, by contrast, is empowering – sometimes dangerously so.

²² For a classic description, see Bourdieu (1977). See also Ross (1901).

²³ See, for instance, Hoff and Pandey (2006).

The effects of socialization reach beyond psychological predispositions and emotions. What psychologists term 'belief in a just world' represents a cognitive misperception more than a norm.²⁴ Well-designed experiments show that information regarding rewards strongly influences – even dominates – information regarding performance. Winners are perceived as significantly more competent than losers even in the presence of information to the contrary. These results are consistent with the sociological concept of 'blaming the victim,' and the economic analysis of framing effects (Kahneman, 2011; Kuran, 1998; Ryan, 1971). They are also consistent with the Marxian concept of false consciousness: people often cannot clearly identify the causes or effects of social power (Denzau & North, 1994). Belief in the possibility of justice is indispensable to sustained efforts to achieve it, yet it is often preempted by the assumption that people already get what they deserve.

Acknowledgement of bargaining over cultural norms and interpretations of social reality helps explain the ideological construction of group allegiances whose complexity can have immobilizing effects. Yet it also creates the opportunity to show how a systematic challenge to one particular belief in a just world – that gender inequality is 'natural' – can spill over in subversive ways. Opposition to feminist efforts often reveals fear of just such ideological externalities.

Political consequences

Individuals make strategic decisions constrained by institutional structures of collective power. These structures do not result purely from class conflict, and they cannot be reduced to a single mode of production such as capitalism. They can best be understood as interlocking hierarchies based on many different dimensions of assigned group membership, including gender. None of these is intrinsically more consequential than the others; their relative importance depends not just on specific economic circumstances, but also on creative strategies for building coalitions.

The parallels among different forms of authoritarian hierarchy provide some clues to their co-evolution. The deep legacy of collective conflict in human history cannot easily be overcome, but rotten dads, rotten employers and rotten leaders can be deposed. Ideals of democratic cooperation, equal opportunity, and mutual aid have sustained successful challenges to many authoritarian hierarchies, including those that can still be described as patriarchal. Moreover, the gradual if partial erosion of patriarchal institutions prefigures other possible advances toward democratic governance on a larger scale.

²⁴ The classic formulation of the 'just world hypothesis' is Melvin Lerner's (1980). In one experiment he describes, participants incorrectly reported that a student who won a cash lottery worked harder than the loser. In another, individuals who were randomly punished with a fake electric shock were derogated, especially if they appeared to have no way of avoiding punishment.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Notes on contributor

Nancy Folbre is Professor emerita of Economics and Director of the Program on Gender and Care Work at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

References

- Agarwal, B. (1997). Bargaining and gender relations: Within and beyond the household. *Feminist Economics*, 3(1), 1–51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135457097338799>
- Ambedkar, B. R. (2004). *Annihilation of caste*. Verso. (Original work published 1936)
- Anderson, E. S. (1999). What is the point of equality? *Ethics*, 109(2), 287–387. <https://doi.org/10.1086/233897>
- Arneson, R. (2016). Exploitation, domination, competitive markets, and unfair division. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 54(S1), 9–30. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sjp.12182>
- Arthur, W. B. (1988). Self-reinforcing mechanisms in economics. In P. W. Anderson, K. J. Arrow, & D. Pines (Eds.), *The economy as an evolving complex system* (pp. 9–31). Addison-Wesley.
- Battacharya, T. (2017). Introduction: Mapping social reproduction theory. In T. Battacharya (Ed.), *Social reproduction theory* (pp. 1–20). Pluto.
- Benería, L. (1979). Reproduction, production and the sexual division of labour. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 3, 203–225. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.cje.a035421>
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice*. Cambridge University Press.
- Bowles, S., & Gintis, H. (1993). The revenge of homo economicus: Contested exchange and the revival of political economy. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 7(1), 83–102. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jep.7.1.83>
- Brewer, R. M., Conrad, C., & King, M. (2002). Gender, color, caste, and class. *Feminist Economics*, 8, 1–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354570022000019038>
- Buchanan, J. M., Tollison, R. D., & Tullock, G. (1980). *Toward a theory of the rent-seeking society*. Texas A and M Press.
- Chiappori, P. A., Fortin, B., & Lacroix, G. (2002). Marriage market, divorce legislation and household labor supply. *Journal of Political Economy*, 110(1), 37–72. <https://doi.org/10.1086/324385>
- Collins, P. H. (1991). *Black feminist thought*. Routledge.
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1989). *Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics*. University of Chicago Legal Forum (pp. 139–167).
- Crenshaw, K. W. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Darity, W. (2005). Stratification economics: The role of intergroup inequality. *Journal of Economics and Finance*, 29(2), 144–153. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02761550>
- Darity, W. (2008). Forty acres and a mule in the 21st century. *Social Science Quarterly*, 89(3), 656–664. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6237.2008.00555.x>

- Darity Jr., W. A., Hamilton, D., & Stewart, J. B. (2015). A tour de force in understanding intergroup inequality: An introduction to stratification economics. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 42(1-2), 1–6. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12114-014-9201-2>
- Darity Jr., W., & Hamilton, D. (2012). Bold policies for economic justice. *The Review of Black Political Economy*, 39(1), 79–85. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12114-011-9129-8>
- Davis, A. (1983). *Women, race, and class*. Vintage.
- Davis, J. B. (2006). Social identity strategies in recent economics. *Journal of Economic Methodology*, 13(3), 371–390. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13501780600908168>
- Denzau, A. T., & North, D. C. (1994). Shared mental models: Ideologies and institutions. *Kyklos*, 47(1), 3–31. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6435.1994.tb02246.x>
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1907). *The souls of black folk*. A.C. McClurg. (Original work published 1903)
- DuBois, W. E. B. (1969). *Black reconstruction*. Atheneum. (Original work published 1935)
- Dugger, W. M. (Ed.). (1996). *Inequality: Radical institutionalist views on race, gender, class, and nation*. Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Dugger, W. M. (1998). Against inequality. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 32(2), 286–303. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.1998.11506034>
- Elster, J. (1985). *Making sense of marx*. Cambridge University Press. (p. 21).
- Emmanuel, A. (1972). *Unequal exchange*. New Left Books.
- England, P. (2016). Sometimes the social becomes personal. *American Sociological Review*, 81(1), 4–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122415621900>
- England, P., & Browne, I. (1992). Internalization and constraint in women's subordination. *Current Perspectives in Social Theory*, 12, 97–123. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0278-1204\(08\)00017-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0278-1204(08)00017-0)
- Fanon, F. (1968). *The wretched of the earth*. Grove Press.
- Ferguson, B. (2016). Exploitation and disadvantage. *Economics & Philosophy*, 32(3), 485–509. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s026626711500036x>
- Ferguson, W. D. (2013). *Collective action and exchange*. Stanford University Press.
- Figart, D. (1997). Gender as more than a dummy variable: Feminist approaches to discrimination. *Review of Social Economy*, 55(1), 1–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346769700000022>
- Folbre, N. (1994a). Children as public goods. *American Economic Review*, 84(2), 86–90.
- Folbre, N. (1994b). *Who pays for the kids: Gender and the structures of constraint*. Routledge.
- Folbre, N. (1998). Gender coalitions: Extrafamily influences on intrafamily inequality. In L. Haddad, J. Hoddinott, & H. Alderman (Eds.), *Intrahousehold resource allocation in developing countries: methods, models and policy* (pp. 263–323). Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Folbre, N. (2016). *Just deserts? Earnings inequality and bargaining power in the US economy*. Washington Center for Equitable Growth Working Paper. Retrieved December 13, 2016, from <http://equitablegrowth.org/working-papers/earnings-inequality-and-bargaining-power/>.
- Folbre, N. (2021). *The rise and decline of patriarchal systems. An intersectional political economy*. Verso.
- Frank, A. G. (1966). *The development of underdevelopment*. Free Press.
- Fraser, N. (1995). From redistribution to recognition? dilemmas of justice in a post-socialist age. *New Left Review*, 212, 68–68.
- Fraser, N., & Honneth, A. (2003). *Redistribution or recognition?* Verso.

- Goodin, R. E. (2008). Women's work: Its irreplaceability and exploitability. In D. I. O'Neill, M. L. S. O'Neill, & I. M. Young (Eds.), *Illusion of consent: Engaging with Carole Pateman* (pp. 119–138). Pennsylvania State Press.
- Grapard, U. (1995). Robinson Crusoe: The quintessential economic man? *Feminist Economics*, 1(1), 33–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/714042213>
- Harvey, D. (2004). The 'new imperialism': Accumulation by dispossession. *Socialist Register*, 40, 63–87.
- Harvey, D. (2014). *Seventeen contradictions and the end of capitalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Hoff, K., & Pandey, P. (2006). Discrimination, social identity, and durable inequalities. *American Economic Review*, 96(2), 206–211. <https://doi.org/10.1257/000282806777212611>
- Ionide, P. (2015). *The emotional politics of racism*. Stanford University Press.
- Kabeer, N. (2004). Globalization, labor standards, and women's rights: Dilemmas of collective (In)action in an interdependent world. *Feminist Economics*, 10(1), 3–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354570042000198227>
- Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. McMillan.
- Kuran, T. (1998). Social mechanisms of dissonance reduction. In P. Hedström & R. Swedberg (Eds.), *Social mechanisms: An analytical approach to social theory* (pp. 147–171). Cambridge University Press.
- Lenin, V. (1999). *Imperialism: The highest stage of capitalism*. Resistance Books.
- Lerner's, M. (1980). *Belief in a just world. A fundamental illusion*. Plenum.
- Lino, M., Kuczynski, K., Rodriguez, N., & Schap, T. (2017). *Expenditures on children by families, 2015*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. Retrieved October 20, 2017, from https://www.cnpp.usda.gov/sites/default/files/crc_2015_March2017.pdf.
- Lundberg, S., & Pollak, R. A. (2003). Efficiency in marriage. *Review of Economics of the Household*, 1(3), 153–167. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1025041316091>
- Marx, K. (1976). *Capital*. Volume 1. Chapter 26. Vintage Books.
- Marx, K. (1990). *Capital*. Penguin Classics, (p. 165).
- Marx, K. (2019). *Capital*. Volume 1, Chapter 26, Retrieved December 9, 2019, from <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1867-c1/ch26.htm>.
- Mazzucato, M. (2018). *The value of everything*. Penguin.
- McCall, L. (2005). The complexity of intersectionality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(3), 1771–1800. <https://doi.org/10.1086/426800>
- McElroy, M. (1990). The empirical content of Nash-bargained household behavior. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 25(4), 559–583. <https://doi.org/10.2307/145667>
- Merriam-Webster. (2019). Retrieved December 24, 2019, from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/intersectional>.
- Mills, C. W. (1999). *The racial contract*. Cornell University Press.
- Moos, K. (2019). Neoliberal redistributive policy: The U.S. Net social wage in the 21st century. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 51(4), 581–605. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0486613419848097>
- Nozick, R. (1974). *Anarchy, state and utopia*. Basic Books.
- Okin, S. M. (1989). *Justice, gender, and the family*. Basic Books.
- Patil, V. (2013). From patriarchy to intersectionality: A transnational feminist assessment of How Far we've really come. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 38(4), 847–867. <https://doi.org/10.1086/669560>
- Power, M. (2004). Social provisioning as a starting point for feminist economics. *Feminist Economics*, 10(3), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354570042000267608>

- Rawls, J. (1971). *A theory of justice*. Harvard University Press.
- Roemer, J. (1982). *A general theory of exploitation and class*. Harvard University Press.
- Roemer, J. (1996). *Theories of distributive justice*. Harvard University Press. (p. 270).
- Roemer, J. E. (1979). Divide and conquer: Microfoundations of a Marxian theory of wage discrimination. *The Bell Journal of Economics*, 10(2), 695–705. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3003360>
- Romero, M. (2008). Crossing the immigration and race border: A critical race theory approach to immigration studies. *Contemporary Justice Review*, 11(1), 23–37. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580701850371>
- Romero, M. (2017). *Introducing intersectionality*. Policy Press.
- Ross, E. (1901). *Social control: A survey of the foundations of order*. Macmillan.
- Ruwanpura, K. N. (2008). Multiple identities, multiple-discrimination: A critical review. *Feminist Economics*, 14(3), 77–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13545700802035659>
- Ryan, W. (1971). *Blaming the victim*. Pantheon.
- Sen, A. (1989). Cooperation, inequality, and the family. *Population and Development Review*, 15, 61–76. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2807922>
- Sennett, R., & Cobb, J. (1993). *The hidden injuries of class*. Norton.
- Tavis, C. (1992). *The mismeasure of woman*. Simon and Schuster.
- Tilly, C. (1999). *Durable inequalities*. University of California Press.
- Ullmann-Margalit, E. (1977). *The emergence of norms*. Clarendon Press. (p. 189).
- Veneziani, R., & Yoshihara, N. (2015). Exploitation in economies with heterogeneous preferences, skills and assets: An axiomatic approach. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 27(1), 8–33. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0951629814538911>
- Vogel, L. (2017). Foreword. In T. Battacharya (Ed.), *Social reproduction theory* (p. x–xii). Pluto.
- Waller, W., & Jennings, A. (1990). On the possibility of a feminist economics: The convergence of institutional and feminist methodology. *Journal of Economic Issues*, 24(2), 613–622. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00213624.1990.11505060>
- Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The modern world-system I: Capitalist agriculture and the origins of the European world-economy in the sixteenth century*. Academic Press.
- Wallerstein, I. (1983). *Historical capitalism*. Verso.
- Wolf, D. A., Lee, R. D., Miller, T., Donehower, G., & Genest, A. (2011). Fiscal externalities of becoming a parent. *Population and Development Review*, 37(2), 241–266. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1728-4457.2011.00410.x>
- Wollner, G. (2019). Anonymous exploitation: Non-individual, non-agential and structural. *Review of Social Economy*, 77(2), 143–162. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00346764.2018.1525758>
- Wright, E. (2010). *Envisioning real Utopias*. Verso (p. 26).
- Wright, E. O. (1997). *Class counts: Comparative studies in class analysis*. Cambridge University Press. (p 11).
- Yoshihara, N., & Veneziani, R. (2018). The theory of exploitation as the unequal exchange of labour. *Economics & Philosophy*, 34(3), 381–409. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0266267118000238>